

T: 01495 356011 Ext./Est: 6011

E: committee.services@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Contact:/Cysylltwch â: Democratic Services



THIS IS A MEETING WHICH THE PUBLIC ARE ENTITLED TO ATTEND

2nd December 2020

Dear Sir/Madam

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Executive Committee will be held in Virtually Via Microsoft Teams - if you would like to attend this meeting live via Microsoft Teams please contact committee.services@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk) on Wednesday, 9th December, 2020 at 10.00 am.

Yours faithfully

Michelle Morris
Managing Director

AGENDA

Pages

1. SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION

You are welcome to use Welsh at the meeting, a minimum notice period of 3 working days is required should you wish to do so. A simultaneous translation will be provided if requested.

We welcome correspondence in the medium of Welsh or English. / Croesawn ohebiaith trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg neu'r Saesneg.

2. APOLOGIES

To receive.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

To receive.

MINUTES

4. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 7 - 28

To consider the Minutes of the meeting held on 14th October, 2020.

5. SPECIAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 29 - 32

To consider the Minutes of the Special Meeting held on 19th October, 2020.

GENERAL MATTERS

6. CONFERENCES AND COURSES 33 - 34

To consider.

DECISION ITEMS - CORPORATE SERVICES MATTERS

7. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 13TH JANUARY 2021 35 - 40

To receive the report.

8. THE CALCULATION OF THE COUNCIL TAX BASE FOR THE YEAR 2021/22 41 - 50

To consider the report of the Chief Officer Resources.

9. GRANTS TO ORGANISATIONS 51 - 52

To consider the report of the Chief Officer Resources.

DECISION ITEMS - EDUCATION MATTERS

10. **360 DEGREE SAFE ONLINE SAFETY POLICY FOR SCHOOLS** 53 - 136

To consider the report of the Corporate Director Education.

11. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATION SERVICES SAFEGUARDING POLICY** 137 - 208

To consider the report of the Corporate Director Education.

MONITORING ITEMS - CORPORATE SERVICES

12. **REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING -2020/2021, FORECAST OUTTURN TO 31 MARCH 2021 (AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2020)** 209 - 258

To consider the report of the Chief Officer Resources.

13. **CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING, FORECAST FOR 2020/2021 FINANCIAL YEAR (AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2020)** 259 - 282

To consider the report of the Chief Officer Resources.

14. **USE OF GENERAL AND EARMARKED RESERVES 2020/2021** 283 - 292

To consider the report of the Chief Officer Resources.

15. **THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES 2019/2020** 293 - 300

To consider the report of the Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance.

MONITORING ITEMS - ENVIRONMENT

16. **FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN (2016- 2022)** 301 - 328

To consider the report of the Head of Community Services.

17. **BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM RESILIENCE FORWARD PLAN (2019-2022) 2019/20 ANNUAL REPORT** 329 - 368

To consider the report of the Head of Community Services.

MONITORING ITEMS - EDUCATION

18. **OUTCOME OF THE LEISURE REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING FOR THE ANEURIN LEISURE TRUST** 369 - 444

To consider the report of the Corporate Director Education.

19. **OUTCOMES 2019-2020: FOUNDATION PHASE, KEY STAGE 2, KEY STAGE 3, KEY STAGE 4** 445 - 512

To consider the report of the Corporate Director Education and Assistant Director EAS.

20. **BLAENAU GWENT EDUCATION SERVICES DRAFT SELF – EVALUATION FINDINGS** 513 - 544

To consider the report of the Corporate Director Education.

21. **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION OUTCOMES FOR EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS – AUTUMN TERM 2019 AND SPRING TERM 2020** 545 - 592

To consider the report of the Corporate Director Education.

22. **EDUCATION DIRECTORATE – RESPONSE TO COVID-19** 593 - 650

To consider the report of the Corporate Director Education.

MONITORING ITEMS - SOCIAL SERVICES

23. **UPDATE ON STRATEGY TO SAFELY REDUCE THE NUMBERS OF CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER** 651 - 658

To consider the report of the Corporate Director Social Services.

24. REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

659 - 666

To consider the report of the Corporate Director Social Services.

25. EXEMPT ITEM(S)

To receive and consider the following report(s) which in the opinion of the proper officer is/are an exempt item(s) taking into account consideration of the public interest test and that the press and public should be excluded from the meeting (the reason for the decision for the exemption is available on a schedule maintained by the proper officer).

DECISION ITEMS - REGENERATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MATTERS

26. BRYNMAWR AND NANTYGLO MASTERPLAN

667 - 678

To consider the report of the Team Manager Regeneration Opportunities.

To: Councillor N. Daniels (Chair)
Councillor J. Collins
Councillor D. Davies
Councillor J. Mason
Councillor J. Wilkins

All other Members (for information)
Manager Director
Chief Officers

This page is intentionally left blank

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE

**SUBJECT: SPECIAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE –
14TH OCTOBER, 2020**

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

**PRESENT: Leader of the Council/
Executive Member Corporate Services
Councillor N.J. Daniels (CHAIR)**

**Deputy Leader/Executive Member –
Regeneration & Economic Development
Councillor D. Davies**

**Executive Member – Education
Councillor J. Collins**

**Executive Member – Environment
Councillor J. Wilkins**

**Executive Member – Social Services
Councillor J. Mason**

WITH: Managing Director
Corporate Director Social Services
Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services
Chief Officer Resources
Chief Officer Commercial
Education Transformation Manager
Communications, Marketing & Customer Access Manager
Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>An apology was received from the Interim Corporate Director Education.</p>	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>The following declarations of interest and dispensations were made:-</p> <p>Councillor J. Wilkins – Item No. 13</p>	
	<p><u>MINUTES</u></p>	
No. 4	<p><u>EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd September, 2020.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
No. 5	<p><u>SPECIAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 8th September, 2020.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	

<p>No. 6</p>	<p><u>SPECIAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 16th September, 2020.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
<p>No. 7</p>	<p><u>SPECIAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 21st September, 2020.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
	<p><u>DECISION ITEMS - CORPORATE SERVICES MATTERS</u></p>	
<p>No. 8</p>	<p><u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 9TH DECEMBER, 2020</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Leader of the Council.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and information contained therein be noted.</p>	
<p>No. 9</p>	<p><u>GRANTS TO ORGANISATIONS</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>The Leader reported that the allocation made to Zion Miners Chapel by Councillor J. Holt read £50.00 not £200.00.</p> <p>RESOLVED accordingly.</p>	

The following additional grants were reported:-

ABERTILLERY

Llanhilleth Ward - Councillors J. Collins & N. Parsons

- | | | |
|----|----------------------------|------|
| 1. | Brynithel Activities Group | £150 |
|----|----------------------------|------|

EBBW VALE

Beaufort Ward – Councillors G. Thomas & S. Healy

- | | | |
|----|----------------------|------|
| 1. | The Beaufort Theatre | £100 |
|----|----------------------|------|

TREDEGAR

Georgetown & Central & West Ward – Councillors

K. Hayden & J. Morgan & S. Thomas & H. Trollope & B. Willis

- | | | |
|-----|---|------|
| 1. | 2167 Air Force Cadets | £200 |
| 2. | Bedwellty Park Bowls Club | £200 |
| 3. | Bethania Chapel | £200 |
| 4. | Chloe's Community Kitchen | £200 |
| 5. | Cymru Creations | £200 |
| 6. | FC Tredegar Under 13's | £100 |
| 7. | FC Tredegar Under 10 Tigers | £100 |
| 8. | Gymfinity | £200 |
| 9. | Kids R Us | £200 |
| 10. | Mother & Toddler Group Tredegar Central Baptist | £200 |
| 11. | St Georges Church | £200 |
| 12. | Silurian Amatuer Boxing Club | £200 |
| 13. | Tredegar Business Forum | £200 |
| 14. | Tredegar Central Baptist Church | £200 |
| 15. | Tredegar Methodist Church | £200 |
| 16. | Tredegar Netball | £200 |
| 17. | Tredegar Orpheus Choir | £200 |
| 18. | Tredegar Town AFC Juniors | £100 |
| 19. | Tredegar Town AFC | £100 |

	<p>20. Tredegar Women & Girls AFC £200</p> <p>21. Tredvale Camera Club £200</p> <p>22. Stocktonville Senior Citizens £200</p> <p>23. British Legion (Moose International) £200</p> <p>24. Planet Fitness £200</p> <p>25. Tredegar Angling Club £200</p> <p>26. Blaenau Gwent Heritage Forum £200</p> <p>27. St Johns Ambulance Tredegar £117.85</p> <p>28. Tredegar Ironsides RFC £100</p> <p>29. Tredegar Ironsides Junior RFC £100</p> <p>30. Southend Allotments £100</p> <p>31. Southend Beekeepers £100</p> <p>32. Georgetown Community Centre £200</p> <p>33. Sirhowy Valley Woodlands £200</p> <p>34. St Georges Court Tenants & Residents Association £200</p> <p>35. Reliance Bus Preservation Society £200</p> <p>36. Saron Chapel £200</p> <p>RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.</p>	
	<p><u>DECISION ITEMS – REGENERATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MATTERS</u></p>	
<p>No. 10</p>	<p><u>CARDIFF CAPITAL REGION & WELSH GOVERNMENT ASPIRE ROLL OUT</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services.</p> <p>The Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services advised that the purpose of the report was to gain endorsement for the submission of a proposal to Cardiff Capital Region to roll out the Aspire Shared Apprenticeship Programme and become the host Authority. Also, to sought endorsement for the submission of a proposal to Welsh Government to merge the Aspire Blaenau Gwent and Aspire Merthyr Tydfil programmes from September 2021 which would retain funding for both local authorities to work with the education to facilitate apprenticeships.</p>	

The Corporate Director provided a background to the work of the Aspire Shared Apprentice Programme and advised that in 2019 it won the 'Large Employer of the Year' award at the Apprenticeship Awards Cymru 2019. The award category entitled 'Large and Macro Employer of the Year' recognised and celebrated the employer's commitment to developing their workforce through apprenticeships, whilst supporting employees during training

The Corporate Director felt that the programme would open up opportunities in our Community and throughout the Heads of the Valleys. The model also had the capabilities to operate across the city region with additional recruitment. He felt that it was positive that Blaenau Gwent was taking the lead on the programme and that CCRD asked to take this forward based on Blaenau Gwent's model

The Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic noted his admiration for the programme and he was proud to work alongside with the Aspire Team.

The Skills Agenda was massive for Blaenau Gwent and Wales and the work of this small team was immense and showed the influence of that programme in the recognition through Welsh Government and CCRD to extend the programme. The Programme was exemplar and something to be used as best practice. The Executive Member advised that he had been present at the Awards Evening and it was fantastic to see the other employers that the Authority had been up against. This work provided a great opportunity with Merthyr Tydfil which would lead us into CCRD and provide that expansion to work through the regions with authorities who wished to join. It was felt that this was a real opportunity to move the programme across the 10 authorities providing real apprenticeships, working with real manufacturers which provided excellent opportunities and employment rates.

The Leader added that the opportunity acknowledged the recognition and respect for the Council in terms of what had been achieved in the last 3-4 years. The hard work and commitment had created something that would be a template used across South East Wales for many years. The Programme would continue to benefit the young people in our communities and the Leader wished to congratulate the Executive Member, Corporate Director and the Team on their hard work.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 namely; the submission of two proposals, one to City Deal and the other to Welsh Government by the end of summer 2020 be endorsed. The approval provided a strategic context and clear focus to support a partnership and collaborative approach to implementing specific actions and associated Employment and Skills delivery.

No. 11

INTEGRATED RESPONSIVE TRANSPORT PILOT

Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager Business and Regeneration.

The Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services advised that the purpose of the report was to seek views on the Integrated Responsive Transport (IRT) Pilot project in Blaenau Gwent. The Corporate Director noted that Welsh Government had identified Blaenau Gwent as an area that would benefit from a pilot scheme and informed that this project would be operated across three local authority areas in Wales - Pembrokeshire Conwy and Blaenau Gwent. These Authority's would benefit from piloting a new type of public transport which would run services outside of usual running times. There would be 2 buses procured as part of the project and would initially operate in the Ebbw Fach and Ebbw Fawr valleys. The Corporate Director added that there had always been concerns around public transport in Blaenau Gwent and this pilot provided an opportunity to test the demand for particular routes and services. It was hoped that this would then aim to provide a greater level of flexibility for users

The project would also link in with the transport strategy for Blaenau Gwent and provide the relevant data to improve the Council's understanding of travel patterns and where appropriate enable us to enhance and adapt transport services to serve the current and future needs of residents.

The Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development welcomed the report as it identified the trust placed in this Council by Welsh Government to run a pilot scheme. The Executive Member felt that Blaenau Gwent was an excellent area to undertake this pilot as the topography of the area was diverse.

The Executive Member also felt that public transport should be controlled by the Public Sector as we are in a good position to understand the needs of our communities. The pilot would provide the opportunity to respond to demand.

The Leader felt it was important that this pilot be publicised well for all residents whether they have access to Social Media or not. It was paramount that in order for the pilot to be successful all our communities are involved. The Executive Member confirmed that initial discussions had commenced on how the pilot would be marketed and concurred that it was important that all resident's needs are met.

The Executive Member for Social Services added that there was also a need to talk to other providers in terms of links to the new Grange Hospital in order for residents to access this hospital. In response, it was confirmed that dialogue would be undertaken with partners in the health sector and consideration would be given to Town Centre, places of employment and access issues.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 that approval was given to progress with the pilot project and introduce IRT to Blaenau Gwent.

No. 12

STRATEGIC HOUSING: CCRCD VIABILITY GAP FUNDING

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services.

The Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services advised that the report outlined the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD) Viability Gap Fund opportunity, provided an Update on the current position in responding to the CCRCD Viability Gap Fund opportunity; including identification of potential development sites and sought approval to progress business case and associated workr to determine viability gap and support an application to CCRCD.

The Corporate Director further spoke to the report and outlined the CCRCD Viability Gap Funding opportunity, revenue funding and the fund timeline. In terms of Blaenau Gwent's position and sites it was advised that potential sites had been identified in the private sector and these would be considered with the owners to determine interest in the initiative.

The Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development welcomed the report and was pleased to see the investment as housing was the key driver in economy.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1; the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD) Viability Gap Fund opportunity be noted; including the current position within Blaenau Gwent in respect of identifying potential development sites. Also approval be given for the continued exploration of the identified sites in order to determine the viability gap; and where appropriate progress business case(s) and associated work to support an application submission to CCRCD Viability Gap Fund.

No. 13

ECONOMY – POST COVID-19 ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Councillor J. Wilkins declared an interest in this meeting, however she remained in the meeting during discussions.

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Regeneration and Development.

The Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services welcomed the positive report which set out the proposed strategy that Blaenau Gwent would adopt in response to COVID19. The strategy supports the sectors and businesses in the County Borough and provided a progress update on the ongoing work taking place locally which fed into regional initiatives.

The Corporate Director stated that the COVID19 pandemic and lockdown had greatly affected many business and employment across Wales and the UK. The trading of most companies had been disrupted which caused both short and long term issues in many sectors. The report looked at data collated from various organisations and applied modelling to look at the possible unemployment figures for Blaenau Gwent. It also gave consideration to businesses which needed assistance and which could enhance the future local economy. The Corporate further provided a detailed overview of the information contained in the report.

The COVID unemployment modelling had been applied across different sectors and gave actual figures for unemployment in the Borough and noted that the worst case scenario would be just over 4,200 additional unemployed with 1,700 new employment expected over the same period. There were also a number of trends and actions emerging from the data and work could commence on initiatives that may need to be developed which would allow Blaenau Gwent businesses to adapt to the new ways of working which were outlined by the Corporate Director.

The Corporate Director further outlined the short and long term actions to be taken forward across the sectors as detailed in the report.

The Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development welcomed the work and advised that the report cut across a number of Service Areas. The Economic Development Team was a small section and had been supported by Revenues and Benefits to protect and support businesses by issuing grant funding. The contact with businesses had been maintained throughout lockdown and he wished to pass thanks to staff for their hard work.

The Executive Member continued that a great deal of jobs and businesses had been affected by the pandemic and the challenge continued as there was no end date. He was confident that the support was in place to protect whatever we are able to and continue to bring investment to Blaenau Gwent.

The Leader reiterated the efforts of officers during this period and informed that he had also been approached by individuals giving compliment to the work of the Economic Development Team to ensure their survival. The staff in Economic Development were tremendous and provided a great support during uncertain times.

The Leader added that the Regeneration and Economic Development reports considered had all be of excellent standard. It demonstrated the commitment and expertise in this area led by the Executive Member. The matters considered were important to the public and highlighted that these serious concerns could be addressed which had tested all authorities across Wales. It was a test to a serious politician and the Leader felt that the Authority had positioned itself well to address these issues.

	<p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 be approved to continue working with partners to focus on the initiatives that would bring the most benefit post-COVID to BG. Those that would improve employment opportunities and support businesses to progress with digital improvements and a mix of home, virtual and shared space working.</p>	
	<p><u>DECISION ITEMS - EDUCATION MATTERS</u></p>	
<p>No. 14</p>	<p><u>REVISED LA GOVERNOR POLICY</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Strategic Education Improvement Manager.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and information contained therein be approved.</p>	
<p>No. 15</p>	<p><u>BLAENAU GWENT – POST 16 PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Interim Corporate Director Education.</p> <p>The Education Transformation Manager outlined the report which was presented to seek approval to establish a Blaenau Gwent Post 16 Partnership Board. There was a strong partnership arrangement between the Council and Coleg Gwent in place which had matured during recent years. The Council and Coleg Gwent had a systematic approach in place to share data at a strategic and operational level and this would be further developed with the establishment of a Post 16 Partnership Board. The Board included representation from the Education Directorate, Coleg Gwent, work based learning providers and Blaenau Gwent secondary school settings. There would also be representation from colleagues in Regeneration to encompass the broader skills and economic development agenda.</p> <p>The Learning Zone delivered an annual performance report to the Council which was included on the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee’s forward work programme and featured on the Member Briefing Programme.</p>	

The Executive Member for Education welcomed the report which demonstrated the commitment of stakeholders. The Executive Member stated that there was a strong relationship between secondary schools and Coleg Gwent and this would further strengthen by the partnership. It was also positive to see that the Regeneration Team would participate in the Board as this would realise a multitude of benefits for young people.

The Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development concurred with the comments raised and felt that working with Coleg Gwent and Aspire would maximise opportunities for our young people.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and information contained therein be approved.

DECISION ITEMS - ENVIRONMENT MATTERS

No. 16 INVESTMENT IN CHILDREN'S PLAY PROVISION

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Community Services.

The Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services advised that the report provided an update to the children's play area sites and sought endorsement for the current work programme of the installation of the play equipment in sites which was identified following an extensive review of play areas undertaken and reported to Council in December 2018. The report outlined the rationale for the installation of new children's play equipment purchased following funding received from Welsh Government through the All Wales Play Opportunities Grant (AWPOG). This funding was received at the end of the 2019/2020 financial year and a decision made under delegated authority due to being in lockdown to reallocate the funding originally identified for the Splash Park project. The Corporate Director advised that the decision to reallocate the funds was made as the Festival Park was no longer in a position to take forward the Splash Park project and the Council had to inform Welsh Government of how the funds would be used by the end of March 2020 or the funding would be withdrawn.

It was reported that an initial AWPOG grant of £117,000 was received in 2019/20 to support the implementing of the Play Sufficiency Action Plan. In March 2020 the Council was notified by Welsh Government of a further allocation of AWPOG funding and Parc Bryn Bach, Tredegar had recently benefited from new grant funding from Welsh Government from the Valleys Regional Parks as part of the Discovery Gateway Project. The new facility had been well received by visitors to the park.

The Corporate Director continued that the report identified the play area sites in areas of priority was based around play value, site access and usage levels. The play area sites identified and prioritised were detailed in Appendix 1 of the report. It was added that the 2018 Play Area Review identified a number of play areas that had little or no play value and it had been agreed with the Executive Member for Environment that further consultation would be undertaken with the respective Ward Members to discuss options for sites.

The Executive Member for Environment welcomed the investment into children's play area as during lockdown these areas were critical to children's well-being.

The Leader added that the original review undertaken in 2018 had been a Financial Efficiency Project (FEP) identified as part of the budget setting process. The review was agreed in 2019 and a great deal of work had been undertaken which continued against all recent challenges. The Leader felt that the continuation of this work recognised the Council's commitment to play and the Health and Wellbeing Agenda remained.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed for the installation of the already purchased play equipment into the sites as identified in the report and support further dialogue at a ward level in respect of the future of children's play areas in line with the "Play Area Review" undertaken in December 2018.

No. 17 **PUBLIC PROTECTION – PRIMARY AUTHORITY SCHEME**

Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager Public Protection

The Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services advised that the report informed Members of the Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act (RES Act), which impacts on the administration of the Council's enforcement functions in respect of Environmental Health, Licensing and Trading Standards. The report proposed the adoption of a policy where suitable businesses trading across local authority boundaries, start-up businesses or a single business could be given the opportunity to enter a legal Primary Authority Relationship with Blaenau Gwent Council in respect of regulatory functions. The Corporate Director noted that the Executive are asked to approve the adoption of Primary Authority partnerships in principle and an associated local policy for Primary Authority.

The Corporate Director provided an overview and explanation of a Primary Authority as set out in the report.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 namely;

- The Draft Policy contained in Appendix 1 be adopted and delegate authority to the Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services, to enter Primary Authority relationships on behalf of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council for the purpose of the Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008 (RES Act).
- the Primary Authority scheme be offered to appropriate businesses on a cost recovery basis for the Local Authority as detailed in the Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act.
- the adoption of the policy would help to ensure legal compliance, embrace the principles of better regulation and support local businesses. The Adoption of the policy would contribute to the Council's aims to develop a vibrant economy in Blaenau Gwent where businesses of all sizes access support to meet their regulatory requirements and enhance business growth and the associated benefits to our residents and communities.

- Adoption of Option 1 does not compel the service to enter any Primary Authority partnerships but merely permits such an agreement, if deemed appropriate in line with the Draft Policy shown in Appendix 1.

No. 18

REVIEW INTO WATER SUPPLY QUALITY IN SCHOOLS

Consideration was given to the joint report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services and the Interim Corporate Director Education.

The Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services informed that the purpose of the report was to update Members on the outcome of the review carried out by Integrated Water Services (IWS) in light of the water quality issues experienced in our schools during the period of closure due to COVID-19.

The Corporate Director felt that the Council had taken a pro-active and comprehensive approach to the reopening of schools from a Health and Safety perspective, including water testing in accordance with the Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) L8 and Health & Safety Executive (HSE) specific advice. The safety of the children and staff across all school sites was a priority to the Council.

The Corporate Director continued that normally schools are only closed for a period of five to six weeks during the summer holidays. This period of school closures was unprecedented and lessons had been learned for the future across the school estate.

The Corporate Director advised that Integrated Water Services (IWS) was the firm appointed to undertake the review. The scope of the review included selecting 12 school sites from the 29 schools sites in the Borough. The Corporate Director noted the schools as detailed in the report and referred the Executive to the key recommendations identified by IWS. The Review findings are shared in full as part of the appendices and nothing identified within the review demonstrated that the Council did anything to put the pupils and staff at risk. The Council accepted the criticism in the Review and an action plan have been produced.

The Executive Member for Environment added that although this matter was specific to schools it was an issue that related to all Council buildings. The review had been requested by the Executive Member and the findings are attached in its entirety in order for the Council to learn from the exercise.

The Education Transformation Manager concurred that the Council faced unprecedented times and challenges. The Council was compliant with the Approved Code of Practice L8 and had been monitoring maintenance and testing regimes throughout the emergency response period. The work undertaken was a good example of strong partnership working with issues responded to in a timely and effective manner. As result, the schools were well informed and supported with no illnesses resulting from the water quality issues in schools, and minimal disruption to our schools, all of whom were able to open to learners during the summer-term. All relevant officers worked tirelessly to address the water testing outcomes and will take on board the recommendations going forward.

The Executive Member for Education welcomed the opportunity to develop the processes in place. She concurred that the Council had been over cautious to ensure the safety of our pupils and school staff which demonstrated that their wellbeing was at the forefront of the Council.

The Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development added that Blaenau Gwent was not unique in these findings. As an Authority we are in unprecedented times and were unaware that schools would be closed for such a long period of time. The work required was identified and carried out quickly with no safeguarding issues due to the health and safety issues. The schools were able to open as departments worked together for the benefit of our children.

The Leader reiterated that this Executive had asked for the review to be undertaken and it had been presented in an open and transparent nature. The Leader stated that in previous years this review would not have been presented, however it was important for everyone to have sight of the information and understand that the criticisms had been addressed by ensuring the appropriate processes was in place going forward. The Leader concurred that Blaenau Gwent was not unique in these matters but both politically and professionally it was felt that the Council needed to be transparent with this review.

In response a question raised in relation to discussions at the Special Community Services Scrutiny Committee, it was informed that the review caused a great deal of debate, however the report and action plan had been accepted with an additional recommendation raised for the Executive's consideration. It was proposed that the Action Plan detailed in Appendix 3 be applied across all Council buildings in respect of Health and Safety being a Corporate responsibility and the Policy be presented to the appropriate Scrutiny Committee to be considered accordingly prior to any changes being approved by full Council.

The Leader and the Executive welcomed the recommendation and it was agreed to be included in the recommendation.

RESOLVED accordingly.

The Leader wished to thank all officers involved in the water testing exercise and the safe reopening of schools. There was a great deal of work undertaken during that time and this seems to have been forgotten in some quarters. However, the Leader wished to pass thanks on behalf of the Executive on the work carried out as staff worked above and beyond the normal working day.

RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing that the report be accepted and Option 2 be approved to implement appropriate review changes, particularly in light that Covid19 which was still prevalent within the Country, and localised lockdowns may result in school full or partial closures, which could result in further water quality issues.

MONITORING ITEMS - CORPORATE SERVICES

**No. 19 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING – 2020/2021
FORECAST OUTTURN TO 31ST MARCH, 2021
(AS AT 30TH JUNE, 2020)**

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.

The Chief Officer Resources advised that the report provided the forecast financial outturn position across all portfolios for the financial year 2020/2021 as forecast at 30th June 2020. The Chief Officer spoke to the report and gave a detailed of the forecast financial position to the end of March 2021 across all portfolios, the forecast outturn for Fees & Charges and the progress on the achievement of the Bridging the Gap Projects for 2020/2021.

The Chief Officer Resources also drew Member attention to the impact on the budget and outlined the funds received. The variances would be further revised at the end of Quarter 2 and would be more refined in line with the specific grants.

The Leader asked that a Cost Pressure Sub Group be arranged as soon as possible in order to discuss ongoing budget pressures. The Leader also asked that if monies in the transformation fund was to be used it be brought to politicians for agreement.

The Leader asked if there was any progress with WG agreeing that Covid related pressures could be capitalised. He stated that he continually raised it at the WLGA and asked that the Chief Officer Resources raise in treasury meetings. The Chief Officer Resources advised that there was no further information on this decision, however there had been some movement in the Scottish Government therefore she would continue to pursue.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and provided appropriate challenge to the financial outcomes in the report. Consideration was given to the action plans attached at Appendix 4, developed to address the forecast adverse variances at the end of June 2020.

<p>No. 20</p>	<p><u>CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING, FORECAST FOR 2020/2021 FINANCIAL YEAR (AS AT 30TH JUNE, 2020)</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appropriate challenge to the financial outcomes in the report be provided. • Continued to support appropriate financial control procedures agreed by Council. • the budgetary control and monitoring procedures in place within the Capital Team, to safeguard Authority funding be noted. 	
<p>No. 21</p>	<p><u>USE OF GENERAL AND EARMARKED RESERVES 2019/2020</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of general and earmarked reserves for 2019/2020 be noted. • The draft increase of the General Reserve in 2019/2020 to £6.348m, being 4.69% of net revenue expenditure (above the 4% target level) be noted. • the impact the £0.454m favourable variance for 2019/2020 would have on the General Reserve target; and • To continue to challenge budget overspends and implement appropriate service Action Plans, where required. • Maintenance of general reserves at an adequate level is crucial to the Council being able to meet future liabilities arising from risks for which specific provision has not been made. 	
<p>No. 22</p>	<p><u>SUPPORTING FINANCIAL RESILIENCE – AUDIT WALES FOLLOW UP REVIEW</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted in principle, subject to the report being submitted for further consideration to the December meeting of the Executive.</p>	

No. 23	<p><u>POSITION STATEMENT ON THE COUNCIL'S CCTV SYSTEM (APRIL TO AUGUST 2020)</u></p>
	<p>Consideration was given to the joint report of the Chief Officer Resources, the Head of Community Services and the Head of Governance and Partnerships.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive considered the information provided in the position statement on the CCTV function during the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>
	<p><u>MONITORING ITEM – ENVIRONMENT</u></p>
No. 24	<p><u>WASTE AND RECYCLING PERFORMANCE 2019-20</u></p>
	<p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Community Services.</p> <p>The Executive Member welcomed the report and referred to the Welsh Local Authority comparison positions of 2018/19 to 2019/20 which had seen Blaenau Gwent raised in rank position to rank 11 from 19. She wished to thank the public and officers on this phenomenal improvement which was a great achievement compared to the position the Authority was in 3 years ago.</p> <p>The Leader concurred with the comments and advised that these improvements demonstrated the commitment this administration have in the important issues that matter to our communities. The Leader added that this Authority was moving in the right direction in all services provided.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.</p>

	<p><u>MONITORING ITEMS – EDUCATION</u></p>	
No. 25	<p><u>BLAENAU GWENT EDUCATION SERVICES DRAFT SELF-EVALUATION FINDINGS</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Interim Corporate Director Education.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted in principle, subject to the report being submitted for further consideration to the December meeting of the Executive.</p>	
	<p><u>MONITORING ITEMS – SOCIAL SERVICES</u></p>	
No. 26	<p><u>SOCIAL SERVICES RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Social Services.</p> <p>The Executive Member for Social Services wished to thank all officers in of Social Services on their response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pressures faced by staff have been challenging, however Teams have continued to provide an outstanding service.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and information contained therein be noted.</p>	
No. 27	<p><u>SAFEGUARDING PERFORMANCE INFORMATION FOR SOCIAL SERVICES – 1ST APRIL, 2019 TO 31ST MARCH, 2020</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Social Services.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and information contained therein be noted.</p>	

This page is intentionally left blank

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE

**SUBJECT: SPECIAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE –
19TH OCTOBER, 2020**

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

**PRESENT: Leader of the Council/
Executive Member Corporate Services
Councillor N.J. Daniels (CHAIR)**

**Deputy Leader/Executive Member –
Regeneration & Economic Development
Councillor D. Davies**

**Executive Member – Education
Councillor J. Collins**

**Executive Member – Environment
Councillor J. Wilkins**

**Executive Member – Social Services
Councillor J. Mason**

**WITH: Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services
Service Manager - Accountancy
Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance**

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
No. 1	<u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u> It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.	

<p>No. 2</p>	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from:-</p> <p>Managing Director Interim Corporate Director Education Chief Officer Commercial</p>	
<p>No. 3</p>	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>No declarations of interest or dispensations were reported.</p>	
	<p><u>DECISION ITEMS – ENVIRONMENT MATTERS</u></p>	
<p>No. 5</p>	<p><u>NEW COUNCIL DEPOT PROPOSALS</u></p> <p>Having regard to the views expressed by the Proper Officer regarding the public interest test, that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and that the report should be exempt.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the public be excluded whilst this item of business is transacted as it is likely there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).</p> <p>Consideration was given to the joint report of the Head of Community Services and Team Manager, Street Scene.</p> <p>The Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services advised that report provided progress on the development of a new Council Depot. It outlined suitable candidate sites to be explored which would be taken forward as part of the next stage to develop an Outline Business Case. The Corporate Director added that the current depot had an estimated site area of approximately 15,500 square metres and housed a number of services.</p>	

Due to the cost to refurbish the existing depot site it was felt that alternative sites should also be explored. The Council looked at work undertaken in other authorities where similar facilities had been built. The Council were continually looking to meet the challenges of the Zero Carbon targets set out for the public sector which included the Council's buildings and how the Council operated their services.

The Corporate Director further spoke to the report and outlined the potential collaborative opportunities, the review undertaken to determine the future requirements, fleet size and initial design stages. The Corporate Director noted that in order to reach a preferred location from sites explored we measured against an options appraisal with criteria measured against each site in terms of size, access, location, collaboration opportunities and staff on site.

The Corporate Director further referred the Executive to the options for recommendations and noted Option 2 as the preferred option.

An overview of discussions at the Community Services Scrutiny Committee was provided and it was noted that a request had been made to look at a location on the Works Site. It was reported that this had not been an amendment to the report, however the Executive agreed that the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services undertake the necessary investigations as a matter of urgency on the location brought forward and report back findings appropriately.

RESOLVED accordingly.

The Executive Member for Environment welcomed the report and the support to be provided from WRAP. The project would link with green energy and carbon neutral projects and felt that this was an exciting opportunity to be taken forward

RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report which contained information relating to the financial/business affairs of persons other than the Authority be accepted and Option 2 with the request to look at the site brought forward by the Community Services Scrutiny Committee be approved and the information contained in the report be noted.

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 6

Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: N/A

Committee: **Executive**

Date of meeting: **9th December, 2020**

Report Subject: **Conferences, Courses, Events and Invitation Report**

Report Submitted by: **Democratic Services**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	09.12.2020	N/A	

1. **Purpose of the Report**

To present a list of Conferences/Courses for consideration and determination by the Executive.

2. **Scope of the Report**

2.1 Introduction to Planning Enforcement

Online Training

9th November, 2020

To approve the attendance of Councillors D. Hancock and W. Hodgins, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee.

3. **Options for Consideration**

3.1 To seek approval for attendance at the above.

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 7

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 23.11.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 24.11.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **9th December 2020**

Report Subject: **Forward Work Programme – 13th January 2021**

Portfolio Holder: **All Portfolio Holders**

Report Submitted by: **Cllr Nigel Daniels, Leader / Executive Member
Corporate Services**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
X	x	24.11.20				09.12.20		

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 To present the Executive Forward Work Programme for the Meeting on 13th January 2021.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 The Executive Work Programme is a key aspect of the Council's planning and governance arrangements and supports the requirements of the Constitution.
 - 2.2 The topics set out in the Work Programme link to the strategic work of the Council as identified by the Council's recently revised Corporate Plan, agreed by the Council on 23rd July 2020, corporate documents and supporting business plans.
 - 2.3 All Scrutiny Committees and the Council Forward Work Programmes have been aligned to the Executive Forward Work Programme.
 - 2.4 As the document is fluid there is flexibility to allow for regular review between the Chair and the Committee.
3. **Options for Recommendation**
 - 3.1 **Option 1**
To agree the Forward Work Programme as presented for the Meeting on 13th January 2021.
 - 3.2 **Option 2**
To suggest any amendments prior to agreeing the Forward Work Programme.

This page is intentionally left blank

Executive Committee Forward Work Programme

Executive Meeting Date: Wednesday 13th January 2021

Report Submission Deadline Date to Liz Thomas: Tuesday 15th December 2020

*Reports received after this date will be included on the next agenda of Executive

Decision: 2 items
Monitoring: 12 items
Information: 6 items

Report Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Scrutiny Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
DECISION ITEMS				
Portfolio: Leader / Corporate Services				
Grants to Organisations	Approval To agree the Grants to Organisations.	Rhian Daly	N/A	N/A
Portfolio: Deputy Leader / Regeneration				
New Destination Management Plan for 2020-2025	Decision To approve the new Destination Management Plan for 2020-2025.	Alyson Tippings/Moe Forouzan	Regeneration – 02.12.20	N/A
MONITORING ITEMS				
Portfolio: Leader / Corporate Services				
Performance Information on the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Quarterly Report	Performance Monitoring Members to consider the activity of Blaenau Gwent Council as part of the overall CCRCDC and influence areas of focus.	Ellie Fry	Regeneration – 02.12.20	N/A
Communications Strategy Monitoring	Performance Monitoring To consider the performance of the Communication Strategy focus on the impact of the strategy during COVID19 Pandemic.	Anne-Louise Clark	Corporate Overview – 11.12.20	N/A
Commercial Strategy Monitoring	Performance Monitoring To consider performance of the Commercial Strategy, focus Strategic Commercial Board element. In depth look at each of the 5 elements	Anne-Louise Clark	Corporate Overview – 11.12.20	N/A
Preparations since Exiting the EU	Progress Update To inform Members of the Council's approach to arrangements since exiting the EU.	Bernadette Elias	Corporate Overview – 11.12.20	N/A

Report Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Scrutiny Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
Portfolio: Deputy Leader / Regeneration				
Energy Prospectus Annual Review	Performance Monitoring To provide members with information on the progress made since approval of the Energy Prospectus.	Amy Taylor	Regeneration – 02.12.20	N/A
Portfolio: Environment				
Litter & Dog Control Order Enforcement – Performance report	Performance Monitoring To receive the annual report on 2019/20 activity.	Dave Thompson	Community Services – 07.12.2020	N/A
Cemetery Capacity Update	Performance Monitoring To be updated on the cemetery capacity following the review undertaken in 2019/20.	Dave Watkins / Matthew Stent	Community Services – 07.12.2020	N/A
Civil Parking Enforcement – 12 month Review	Progress Update Members to receive a 12 month review.	Clive Rogers	Community Services – 07.12.2020	N/A
SE Wales Resilient Uplands – Wales Rural Development Programme	Progress Update To inform members of the ongoing regional South East Wales Resilient Uplands (SEWRU) project and how the Council is supporting the delivery of the 3-year (2018-2021) project.	Chris Engel	Community Services – 07.12.2020	N/A
Portfolio: Education				
Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP) Monitoring and the Development of 10 Year WESP Plan.	Performance Monitoring / Development Members to review the performance of the Council and monitor the associated outcomes, whilst recognising how this monitoring can inform key strategic priorities and a new 10 year WESP.	Claire Gardner	Education and Learning – 15.12.2020	N/A
Improving Schools	Performance Monitoring To provide Members with an update on any inspection report findings and progress within schools which are subject to Council.	Michelle Jones	Education and Learning – 15.12.2020	N/A
Portfolio: Social Services				

Report Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Scrutiny Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
Integrated Care Fund	Progress Update Members to be informed of the future and progress of the Integrated Care Fund.	Alyson Hoskins	Social Services – 10.12.2020	N/A
INFORMATION ITEMS				
Management of Pupil Places and the School Estate 2019/20	Information Only To update Members on the management of pupil places and the school estate, throughout the 2019/20 academic session.	Claire Gardner	Education and Learning – 15.12.2020	N/A
Progress on ICT Infrastructure and Connectivity in Schools	Information Only To update Members on the roll out of the ICT Infrastructure and Connectivity project across the school estate.	Lynn Phillips	Education and Learning – 15.12.2020	N/A
National Adoption Service Annual Report	Information Only Members to be informed about National and Regional progress of Adoption services	Tanya Evans	Social Services – 10.12.2020	N/A
Annual Health and Safety Report	Information Only To receive the Annual Health and Safety report.	Andrea Prosser	Corporate Overview – 11.12.20	N/A
Welsh Language	Information Only	Andrew Parker	Corporate Overview – 11.12.20	N/A
Review of staff attendance 2019/20, as at end of March 2020	Information Only Members to be informed of the annual review of staff sickness absence.	Andrea Prosser	Corporate Overview – 11.12.20	N/A

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 8

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 03.12.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 02.12.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**
Date of meeting: **9th December 2020**
Report Subject: **The Calculation of the Council Tax Base for the year 2021/22**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Nigel Daniels – Leader / Executive Member Corporate Services**
Report Submitted by: **Rhian Hayden, Chief Officer - Resources**

Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	01.12.20	03.12.20				09.12.20		

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 To set the Council Tax Base for the financial year 2021/22.

2. Scope and Background

2.1 The Council is statutorily required to calculate the Council Tax Base for each financial year.

2.2 The Council Tax Base is a measure of the Authority's tax-raising capacity. It is expressed in terms of the number of Band D equivalent dwellings taking account of exemptions, reductions for disabilities and discounts.

2.3 The Council's Tax Base is calculated by applying the formula **A x B**, where

A is the total of the "relevant amounts" for 2021/2022 for each of the valuation bands contained in the Council's valuation list and Band A*, and

B is the Council's estimated collection rate for the year.

The "relevant amounts" for the financial year beginning on 1st April, 2021, for a valuation band, are based on the dwellings shown in the valuation list for the Authority as at 31st October, 2020, and is found by applying the formula,

$$(H-(IxE)+J) \times \frac{E}{G}$$

Where

H Is the number of chargeable dwellings in the valuation band and Band A*;

I Is the number of estimated discounts payable in respect of such dwellings;

E Is the appropriate percentage (25% in 2021/2022);

J Is the amount of adjustments in respect of the chargeable dwellings or discounts;

F Is the proportionate number of dwellings in that band:
and

G Is the proportionate number applicable in respect of the Band D dwellings

2.4 The Council's Tax Base for the current year, 2020/2021, was set at 20,662.45.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 That the Executive Committee approves the Council Tax base calculation for 2021/22 as detailed in Appendix 1 tables 1 to 6, and that the council tax base for tax setting purposes be 20,794.09.

4. **Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the**

4.1 **Council Priorities**

The report is linked to and instrumental in the budget strategy for the financial year 2021/22.

4.2 **Statutory Responsibilities**

The calculation must comply with: -

- a) The Local Government Finance Act , 1992,
- b) The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (Wales) Regulations, 1995,
- c) The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) and Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwellings) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulation 2004.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 **Financial**

Option 1

The Council Tax base determines the Councils ability to raise revenue through Council Tax.

5.2 **Risk**

Option 1

Failure to set the Council Tax base correctly can restrict the Council's ability to enforce the collection of Council Tax.

5.3 **Personnel**

There are no direct staff implications to this report.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

A review of council tax collection was undertaken during 2019 that resulted in some changes to collection methods. Whilst in 2019/2020 there was an early indication of improving collection rates, the coronavirus pandemic has had a significant effect on current council tax collection rates across Wales, and it is anticipated that this may continue into 2021/22. I therefore consider it prudent to estimate the in-year collection for 2021/2022 to remain at 95%.

6.2 **Involvement**

The Community Council's within the Blaenau Gwent area will be informed of their appropriate council tax base for 2021/22.

6.3 **Thinking for the Long term**

The council tax base calculation is an annual calculation based on reference to the dwellings within a local authority area on the 31st October of the preceding year.

6.4 **Collaboration / partnership working**

Each individual local authority must calculate their relevant council tax base.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

- 7.1 The Revenue section will continue monitoring collection performance to inform future years calculations.

DE

12th November 2020

This page is intentionally left blank

APPENDIX 1

TABLE 1 ABERTILLERY & LLANHILLETH

Band	H	I	E	(IxE)	Net of Discount H-(IxE)	J	(F/G)	Relevant Amounts
A*	10	4	25.00%	1.00	9.00	0	5/9 = 0.555556	5.00
A	5,491	2,434	25.00%	608.50	4882.50	0	6/9 = 0.666667	3255.00
B	1,588	495	25.00%	123.75	1464.25	0	7/9 = 0.777778	1138.86
C	250	71	25.00%	17.75	232.25	0	8/9 = 0.888889	206.44
D	179	51	25.00%	12.75	166.25	0	9/9 = 1.000000	166.25
E	78	16	25.00%	4.00	74.00	0	11/9 = 1.222222	90.44
F	26	3	25.00%	0.75	25.25	0	13/9 = 1.444444	36.47
G	5	2	25.00%	0.50	4.50	0	15/9 = 1.666667	7.50
H	1	2	25.00%	0.50	0.50	0	18/9 = 2.000000	1.00
I	1	2	25.00%	0.50	0.50	0	21/9 = 2.333333	1.17
Total =	7,629	3,080		770.00	6,859.00	0		4,908.13

Page 45

A = 4,908.13
 B = 95.00%
 A X B = 4,662.72

TABLE 2

BRYNMAWR

Band	H	I	E	(IxE)	Net of Discount H-(IxE)	J	(F/G)	Relevant Amounts
A*	2	2	25.00%	0.50	1.50	0	5/9 = 0.555556	0.83
A	1,132	614	25.00%	153.50	978.50	0	6/9 = 0.666667	652.33
B	892	321	25.00%	80.25	811.75	0	7/9 = 0.777778	631.36
C	304	85	25.00%	21.25	282.75	0	8/9 = 0.888889	251.33
D	160	39	25.00%	9.75	150.25	0	9/9 = 1.000000	150.25
E	54	9	25.00%	2.25	51.75	0	11/9 = 1.222222	63.25
F	21	4	25.00%	1.00	20.00	0	13/9 = 1.444444	28.89
G	2	0	25.00%	0.00	2.00	0	15/9 = 1.666667	3.33
H	5	10	25.00%	2.50	2.50	0	18/9 = 2.000000	5.00
I	0	0	25.00%	0.00	0.00	0	21/9 = 2.333333	0.00
Total =	2,572	1,084		271.00	2,301.00	0		1786.57

A = 1,786.57
 B = 95.00%
 A X B = 1,697.24

TABLE 3

EBBW VALE , BEAUFORT & CWM

Band	H	I	E	(IxE)	Net of Discount H-(IxE)	J	(F/G)	Relevant Amounts
A*	20	9	25.00%	2.25	17.75	0	5/9 = 0.555556	9.86
A	5,900	2,617	25.00%	654.25	5245.75	0	6/9 = 0.666667	3497.17
B	2,498	822	25.00%	205.50	2292.50	0	7/9 = 0.777778	1783.06
C	1,013	293	25.00%	73.25	939.75	0	8/9 = 0.888889	835.33
D	693	165	25.00%	41.25	651.75	0	9/9 = 1.000000	651.75
E	317	68	25.00%	17.00	300.00	0	11/9 = 1.222222	366.67
F	130	18	25.00%	4.50	125.50	0	13/9 = 1.444444	181.28
G	15	0	25.00%	0.00	15.00	0	15/9 = 1.666667	25.00
H	5	8	25.00%	2.00	3.00	0	18/9 = 2.000000	6.00
I	2	0	25.00%	0.00	2.00	0	21/9 = 2.333333	4.67
Total =	10,593	4,000		1000.00	9,593.00	0		7,360.79

A = 7,360.79
 B = 95.00%
 A X B = 6,992.75

TABLE 4

NANTYGLO & BLAINA

Band	H	I	E	(IxE)	Net of Discount H-(IxE)	J	(F/G)	Relevant Amounts
A*	9	2	25.00%	0.50	8.50	0	5/9 = 0.555556	4.72
A	2,423	1,060	25.00%	265.00	2158.00	0	6/9 = 0.666667	1438.67
B	1,105	356	25.00%	89.00	1016.00	0	7/9 = 0.777778	790.22
C	248	69	25.00%	17.25	230.75	0	8/9 = 0.888889	205.11
D	208	41	25.00%	10.25	197.75	0	9/9 = 1.000000	197.75
E	153	24	25.00%	6.00	147.00	0	11/9 = 1.222222	179.67
F	15	2	25.00%	0.50	14.50	0	13/9 = 1.444444	20.94
G	8	1	25.00%	0.25	7.75	0	15/9 = 1.666667	12.92
H	2	2	25.00%	0.50	1.50	0	18/9 = 2.000000	3.00
I	0	0	25.00%	0.00	0.00	0	21/9 = 2.333333	0.00
Total =	4,171	1,557		389.25	3,781.75	0		2,853.00

A = 2,853.00
 B = 95.00%
 A X B = 2,710.35

TABLE 5

TREDEGAR

Band	H	I	E	(IxE)	Net of Discount H-(IxE)	J	(F/G)	Relevant Amounts
A*	16	12	25.00%	3.00	13.00	0	5/9 = 0.555556	7.22
A	3,717	1,792	25.00%	448.00	3269.00	0	6/9 = 0.666667	2179.33
B	1,807	614	25.00%	153.50	1653.50	0	7/9 = 0.777778	1286.06
C	779	229	25.00%	57.25	721.75	0	8/9 = 0.888889	641.56
D	388	76	25.00%	19.00	369.00	0	9/9 = 1.000000	369.00
E	233	50	25.00%	12.50	220.50	0	11/9 = 1.222222	269.50
F	127	16	25.00%	4.00	123.00	0	13/9 = 1.444444	177.67
G	28	6	25.00%	1.50	26.50	0	15/9 = 1.666667	44.17
H	2	4	25.00%	1.00	1.00	0	18/9 = 2.000000	2.00
I	2	2	25.00%	0.50	1.50	0	21/9 = 2.333333	3.50
Total =	7,099	2,801		700.25	6,398.75	0		4,980.01

A = 4,980.01
 B = 95.00%
 A X B = 4,731.01

TABLE 6

AUTHORITY TOTALS

Band	H	I	E	(IxE)	Net of Discount H-(IxE)	J	(F/G)	Relevant Amounts
A*	57	29	25.00%	7.25	49.75	0	5/9 = 0.555556	27.64
A	18,663	8,517	25.00%	2129.25	16533.75	0	6/9 = 0.666667	11022.51
B	7,890	2608	25.00%	652.00	7238.00	0	7/9 = 0.777778	5629.56
C	2,594	747	25.00%	186.75	2407.25	0	8/9 = 0.888889	2139.78
D	1,628	372	25.00%	93.00	1535.00	0	9/9 = 1.000000	1535.00
E	835	167	25.00%	41.75	793.25	0	11/9 = 1.222222	969.53
F	319	43	25.00%	10.75	308.25	0	13/9 = 1.444444	445.25
G	58	9	25.00%	2.25	55.75	0	15/9 = 1.666667	92.92
H	15	26	25.00%	6.50	8.50	0	18/9 = 2.000000	17.00
I	5	4	25.00%	1.00	4.00	0	21/9 = 2.333333	9.33
Total =	32,064	12,522		3130.50	28,933.50	0		21,888.52

Page 50

A = 21,888.52
 B = 95.00%
 A X B = 20,794.09

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE LEADER AND MEMBERS OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

REPORT SUBJECT: GRANTS TO ORGANISATIONS – 9th December 2020

REPORT AUTHOR: RHIAN HAYDEN

**LEAD OFFICER/
DEPARTMENT CHIEF OFFICER RESOURCES,
RESOURCES**

ABERTILLERY

Abertillery Ward- Councillor J. Holt

- | | | |
|----|-----------------|------|
| 1. | Ebenezer Church | £100 |
|----|-----------------|------|

BRYNMAWR

Brynmawr Ward – Councillor L. Elias

- | | | |
|----|----------------------------------|------|
| 1. | Brynmawr Rotary | £150 |
| 2. | Brynmawr Interact | £100 |
| 3. | Brynmawr Town Centre Partnership | £200 |

EBBW VALE

Cwm Ward – Councillors G. Davies & D. Bevan

- | | | |
|----|--|------|
| 1. | Cwm Christmas Lighting Group | £200 |
| 2. | Waunlwyd and Victoria Christmas Lights | £200 |

Ebbw Vale North Ward – Councillors D. Davies & P. Edwards & B. Summers

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------|------|
| 1. | Providence Baptist Church | £300 |
|----|---------------------------|------|

CHIEF OFFICER RESOURCES

Agenda Item 10

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 23.11.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 24.11.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **9th December 2020**

Report Subject: **360 degree Safe Online Safety Policy for Schools**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr J Collins, Executive Member for Education**

Report Submitted by: **Lynn Phillips, Corporate Director of Education**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
x	x	24.11.20			8.10.20	09.12.20		

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek the Executive Committee's approval of the Blaenau Gwent 360 Degree Safe Cymru Online Safety Policy for schools.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 The requirement to ensure that learners are able to use the internet and related communications technologies appropriately and safely is part of a school's wider duty of care. The 360 Degree Safe Cymru Online Safety Policy is provided by South West Grid for Learning (SWGfL) in partnership with Welsh Government. The Online Safety Policy is intended to help schools produce a suitable online safety policy document, which will consider all current and relevant issues in a whole school context.
 - 2.2 Since April 2014, South West Grid for Learning has worked in partnership with the Welsh Government to raise awareness of online safety issues and to improve online safety policy and practice for schools and colleges in Wales. The 360 Degree Safe Cymru Online Safety Policy suggests policy statements which would be essential in any school online safety policy, based on good practice. There are a range of alternative statements that schools should consider, and choose those that are most suitable, given their particular circumstances. The adoption of the 360 Degree Safe Cymru Online Safety policy as the Council's online safety policy for schools will provide clarity and consistency across school estate.
3. **Options for Recommendation**
 - 3.1 The Education and Learning and Social Services Scrutiny Committee (Safeguarding) considered the draft strategy document and supported the policy with the addition of a link to the Welsh Government information

'Keeping Safe Online'. This has been added to page 11 of the policy, 'Education – parents and carers'.

- 3.2 **Option 1** - The Executive Committee are asked to review the policy and if appropriate agree the policy.

Option 2 – The Executive Committee amend the policy.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

This report is in line with the following objectives as set out in the Blaenau Gwent Wellbeing Plan:

- Blaenau Gwent wants everyone to have the best start in life.
- Blaenau Gwent wants safe and friendly communities.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 **Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)**

There are no direct financial implications.

5.2 **Risk including Mitigating Actions**

There is a risk that without a robust online safety policy, the safety and well-being of children and young people could be negatively impacted. The adoption of an appropriate policy ensures that this risk is mitigated.

A range of key stakeholders have contributed to the development of this policy, which is supported by Welsh Government.

5.3 **Legal**

Welsh Government Circular 158/2015, 'Keeping Learners Safe' contains guidance for local authorities and governing bodies on arrangements for safeguarding children under section 175 of the Education Act 2002. E-safety is referenced within this document as a safeguarding responsibility in specific circumstances.

5.4 **Human Resources**

There are no direct staffing or workforce implications arising from this report.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

Local Authority policies have previously been distributed to governing bodies for adoption by schools and all schools have policies in place for internet safety and acceptable use agreements.

The proposed 360 Degree Safe Cymru Online Safety Policy consists of an online safety policy and a series of appendices containing more detailed

templates and forms. They have been developed with support by Online Safety professionals through the South West Grid for Learning (SWGfL) in partnership with Welsh Government.

The policy provides guidance and an indication of what should be included. It allows each school to ensure that the content will be relevant for the individual circumstances of each school.

6.2 Expected outcome for the public

The proposed policy template provides a framework to support schools in developing confident, digital citizens who know how to stay safe online.

6.3 Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)

The proposed policy demonstrates an integrated approach to online safety across schools.

Views have been sought from schools through the Designated Safeguarding Persons (DSP). There were no objections to taking forward the policy approach.

The copyright of the policy is held by South West Grid for learning. Schools/colleges and other educational institutions are permitted free use of the policy templates for the purposes of policy review and development. A range of individuals and organisations have contributed to the development of the policy and appendices, including:

- Members of the SWGfL online safety group;
- Representatives of Welsh local authorities;
- Representatives from a range of Welsh schools/colleges involved in consultation and pilot groups;
- Plymouth University online safety.

South West Grid for Learning and the Education Achievement Service are in agreement with the Council plan to adopt this policy.

6.4 Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)

Welsh Government encourages schools to make full use of digital technologies to engage learners and improve learner outcomes. The proposed policy supports this learning opportunity.

6.5 Preventative focus

In order to become confident digital citizens, children need to know how to stay safe online, both under supervision and independently. The proposed policy supports this.

6.6 Collaboration / partnership working

The Council collaborates with a range of partners and corporate services to discharge its Local Government Education Service functions.

South West Grid for Learning and Education Achievement Service are in agreement with the Council proposal to adopt this policy.

6.7 Integration (across service areas)

The proposed policy is for all schools. The proposed policy template would cover other pre-existing LA policies that will be superseded upon the implementation of this policy

6.8 EqIA

An EQIA for the online safety policy template has been undertaken and no adverse impact has been identified.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

7.1 Adoption of the policy templates will be monitored on a termly basis through the Safeguarding Matrix which is part of the embedded approach within the Council.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – 360 degree Safe Cymru Online Safety Policy Template



Online safety policy template
for schools

Contents

Introduction	3
Development/monitoring/review of this policy	6
Roles and responsibilities	7
Policy statements	10
User actions	20
Responding to incidents of misuse	21
Learner actions	24
Staff Actions	25
Appendix	26
Appendices – Section A - Acceptable Use Agreement	27
Appendices – Section B – Specific Policies	27
Appendices – Section C – Supporting documents and links	27
A1 Learner Acceptable Use Agreement template – for younger learners (Foundation)	28
A2 Learner Acceptable Use Agreement (AUA) template – for older learners	29
A3 Staff (and volunteer) acceptable use agreement template	32
A4 Parent/carer acceptable use agreement template	35
Use of Biometric Systems	37
Use of Cloud Systems Permission Form	38
A5 Acceptable Use Agreement for community users template	39
B1 School technical security policy template (including filtering and passwords)	41
B2 School personal data advice and guidance	48
Suggestions for use	48
School personal data handling	48
Introduction	48
Legislative Context	49
Personal Data	49
Fee	55
Responsibilities	55
Freedom of Information Act	56
Model Publication Scheme	56
Information to Parents/carers – the Privacy Notice	56
B3 School Mobile Technologies Policy Template (inc. BYOD/BYOT)	57
B4 Social Media Template Policy	62
B5 School policy template - Online safety group terms of reference	66
C1 Responding to incidents of misuse – flow chart	68
C2 Record of reviewing devices/internet sites	69
C3 Reporting Log Template	70

Online safety policy template for schools

C4 Training Needs Audit Log Template	71
C5 Summary of Legislation	72
C6 Links to other organisations or documents	75
C7 Glossary of terms	78

Introduction

The online safety policy template

These school online safety policy templates are intended to help school leaders produce a suitable online safety policy document which will consider all current and relevant issues, in a whole school context, linking with other relevant policies, such as the safeguarding, behaviour and anti-bullying policies.

The requirement to ensure that learners are able to use the internet and related communications technologies appropriately and safely is addressed as part of the wider duty of care to which all who work in schools are bound. Schools must, through their online safety policy, meet their statutory obligations to ensure that learners are safe and are protected from potential harm, both on and off-site. The policy will also form part of the school's protection from legal challenge, relating to the use of digital technologies.

These policy templates suggest policy statements which, in the view of Welsh Government, would be essential in any school online safety policy, based on good practice. In addition there are a range of alternative statements that schools should consider and choose those that are most suitable, given their particular circumstances.

An effective school online safety policy must be tailored to the needs of each school and an important part of the process will be the discussion and consultation which takes place during the writing or review of the policy. This will help ensure that the policy is owned and accepted by the whole school community.

It is suggested that consultation in the production of this policy should involve:

- governors
- teaching staff and support staff
- learners
- community users and any other relevant groups.

Due to the ever-changing nature of digital technologies, it is best practice that the school reviews the online safety policy at least annually and, if necessary, more frequently in response to any significant new developments in the use of the technologies, new threats to online safety or incidents that have taken place.

Schools are subject to an increased level of scrutiny of their online safety practices by Estyn Inspectors during inspections, while the Counter Terrorism and Securities Act 2015 requires schools to ensure that children are safe from terrorist and extremist material on the internet.

Given the range of optional statements and guidance notes, this template document is much longer than the resulting policy is likely to be. It is intended that, while covering a complex and ever changing aspect of the work of the school, the resulting policy should be concise and easily understood, if it is to be effective and adopted by all.

The template uses a number of alternative terms, e.g. school. These need to be deleted as relevant. *Within this template, sections which include information or guidance are shown in BLUE. It is anticipated that schools would remove these sections from their completed policy document, though this will be a decision for the group that produces the policy.*

Where sections are highlighted in BOLD text, it is strongly suggested that these should be an essential part of a school online safety policy.

Where sections in the template are written in ITALICS it is anticipated that schools would wish to carefully consider whether or not to include that section or statement in their completed policy.

Online safety policy template for schools

The first part of this document (approximately 25 pages) provides a template for an overall online safety policy for the school. The appendices contain acceptable use agreement templates and more detailed, specific policy templates. It will be for schools to decide which of these documents they choose to amend and adopt.

[Name of school]

Online safety policy

This policy applies to all members of the school community (including staff, learners, volunteers, parents and carers, visitors, community users) who have access to and are users of school digital systems, both in and out of the school. It also applies to the use of personal digital technology on the school site (where allowed).

Development/monitoring/review of this policy

This online safety policy has been developed by a working group/committee (or insert name of group) made up of: (delete/add as relevant)

- *Headteacher/senior leaders*
- *Online safety officer/coordinator*
- *Staff – including practitioners/support staff/technical staff*
- *Governors*
- *Parents and carers*
- *Community users.*

Consultation with the whole school community has taken place through a range of formal and informal meetings.

Schedule for development/monitoring/review

This online safety policy was approved by the <i>governing body/governors sub-committee</i> on:	<i>Insert date</i>
The implementation of this online safety policy will be monitored by the:	<i>Insert name of group/individual (suggested groups – online safety coordinator/officer/group, senior leadership team, other relevant group)</i>
Monitoring will take place at regular intervals:	<i>Insert time period (suggested to be at least once a year)</i>
The <i>governing body/governors sub-committee</i> will receive a report on the implementation of the online safety policy generated by the monitoring group (which will include anonymous details of online safety incidents) at regular intervals:	<i>Insert time period (suggested to be at least once a year)</i>
The online safety policy will be reviewed annually, or more regularly in the light of any significant new developments in the use of the technologies, new threats to online safety or incidents that have taken place. The next anticipated review date will be:	<i>Insert date</i>
Should serious online safety incidents take place, the following external persons/agencies should be informed:	<i>Insert names/titles of relevant persons/agencies, e.g. LA ICT manager, LA safeguarding officer, police</i>

The school will monitor the impact of the policy using: (delete/add as relevant)

- *Logs of reported incidents*
- *Monitoring logs of internet activity (including sites visited)*
- *Internal monitoring data for network activity*
- *Surveys/questionnaires of:*
 - *learners*
 - *parents and carers*
 - *staff.*

} If possible – may need the assistance of service provider

Roles and responsibilities

The following section outlines the online safety roles and responsibilities of individuals¹ and groups within the school.

Governors

Governors are responsible for the approval of the online safety policy and for reviewing the effectiveness of the policy. This will be carried out by the *Governing Body/governor's sub-committee* receiving regular information about online safety incidents and monitoring reports. A member of the Governing Body should take on the role of online safety governor² to include:

- regular meetings with the online safety coordinator/officer
- regular monitoring of online safety incident logs
- regular monitoring of filtering change control logs and monitoring of filtering logs (where possible)
- reporting to relevant governors/sub-committee/meeting.

Headteacher and senior leaders

- The headteacher has a duty of care for ensuring the safety (including online safety) of members of the school community, though the day to day responsibility for online safety may be delegated to the online safety coordinator/officer
- The headteacher and (at least) another member of the senior leadership team should be aware of the procedures to be followed in the event of a serious online safety allegation being made against a member of staff³
- The headteacher/senior leaders are responsible for ensuring that the online safety coordinator/officer and other relevant staff receive suitable training to enable them to carry out their online safety roles and to train other colleagues, as relevant
- The headteacher/senior leaders will ensure that there is a system in place to allow for monitoring and support of those in school who carry out the internal online safety monitoring role. This is to provide a safety net and also support to those colleagues who take on important monitoring roles
- The headteacher/senior leaders will receive regular monitoring reports from the online safety coordinator/officer

Online safety coordinator/officer

NOTE: It is strongly recommended that each school should have a named member of staff with a day to day responsibility for online safety; some schools may choose to combine this with the designated senior person role. Schools may choose to appoint a person with a child welfare background, preferably with good knowledge and understanding of the new technologies, rather than a technical member of staff – but this will be the choice of the school.

The online safety coordinator/officer:

- leads the online safety group
- takes day to day responsibility for online safety issues and has a leading role in establishing and reviewing the school online safety policies/documents
- ensures that all staff are aware of the procedures that need to be followed in the event of an online safety incident taking place.
- provides (or identifies sources of) training and advice for staff
- liaises with the local authority/relevant body
- liaises with (school/local authority) technical staff

¹ In a small school some of the roles described below may be combined, though it is important to ensure that there is sufficient 'separation of responsibility' should this be the case.

² It is suggested that the role may be combined with that of the Safeguarding Governor.

³ See flow chart on dealing with online safety incidents – included in a later section – 'Responding to incidents of misuse' and relevant local authority HR/other relevant body disciplinary procedures.

Online safety policy template for schools

- receives reports of online safety incidents⁴ and creates a log of incidents to inform future online safety developments
- meets regularly with online safety governor to discuss current issues, review incident logs and if possible, filtering change control logs
- attends relevant meeting/sub-committee of governors
- reports regularly to headteacher/senior leadership team.

Network manager/technical staff

NOTE: If the school has a managed ICT service provided by an outside contractor, it is the responsibility of the school to ensure that the managed service provider carries out all the online safety measures that would otherwise be the responsibility of the school technical staff, as suggested below. It is also important that the managed service provider is fully aware of the school online safety policy and procedures.

The network manager/technical staff (or local authority/managed service provider) is responsible for ensuring that:

- the *school* technical infrastructure is secure and is not open to misuse or malicious attack
- the school meets (as a minimum) the required online safety technical requirements as identified by the local authority or other relevant body and also the online safety policy/guidance that may apply
- users may only access the networks and devices through a properly enforced password protection policy, in which passwords are regularly changed
- they keep up-to-date with online safety technical information in order to effectively carry out their online safety role and to inform and update others as relevant
- the use of the *network/internet/learning platform/Hwb/remote access/e-mail* is regularly monitored in order that any misuse/attempted misuse can be reported to the *headteacher/senior leader; online safety coordinator/officer (insert others as relevant)* for investigation/action/sanction
- *(if present) monitoring software/systems are implemented and updated as agreed in school policies*
- *the filtering policy (if one exists), is applied and updated on a regular basis and its implementation is not the sole responsibility of any single person (see appendix 'Technical security policy template' for good practice).*

Teaching and support staff

These individuals are responsible for ensuring that:

- they have an up-to-date awareness of online safety matters and of the current school online safety policy and practices
- they have read, understood and signed the staff acceptable use agreement (AUA)
- they report any suspected misuse or problem to the *headteacher/senior leader; online safety coordinator/officer (insert others as relevant)* for investigation/action
- all digital communications with learners/parents and carers should be on a professional level *and only carried out using official school systems*
- online safety issues are embedded in all aspects of the curriculum and other activities
- learners understand and follow the online safety and acceptable use agreements
- learners have a good understanding of research skills and the need to avoid plagiarism and uphold copyright regulations
- they monitor the use of digital technologies, mobile devices, cameras, etc., in lessons and other school activities (where allowed) and implement current policies with regard to these devices

⁴ The school will need to decide how these incidents will be dealt with and whether the investigation/action will be the responsibility of the Online safety coordinator/officer or another member of staff, e.g. headteacher/senior leader/designated senior person/class teacher/head of year, etc.

Online safety policy template for schools

- in lessons where internet use is pre-planned learners should be guided to sites checked as suitable for their use *and that processes are in place for dealing with any unsuitable material that is found in internet searches.*

Designated senior person

NOTE: It is important to emphasise that these are safeguarding issues, not technical issues; the technology provides additional means for safeguarding issues to develop. Schools may choose to combine the role of designated senior person and online safety officer.

The designated senior person should be trained in online safety issues and be aware of the potential for serious safeguarding issues to arise from:

- sharing of personal data⁵
- access to illegal/inappropriate materials
- inappropriate online contact with adults/strangers
- potential or actual incidents of grooming
- online bullying.

If the roles of the designated senior person and the online safety officer are not combined, it is suggested that they work in collaboration due to the safeguarding issues often related to online safety.

Online safety group

The online safety group⁶ provides a consultative group that has wide representation from the school community, with responsibility for issues regarding online safety and monitoring the online safety policy including the impact of initiatives. Depending on the size or structure of the school this group may be part of the safeguarding group. The group will also be responsible for regular reporting to senior leaders and the governing body.

Members of the online safety group (or other relevant group) will assist the online safety coordinator/officer (or other relevant person, as above) with:

- the production/review/monitoring of the school online safety policy/documents
- *the production/review/monitoring of the school filtering policy (if possible and if the school chooses to have one) and requests for filtering changes*
- mapping and reviewing the online safety education provision – ensuring relevance, breadth and progression
- monitoring network/internet/incident logs where possible
- consulting stakeholders – including parents/carers and the learners about the online safety provision
- monitoring improvement actions identified through use of the 360 degree safe Cymru self review tool.

An online safety group terms of reference template can be found in the appendices.

Learners

These individuals:

- are responsible for using the school digital technology systems in accordance with the learner acceptable use agreement (this should include personal devices – where allowed)
- should have a good understanding of research skills and the need to avoid plagiarism and uphold copyright regulations
- need to understand the importance of reporting abuse, misuse or access to inappropriate materials and know how to do so

⁵ See 'Personal data policy' in the Appendix..

⁶ Schools will need to decide the membership of the online safety group. It is recommended that the group should include representation from learners and parents/carers.

Online safety policy template for schools

- will be expected to know and understand policies on the use of mobile devices and digital cameras. They should also know and understand policies on the taking/use of images and on online bullying
- should understand the importance of adopting good online safety practice when using digital technologies out of school and realise that the school's online safety policy covers their actions out of school, if related to their membership of the school.

Parents and carers

Parents and carers play a crucial role in ensuring that their children understand the need to use the internet/mobile devices in an appropriate way. The school will take every opportunity to help parents and carers understand these issues through *parents'/carers' evenings, newsletters, letters, website, Hwb, learning platform and information about national/local online safety campaigns/literature*. Parents and carers will be encouraged to support the school in promoting good online safety practice and to follow guidelines on the appropriate use of:

- digital and video images taken at school events
- access to parents'/carers' sections of the website, Hwb, learning platform and online learner records
- their children's personal devices in the school (where this is allowed).

Community users

Community users who access school systems/website/Hwb/learning platform as part of the wider school provision will be expected to sign a community user AUA before being provided with access to school systems. [A community users acceptable use agreement template can be found in the appendices \(A6\)](#)

Policy statements

Education – learners

While regulation and technical solutions are very important, their use must be balanced by educating learners to take a responsible approach. The education of learners in online safety is therefore an essential part of the school's online safety provision. Learners need the help and support of the school to recognise and avoid online safety risks and build their resilience.

Online safety should be a focus in all areas of the curriculum and staff should reinforce online safety messages across the curriculum. The online safety curriculum should be broad, relevant and provide progression, with opportunities for creative activities and will be provided in the following ways (Note: statements will need to be adapted, depending on school structure and the age of the learners).

- **A planned online safety curriculum across a range of subjects, (e.g. ICT/PSE/DCF) and topic areas and should be regularly revisited.**
- **Key online safety messages should be reinforced as part of a planned programme of assemblies and tutorial/pastoral activities.**
- **Learners should be taught in all lessons to be critically aware of the materials/content they access online and be guided to validate the accuracy of information.**
- **Learners should be taught to acknowledge the source of information used and to respect copyright when using material accessed on the internet.**
- Learners should be supported in building resilience to radicalisation by providing a safe environment for debating controversial issues and helping them to understand how they can influence and participate in decision-making. [Nb. additional duties for schools under the Counter Terrorism and Securities Act 2015 which requires schools to ensure that children are safe from terrorist and extremist material on the internet.](#)
- *Learners should be helped to understand the need for the learner acceptable use agreement and encouraged to adopt safe and responsible use both within and outside school.*
- *Staff should act as good role models in their use of digital technologies the internet and mobile devices.*

Online safety policy template for schools

- *In lessons where internet use is pre-planned, it is best practice that learners should be guided to sites checked as suitable for their use and that processes are in place for dealing with any unsuitable material that is found in internet searches.*
- *Where learners are allowed to freely search the internet, staff should be vigilant in monitoring the content of the websites the young people visit.*
- *It is accepted that from time to time, for good educational reasons, students may need to research topics, (e.g. racism, drugs, discrimination) that would normally result in internet searches being blocked. In such a situation, staff can request that the technical staff (or other nominated person) can temporarily remove those sites from the filtered list for the period of study. Any request to do so, should be auditable, with clear reasons for the need.*

Education – parents and carers

Many parents and carers have only a limited understanding of online safety risks and issues, yet they play an essential role in the education of their children and in the monitoring/regulation of the children's online behaviours. Parents may underestimate how often children and young people come across potentially harmful and inappropriate material on the internet and may be unsure about how to respond.

The school will therefore seek to provide information and awareness to parents and carers through:
(select/delete as appropriate)

- *curriculum activities*
- *letters, newsletters, web site, learning platform, Hwb*
- *parents and carers evenings/sessions*
- *high profile events/campaigns, e.g. Safer Internet Day*
- *reference to the relevant web sites/publications, providing advice on a range of matters including parental controls e.g. www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers <https://hwb.gov.wales/zones/keeping-safe-online/parents-and-carers/>*

Education – the wider community

The school will provide opportunities for local community groups/members of the community to gain from the school's online safety knowledge and experience. This may be offered through the following:

- providing family learning courses in use of new digital technologies, digital literacy and online safety
- online safety messages targeted towards grandparents and other relatives as well as parents.
- the school learning platform, Hwb, website will provide online safety information for the wider community
- supporting community groups, e.g. early years settings, childminders, youth/sports/voluntary groups to enhance their online safety provision (possibly supporting the group in the use of Online Compass, an online safety self review tool - www.onlinecompass.org.uk).

Education and training – staff/volunteers

It is essential that all staff receive online safety training and understand their responsibilities, as outlined in this policy. Training will be offered as follows: (select/delete as appropriate)

- **a planned programme of formal online safety training will be made available to staff. This will be regularly updated and reinforced. An audit of the online safety training needs of all staff will be carried out regularly.** *It is expected that some staff will identify online safety as a training need within the performance management process*
- **all new staff should receive online safety training as part of their induction programme, ensuring that they fully understand the school online safety policy and acceptable use agreements.**
- *the online safety coordinator/officer (or other nominated person) will receive regular updates through attendance at external training events, (e.g. from Consortium/SWGfL/LA/other relevant organisations) and by reviewing guidance documents released by relevant organisations*
- *this online safety policy and its updates will be presented to and discussed by staff in staff/team meetings/INSET days*

Online safety policy template for schools

- *the online safety coordinator/officer (or other nominated person) will provide advice/guidance/training to individuals as required.*

Training – governors

Governors should take part in online safety training/awareness sessions, with particular importance for those who are members of any sub-committee/group involved in technology/online safety/health and safety/safeguarding. This may be offered in a number of ways such as:

- attendance at training provided by the local authority/National Governors Association/or other relevant organisation, (e.g. SWGfL)
- participation in school training/information sessions for staff or parents ([this may include attendance at assemblies/lessons](#)).

Technical – infrastructure/equipment, filtering and monitoring

If the school has a managed ICT service provided by an outside contractor, it is the responsibility of the school to ensure that the managed service provider carries out all the online safety measures that would otherwise be the responsibility of the school, as suggested below. It is also important that the managed service provider is fully aware of the school online safety policy/acceptable use agreements. The school should also check their local authority/other relevant body policies on these technical issues if the service is not provided by the authority.

The school will be responsible for ensuring that the school infrastructure/network is as safe and secure as is reasonably possible and that policies and procedures approved within this policy are implemented. It will also need to ensure that the relevant people named in the above sections will be effective in carrying out their online safety responsibilities: ([schools will have very different technical infrastructures and differing views as to how these technical issues will be handled – it is therefore essential that this section is fully discussed by a wide range of staff – technical, educational and administrative staff before these statements are agreed and added to the policy](#)) A more detailed technical security policy template can be found in the Appendix.

- **School technical systems will be managed in ways that ensure that the school meets recommended technical requirements** ([these may be outlined in local authority/other relevant body policy and guidance](#)).
- There will be regular reviews and audits of the safety and security of school technical systems.
- Servers, wireless systems and cabling must be securely located and physical access restricted.
- Good practice in preventing loss of data from ransomware attacks requires a rigorous and verified back-up routine, including the keeping of copies off-site.
- **All school networks and system will be protected by secure passwords.**
- **The master account passwords for the school systems should be kept in a secure place, e.g. school safe. Consideration should also be given to using two factor authentication for such accounts** ([further guidance is available in the 'Technical security policy template' in the Appendix](#)).
- **All users have clearly defined access rights to school technical systems and devices. Details of the access rights available to groups of users will be recorded by the Network Manager (or other person) and will be reviewed, at least annually, by the online safety group** ([or other group](#)).
- **All users (adults and learners) have responsibility for the security of their username and password, must not allow other users to access the systems using their log on details and must immediately report any suspicion or evidence that there has been a breach of security.**
- **Passwords must not be shared with anyone.**
- **All users will be provided with a username and password** by [xxxxx \(insert name or title\)](#) who will keep an up to date record of users and their usernames ([see section on password generation in 'Technical security policy template' in the Appendix](#)).
- **Passwords should be long. Good practice highlights that passwords over 12 characters in length are more difficult to crack. Passwords generated by using a combination of unconnected words that are over 16 characters long are extremely difficult to crack. Password length trumps any other special requirements such as uppercase/lowercase letters, number**

Online safety policy template for schools

and special characters. Passwords should be easy to remember, but difficult to guess or crack.

- **Records of learner usernames and passwords for Foundation Phase learners can be kept in an electronic or paper-based form, but they must be securely kept when not required by the user.** *Password complexity in foundation phase should be reduced (for example 6 character maximum) and should not include special characters. Where external systems have different password requirements the use of random words or sentences should be encouraged.*
- Password requirements for learners at Key Stage 2 and above should increase as learners progress through school.
- [\(Insert name or role\)](#) is responsible for ensuring that software licence logs are accurate and up-to-date and that regular checks are made to reconcile the number of licences purchased against the number of software installations [\(inadequate licencing could cause the school to breach the Copyright Act which could result in fines or unexpected licensing costs\)](#).
- Internet access is filtered for all users. Illegal content (child sexual abuse images) is filtered by the broadband or filtering provider by actively employing the Internet Watch Foundation CAIC list. Content lists are regularly updated and internet use is logged and regularly monitored. [\(The school will need to decide on the merits of external/internal provision of the filtering service – see Appendix\)](#). There is a clear process in place to deal with requests for filtering changes [\(see Appendix for more details\)](#).
- *The school has (if possible) provided enhanced/differentiated user-level filtering* (allowing different filtering levels for different ages/stages and different groups of users: staff/learners, etc.).
- Internet filtering should ensure that children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet. [N.b. additional duties for schools under the Counter Terrorism and Securities Act 2015 which requires schools to ensure that children are safe from terrorist and extremist material on the internet \(see Appendix for information on ‘appropriate filtering/monitoring’\)](#).
- Where possible, school technical staff regularly monitor and record the activity of users on the school technical systems and users are made aware of this in the acceptable use agreement. [\(schools may wish to add details of the monitoring programmes that are used\)](#).
- An appropriate system is in place [\(to be described\)](#) for users to report any actual/potential technical incident/security breach to the relevant person, as agreed).
- Appropriate security measures are in place [\(schools may wish to provide more detail which may need to be provided by the service provider\)](#) to protect the servers, firewalls, routers, wireless systems, work stations, mobile devices, etc., from accidental or malicious attempts which might threaten the security of the school systems and data. These are tested regularly. The school infrastructure and individual workstations are protected by up to date virus software.
- An agreed policy is in place [\(to be described\)](#) for the provision of temporary access of ‘guests’, (e.g. trainee teachers, supply teachers, visitors) onto the school systems.
- An agreed policy is in place [\(to be described\)](#) regarding the extent of personal use that users (staff/learners/community users) and their family members are allowed on school devices that may be used out of school.
- An agreed policy is in place [\(to be described\)](#) that allows staff to/forbids staff from downloading executable files and installing programmes on school devices.

An agreed policy is in place [\(to be described\)](#) regarding the use of removable media (e.g. memory sticks/CDs/DVDs) by users on school devices. Personal data cannot be sent over the internet or taken off the school site unless safely encrypted or otherwise secured. [\(See school personal data policy template in the appendix for further detail.\)](#)

Mobile technologies

Mobile technology devices may be school owned/provided or personally owned and might include smartphone, tablet, notebook/laptop or other technology that usually has the capability of utilising the school’s wireless network. The device then has access to the wider internet which may include the school learning platform and other cloud-based services such as e-mail and data storage.

Online safety policy template for schools

All users should understand that the primary purpose of the use of mobile/personal devices in a school context is educational. The mobile technologies policy should be consistent with and inter-related to other relevant school policies including but not limited to those for safeguarding, behaviour, anti-bullying, acceptable use, and policies around theft or malicious damage. Teaching about the safe and appropriate use of mobile technologies should be an integral part of the school's online safety education programme.

In preparing a mobile technologies policy the school should consider possible issues and risks. These may include:

- security risks in allowing connections to your school network
- filtering of personal devices
- breakages and insurance
- access to devices for all learners
- avoiding potential classroom distraction
- network connection speeds, types of devices
- charging facilities
- total cost of ownership.

A range of mobile technology implementations is possible.

For further reading, please refer to the *NEN Technical Strategy Guidance Note 5 – Bring your own device* - [/www.nen.gov.uk/advice/bring-your-own-device-byod](http://www.nen.gov.uk/advice/bring-your-own-device-byod)

A more detailed mobile technologies policy template can be found in the Appendix. The school may however choose to include these aspects of their policy in a comprehensive acceptable use agreement, rather than in a separate mobile technologies policy. It is suggested that the school should in this overall policy document outline the main points from their agreed policy. A checklist of points to be considered is included below.

- The school acceptable use agreements for staff, learners, parents and carers will give consideration to the use of mobile technologies.
- The school allows: (the school should complete the table below to indicate which devices are allowed and define their access to school systems).

	School devices			Personal devices		
	School owned for individual use	School owned for multiple users	Authorised device ⁷	Student owned	Staff owned	Staff owned
Allowed in school				Yes/No ⁸	Yes/No ⁸	Yes/No ⁸
Full network access						
Internet only						
No network access						

Aspects that the school may wish to consider and include in their online safety policy, mobile technologies policy or acceptable use agreements include the following:

School owned/provided devices:

- Who they will be allocated to.
- Where, when and how their use is allowed – times/places/in/out of school.

⁷ Authorised device – purchased by the learner/family through a school-organised scheme. This device may be given full access to the network as if it were owned by the school.

⁸ The school should add below any specific requirements about the use of mobile/personal devices in school.

Online safety policy template for schools

- If personal use is allowed.
- Levels of access to networks/internet (as above).
- Management of devices/installation of apps/changing of settings/monitoring.
- Network/broadband capacity.
- Technical support.
- Filtering of devices.
- Access to cloud services.
- Data protection.
- Taking/storage/use of images.
- Exit processes, what happens to devices/software/apps/stored data if user leaves the school.
- Liability for damage.
- Staff training.

Personal devices

- Which users are allowed to use personal mobile devices in school (staff/learners/visitors).
- Restrictions on where, when and how they may be used in school.
- Storage.
- Whether staff will be allowed to use personal devices for school business.
- Levels of access to networks/internet (as above).
- Network/broadband capacity.
- Technical support (this may be a clear statement that no technical support is available).
- Filtering of the internet connection to these devices.
- Data protection.
- Taking/storage/use of images.
- Liability for loss/damage or malfunction following access to the network (likely to be a disclaimer about school responsibility).
- Identification/labelling of personal devices.
- How visitors will be informed about school requirements.
- How education about the safe and responsible use of mobile devices is included in the school online safety education programmes.

Use of digital and video images

The development of digital imaging technologies has created significant benefits to learning, allowing staff and learners instant use of images that they have recorded themselves or downloaded from the internet. However, staff, parents and carers and learners need to be aware of the risks associated with publishing digital images on the internet. Such images may provide avenues for online bullying to take place. Digital images may remain available on the internet forever and may cause harm or embarrassment to individuals in the short or longer term. It is common for employers to carry out internet searches for information about potential and existing employees. The school will inform and educate users about these risks and will implement policies to reduce the likelihood of the potential for harm ([select/delete as appropriate](#)).

- **When using digital images, staff should inform and educate learners about the risks associated with the taking, use, sharing, publication and distribution of images. In particular they should recognise the risks attached to publishing their own images on the internet, e.g. on social networking sites.**
- In accordance with guidance from the Information Commissioner's Office, parents/carers are welcome to take videos and digital images of their children at school events for their own personal use (as such use is not covered by the Data Protection Act). To respect everyone's privacy and in some cases protection, these images should not be published/made publicly available on social networking sites, nor should parents/carers comment on any activities involving other *learners* in the digital/video images.
- *Staff and volunteers are allowed to take digital/video images to support educational aims, but must follow school policies concerning the sharing, distribution and publication of those images. Those*

Online safety policy template for schools

images should only be taken on school equipment; the personal equipment of staff should not be used for such purposes.

- *Care should be taken when taking digital/video images that learners are appropriately dressed and are not participating in activities that might bring the individuals or the school into disrepute.*
- *Learners must not take, use, share, publish or distribute images of others without their permission*
- *Photographs published on the website, or elsewhere that include learners will be selected carefully and will comply with good practice guidance on the use of such images.*
- *Learners' full names will not be used anywhere on a website or blog, particularly in association with photographs.*
- *Written permission from parents or carers will be obtained before photographs of learners are published on the school website (may be covered as part of the AUA signed by parents or carers at the start of the year - see parents and carers acceptable use agreement in the Appendix).*
- *Learners' work can only be published with the permission of the learner and parents or carers.*

Data protection

Personal data will be recorded, processed, transferred and made available according to the current data protection legislation.

The school must ensure that:

- **it has a Data Protection Policy. (see appendix for template policy)**
- **it implements the data protection principles and is able to demonstrate that it does so.**
- **it has paid the appropriate fee Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)**
- **it has appointed an appropriate Data Protection Officer (DPO) who has a high level of understanding of data protection law and is free from any conflict of interest.** The school may also wish to appoint a Data Manager and Systems Controllers to support the DPO
- **it has an 'information asset register' in place and knows exactly what personal data it holds, where, why and which member of staff has responsibility for managing it**
- **the information asset register lists the lawful basis for processing personal data (including, where relevant, consent). Where special category data is processed, an additional lawful basis will have also been listed**
- **it will hold the minimum personal data necessary to enable it to perform its function and it will not hold it for longer than necessary for the purposes it was collected for. The school should develop and implement a 'retention schedule' to support this**
- **data held must be accurate and up to date where this is necessary for the purpose you hold it for. Have systems in place to identify inaccuracies, such as asking parents to check emergency contact details at suitable intervals**
- **it provides staff, parents, volunteers, teenagers and older children with information about how the school looks after their data and what their rights are in a clear Privacy Notice (see Privacy Notice section in the appendix)**
- **procedures must be in place to deal with the individual rights of the data subject, e.g. one of the dozen rights applicable is that of Subject Access which enables an individual to see to have a copy of the personal data held about them**
- **data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA) are carried out where necessary. For example, to ensure protection of personal data when accessed using any remote access solutions, or entering into a relationship with a new supplier**
- **IT system security is ensured and regularly checked. Patches and other security essential updates are applied promptly to protect the personal data on the systems. Administrative systems are securely ring fenced from systems accessible in the classroom/to learners**

Online safety policy template for schools

- it has undertaken appropriate due diligence and has GDPR compliant contracts in place with any data processors
- it understands how to share data lawfully and safely with other relevant data controllers. In Wales, schools should consider using the [Wales Accord on Sharing Personal Information](#) toolkit to support regular data sharing between data controllers
- there are clear and understood policies and routines for the deletion and disposal of data
- it [reports any relevant breaches to the Information Commissioner](#) within 72hrs of becoming aware of the breach as required by law. It also reports relevant breaches to the individuals affected as required by law. In order to do this it has a policy for reporting, logging, managing, investigating and learning from information risk incidents.
- If a maintained school, it must have a Freedom of Information Policy which sets out how it will deal with FOI requests.
- all staff receive data protection training at induction and appropriate refresher training thereafter. Staff undertaking particular data protection functions, such as handling requests under the individual's rights, will receive training appropriate for their function as well as the core training provided to all staff.

When personal data is stored on any mobile device or removable media the:

- data must be encrypted and password protected.
- device must be password protected. (be sure to select devices that can be protected in this way)
- device must be protected by up to date virus and malware checking software
- data must be securely deleted from the device, in line with school policy (below) once it has been transferred or its use is complete.

Staff must ensure that they: (schools may wish to include more detail about their own data/password/encryption/secure transfer processes)

- at all times take care to ensure the safe keeping of personal data, minimising the risk of its loss or misuse
- can recognise a possible breach, understand the need for urgency and know who to report it to within the school
- can help data subjects understand their rights and know how to handle a request whether verbal or written. Know who to pass it to in the school
- only use encrypted mobile devices (including USBs) for personal data, particularly when it is about children
- will not transfer any school personal data to personal devices except as in line with school policy
- use personal data only on secure password protected computers and other devices, ensuring that they are properly "logged-off" at the end of any session in which they are using personal data
- transfer data using encryption and secure password protected devices.

(The school will need to set its own policy as to whether data storage on removal media is allowed, even if encrypted – some organisations do not allow storage of personal data on removable devices.)

The Personal Data Advice and Guidance in the appendix (B2) provides more detailed information on the school's responsibilities and on good practice.

Communication technologies

This is an area of rapidly developing technologies and uses. Schools will need to discuss and agree how they intend to implement and use these technologies, e.g. few schools allow learners to use mobile phones in

Online safety policy template for schools

lessons, while others identify educational potential and allow their use. This section may also be influenced by the age of the learners. The table has been left blank for school to choose its own responses.

A wide range of rapidly developing communications technologies has the potential to enhance learning. The following table shows how the school currently considers the benefit of using these technologies for education outweighs their risks/disadvantages:

	Staff and other adults			Learners				
	Allowed	Allowed at certain times	Allowed for selected staff	Not allowed	Allowed	Allowed at certain times	Allowed with staff permission	Not allowed
Mobile phones may be brought to school								
Use of mobile phones in lessons								
Use of mobile phones in social time								
Taking photos on mobile phones/cameras								
Use of other mobile devices, e.g. tablets, gaming devices								
Use of personal e-mail addresses in school, or on school network								
Use of school e-mail for personal e-mails								
Use of messaging apps								
Use of social media								
Use of blogs								

The school may also wish to add some of the following policy statements about the use of communications technologies, in place of, or in addition to the above table.

When using communication technologies the school considers the following as good practice:

- **the official school e-mail service may be regarded as safe and secure and is monitored. Users should be aware that e-mail communications are monitored.** *Staff and learners should therefore use only the school email service to communicate with others when in school, or on school systems (e.g. by remote access)*
- **users must immediately report to the nominated person – in accordance with the school policy – the receipt of any communication that makes them feel uncomfortable, is offensive, discriminatory, threatening or bullying in nature and must not respond to any such communication**
- **any digital communication between staff and learners or parents/carers (e-mail, chat, learning platform, etc.) must be professional in tone and content.** *These communications may only take place on official (monitored) school systems. Personal e-mail addresses, text messaging or social media must not be used for these communications*

Online safety policy template for schools

- *whole class/group e-mail addresses may be used at Foundation Stage, while learners at Key Stage 2 and above will be provided with individual school e-mail addresses for educational use. (Schools may choose to use group or class e-mail addresses for younger age groups, e.g. at Foundation Stage)*
- *learners should be taught about online safety issues, such as the risks attached to the sharing of personal details. They should also be taught strategies to deal with inappropriate communications and be reminded of the need to communicate appropriately when using digital technologies.*
- *personal information should not be posted on the school website and only official e-mail addresses should be used to identify members of staff*

Social media

With an increase in use of all types of social media for professional and personal purposes a policy that sets out clear guidance for staff to manage risk and behaviour online is essential. Core messages should include the protection of learners, the school and the individual when publishing any material online.

Expectations for teachers' professional conduct are set out by the General Teaching Council Wales (GTCW) but all adults working with children and young people must understand that the nature and responsibilities of their work place them in a position of trust and that their conduct should reflect this.

All schools and local authorities have a duty of care to provide a safe learning environment for learners and staff. Schools and local authorities could be held responsible, indirectly for acts of their employees in the course of their employment. Staff members who harass, bully online, discriminate on the grounds of sex, race or disability or who defame a third party may render the school or local authority liable to the injured party. Reasonable steps to prevent predictable harm must be in place. All staff working at any educational establishment are expected to demonstrate a professional approach and respect for learners and their families and for colleagues and the learning setting.

The school provides the following measures to ensure reasonable steps are in place to minimise risk of harm to learners through:

- ensuring that personal information is not published
- training being provided including acceptable use, social media risks, checking of settings, data protection and reporting issues
- clear reporting guidance, including responsibilities, procedures and sanctions
- risk assessment, including legal risk.

School staff should ensure that:

- no reference should be made in social media to learners, parents and carers or school staff
- they do not engage in online discussion on personal matters relating to members of the school community
- personal opinions should not be attributed to the school or local authority
- security settings on personal social media profiles are regularly checked to minimise risk of loss of personal information.

When official school social media accounts are established there should be:

- a process for approval by senior leaders
- clear processes for the administration and monitoring of these accounts – involving at least two members of staff
- a code of behaviour for users of the accounts
- systems for reporting and dealing with abuse and misuse
- understanding of how incidents may be dealt with under school disciplinary procedures.

Online safety policy template for schools

Personal use

- Personal communications are those made via a personal social media accounts. In all cases, where a personal account is used which associates itself with, or impacts on, the school it must be made clear that the member of staff is not communicating on behalf of the school with an appropriate disclaimer. Such personal communications are within the scope of this policy.
- Personal communications which do not refer to or impact upon the school are outside the scope of this policy.
- Where excessive personal use of social media in school is suspected, and considered to be interfering with relevant duties, disciplinary action may be taken.
- *The school permits reasonable and appropriate access to private social media sites.*

Monitoring of public social media

- As part of active social media engagement, it is considered good practice to pro-actively monitor the Internet for public postings about the school..
- The school should effectively respond to social media comments made by others according to a defined policy or process.

School use of social media for professional purposes will be checked regularly by a senior leader and online safety group to ensure compliance with the social media, data protection, communications, digital image and video policies.

[The social media policy template in Appendix B4 provides more detailed guidance on the school's responsibilities and on good practice.](#)

Unsuitable/inappropriate activities

Some internet activity such as accessing child abuse images or distributing racist material is illegal and would obviously be banned from school and all other technical systems. Other activities such as online bullying would be banned and could lead to criminal prosecution. There are however a range of activities which may, generally, be legal but would be inappropriate in a school context, either because of the age of the users or the nature of those activities.

The school believes that the activities referred to in the following section would be inappropriate in a school context and that users, as defined below, should not engage in these activities in, or out of, school when using school equipment or systems. The school policy restricts usage as follows.

User actions		Acceptable	Acceptable at certain times	Acceptable for nominated users	Unacceptable	Unacceptable and illegal
Users shall not visit internet sites, make, post, download, upload, data transfer, communicate or pass on, material, remarks, proposals or comments that contain or relate to:	child sexual abuse images – the making, production or distribution of indecent images of children, contrary to The Protection of Children Act 1978					X
	grooming, incitement, arrangement or facilitation of sexual acts against children Contrary to the Sexual Offences Act 2003					X
	possession of an extreme pornographic image (grossly offensive, disgusting or otherwise of an obscene character), contrary to the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008					X
	criminally racist material in UK – to stir up religious hatred (or hatred on the grounds of sexual orientation) - contrary to the Public Order Act 1986					X
	pornography				X	
	promotion of any kind of discrimination				X	
	threatening behaviour, including promotion of physical violence or mental harm				X	

Online safety policy template for schools

	promotion of extremism or terrorism				X	
	any other information which may be offensive to colleagues or breaches the integrity of the ethos of the school or brings the school into disrepute				X	
	Using school systems to run a private business				X	
	Using systems, applications, websites or other mechanisms that bypass the filtering or other safeguards employed by the school				X	
	Infringing copyright				X	
	Revealing or publicising confidential or proprietary information, (e.g. financial/personal information, databases, computer/network access codes and passwords)				X	
	Creating or propagating computer viruses or other harmful files				X	
	Unfair usage (downloading/uploading large files that hinders others in their use of the internet)				X	
	Online gaming (educational)					
	Online gaming (non educational)					
	Online gambling					
	Online shopping/commerce					
	File sharing					
	Use of social media					
	Use of messaging apps					
	Use of video broadcasting, e.g. YouTube					

(The school should agree its own responses and place the ticks in the relevant columns, in the table above. They may also wish to add additional text to the column(s) on the left to clarify issues. The last section of the table has been left blank for schools to decide their own responses).

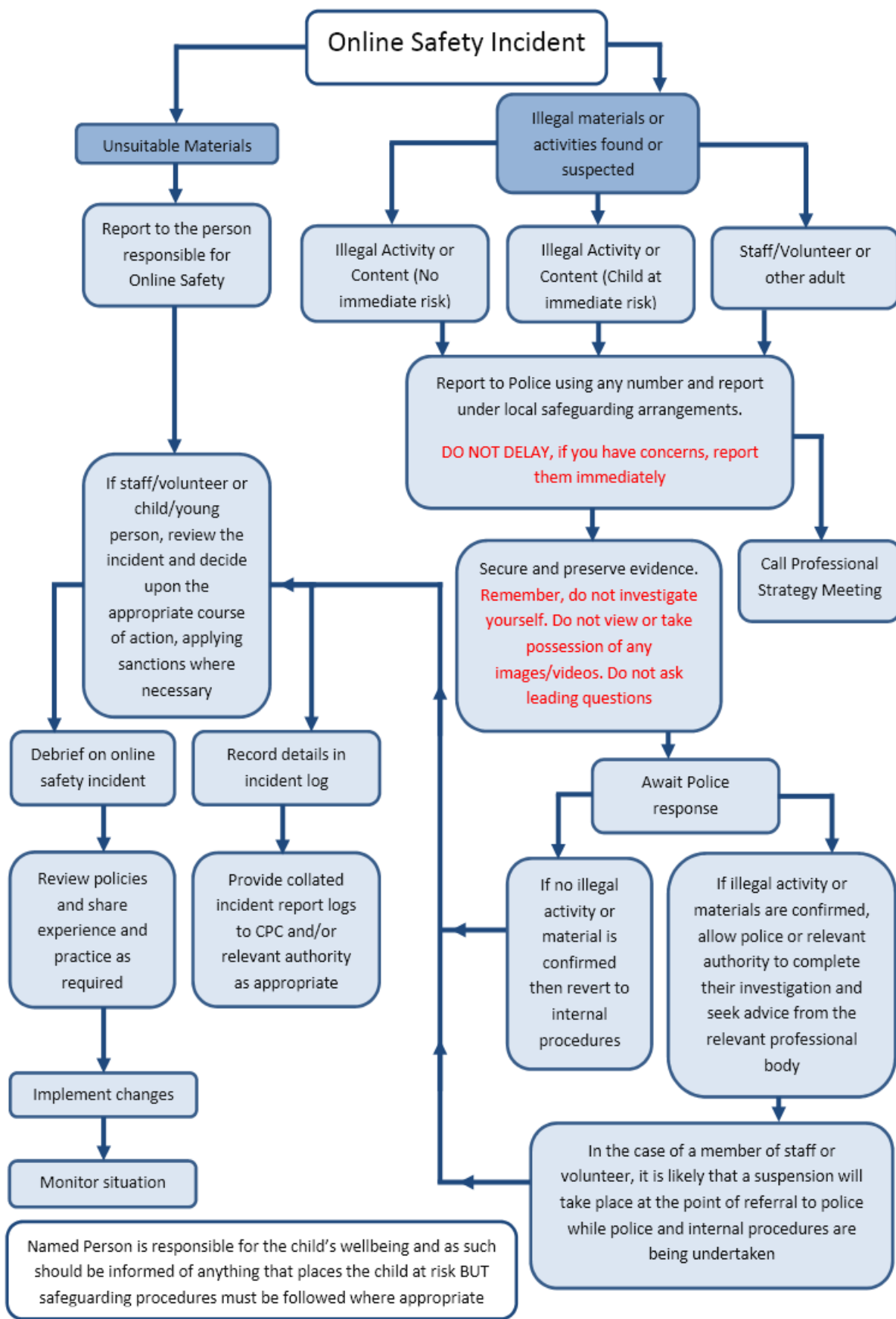
Responding to incidents of misuse

This guidance is intended for use when staff need to manage incidents that involve the use of online services. It encourages a safe and secure approach to the management of the incident. Incidents might involve illegal or inappropriate activities (see 'User actions' above).

Illegal incidents

If there is any suspicion that the website(s) concerned may contain child abuse images, or if there is any other suspected illegal activity, refer to the right hand side of the flowchart (below and appendix) for responding to online safety incidents and report immediately to the police.

Online safety policy template for schools



Online safety policy template for schools

Other incidents

It is hoped that all members of the school community will be responsible users of digital technologies, who understand and follow school policy. However, there may be times when infringements of the policy could take place, through careless, irresponsible or, very rarely, through deliberate misuse.

In the event of suspicion, all steps in this procedure should be followed.

- Have more than one senior member of staff/volunteer involved in this process. This is vital to protect individuals if accusations are subsequently reported.
- Conduct the procedure using a designated computer that will not be used by learners and if necessary can be taken off site by the police should the need arise. Use the same computer for the duration of the procedure.
- It is important to ensure that the relevant staff should have appropriate internet access to conduct the procedure, but also that the sites and content visited are closely monitored and recorded (to provide further protection).
- Record the URL of any site containing the alleged misuse and describe the nature of the content causing concern. It may also be necessary to record and store screenshots of the content on the machine being used for investigation. These may be printed, signed and attached to the form (except in the case of images of child sexual abuse – see below).
- Once this has been completed and fully investigated the group will need to judge whether this concern has substance or not. If it does then appropriate action will be required and could include the following:
 - internal response or discipline procedures
 - involvement by local authority or national/local organisation (as relevant).
 - police involvement and/or action
- **If content being reviewed includes images of child abuse then the monitoring should be halted and referred to the police immediately. Other instances to report to the police would include:**
 - incidents of ‘grooming’ behaviour
 - the sending of obscene materials to a child
 - adult material which potentially breaches the Obscene Publications Act
 - criminally racist material
 - promotion of terrorism or extremism
 - other criminal conduct, activity or materials.
- Isolate the computer in question as best you can. Any change to its state may hinder a later police investigation.

It is important that all of the above steps are taken as they will provide an evidence trail for the school and possibly the police and demonstrate that visits to these sites were carried out for safeguarding purposes. The completed form should be retained by the group for evidence and reference purposes.

School actions

It is more likely that the school will need to deal with incidents that involve inappropriate rather than illegal misuse. It is important that any incidents are dealt with as soon as possible in a proportionate manner, and that members of the school community are aware that incidents have been dealt with. It is intended that incidents of misuse will be dealt with through normal behaviour/disciplinary procedures as follows: [\(the school will need to agree upon its own responses and place the ticks in the relevant columns. They may also wish to add additional text to the column\(s\) on the left to clarify issues. Schools have found it useful to use the charts below at staff meetings/training sessions\)](#)

Online safety policy template for schools

Learner actions

Incidents	Refer to class teacher/tutor	Refer to Head of Department/Head of Year/other	Refer to Headteacher/Principal	Refer to Police	Refer to technical support staff for action re filtering/security etc.	Inform parents/carers	Removal of network/internet access rights	Warning	Further sanction, e.g. detention/exclusion
Deliberately accessing or trying to access material that could be considered illegal (see list in earlier section on unsuitable/inappropriate activities).		X	X	X					
Unauthorised use of non-educational sites during lessons.									
Unauthorised use of mobile phone/digital camera/other mobile device.									
Unauthorised use of social media/messaging apps/personal e-mail.									
Unauthorised downloading or uploading of files.									
Allowing others to access school network by sharing username and passwords.									
Attempting to access or accessing the school network, using another learners' account.									
Attempting to access or accessing the school network, using the account of a member of staff.									
Corrupting or destroying the data of other users.									
Sending an email, text or message that is regarded as offensive, harassment or of a bullying nature.									
Continued infringements of the above, following previous warnings or sanctions.									
Actions which could bring the school into disrepute or breach the integrity of the ethos of the school.									
Using proxy sites or other means to subvert the school's filtering system.									
Accidentally accessing offensive or pornographic material and failing to report the incident.									
Deliberately accessing or trying to access offensive or pornographic material.									
Receipt or transmission of material that infringes the copyright of another person or infringes the Data Protection Act.									

Staff Actions

Incidents	Refer to line manager	Refer to Headteacher/ Principal	Refer to local authority/HR	Refer to Police	Refer to Technical Support Staff for action re filtering, etc.	Warning	Suspension	Disciplinary action
Deliberately accessing or trying to access material that could be considered illegal (see list in earlier section on unsuitable/inappropriate activities)		X	X	X				
Inappropriate personal use of the internet/social media/personal e-mail								
Unauthorised downloading or uploading of files.								
Allowing others to access school network by sharing username and passwords or attempting to access or accessing the school network, using another person's account.								
Careless use of personal data, e.g. holding or transferring data in an insecure manner								
Deliberate actions to breach data protection or network security rules.								
Corrupting or destroying the data of other users or causing deliberate damage to hardware or software								
Sending an e-mail, text or message that is regarded as offensive, harassment or of a bullying nature.								
Using personal email/social networking/messaging to carrying out digital communications with learners.								
Actions which could compromise the staff member's professional standing								
Actions which could bring the school into disrepute or breach the integrity of the ethos of the school.								
Using proxy sites or other means to subvert the school's filtering system.								
Accidentally accessing offensive or pornographic material and failing to report the incident.								
Deliberately accessing or trying to access offensive or pornographic material								
Breaching copyright or licensing regulations.								
Continued infringements of the above, following previous warnings or sanctions.								

Online safety policy template for schools

Appendix

Copies of the more detailed template policies and agreements, contained in the appendix, can be downloaded from:

<https://dysgu.hwb.gov.wales/playlists/view/dfdcd1d6-21b0-46ac-b6bb-fc83402ef3d7/en#page1>

Acknowledgements

Welsh Government and SWGfL would like to acknowledge a range of individuals and organisations whose policies, documents, advice and guidance have contributed to the development of this school online safety policy templates and of the 360 degree safe Cymru online safety self review tool:

- Members of the SWGfL online safety group
- Representatives of Welsh local authorities
- Representatives from a range of Welsh schools involved in consultation and pilot groups
- Plymouth University online safety

Copyright of these policy templates is held by SWGfL. Schools and other educational institutions are permitted free use of the policy templates for the purposes of policy review and development. Any person or organisation wishing to use the document for other purposes should seek consent from SWGfL (onlinesafety@swgfl.org.uk) and acknowledge its use.

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information included in this document is accurate, as at the date of publication in October 2018. However, SWGfL cannot guarantee it's accuracy, nor can it accept liability in respect of the use of the material.

© SWGfL 2018

Appendices – Section A - Acceptable Use Agreement

A1 Learner Acceptable Use agreement template (younger children)

- A2 Learner Acceptable Use agreement template (older children)
- A3 Staff and Volunteers Acceptable Use Agreement template
- A4 Parents /Carers Acceptable Use Agreement template
- A5 Community Users Acceptable Use Agreement template

Appendices – Section B – Specific Policies

- B1 Technical security policy template
- B2 Personal data advice and guidance

- B3 Mobile technologies policy template
- B4 Social media policy template

- B5 Online safety group terms of reference

Appendices – Section C – Supporting documents and links

- C1 Responding to incidents of misuse – flowchart
- C2 Record of reviewing sites (for internet misuse)

- C3 Reporting log template

- C4 Training needs audit template

- C5 Summary of legislation

- C6 Links to other organisations and documents

- C7 Glossary of terms

A1 Learner Acceptable Use Agreement template – for younger learners (Foundation)

This is how we stay safe when we use computers:

I will ask a teacher or another adult from the school if I want to use the computers.

I will only use activities that a teacher or another adult from the school has told or allowed me to use.

I will take care of the computer and other equipment.

I will ask for help from a teacher or another adult from the school if I am not sure what to do or if I think I have done something wrong.

I will tell a teacher or another adult from the school if I see something that upsets me on the screen.

I know that if I break the rules I might not be allowed to use a computer/tablet.

Signed (child):

(The school will need to decide whether or not they wish the learners to sign the agreement – and at which age - for younger children the signature of a parent/carer should be sufficient, if the school requires signatures)

Signed (parent):

This AUA is based on one produced by St Mark's Church of England/Methodist Ecumenical VA Primary School, Weston super Mare.

Primary schools using this acceptable use agreement for younger children may also wish to use (or adapt for use) the Parent/Carer Acceptable use agreement (the template can be found later in these templates) as this provides additional permission forms (including the digital and video images permission form).

A2 Learner Acceptable Use Agreement (AUA) template – for older learners

Sections that include advice or guidance are written in BLUE. It is anticipated that schools will remove these sections from their final AUA document. Schools should review and amend the contents of this AUA to ensure that it is consistent with their online safety policy and other relevant school policies. Due to the number of optional statements and the advice/guidance sections included in this template, it is anticipated that the final AUA will be more concise.

School policy

Digital technologies have become integral to the lives of children and young people, both within and outside schools. These technologies are powerful tools, which open up new opportunities for everyone. They can stimulate discussion, promote creativity and stimulate awareness of context to promote effective learning. Young people should have an entitlement to safer internet access at all times.

This Acceptable use agreement is intended to ensure:

- that learners will be responsible users and stay safe while using the internet and other digital technologies for educational, personal and recreational use
- that school systems and users are protected from accidental or deliberate misuse that could put the security of the systems and users at risk.

The school will try to ensure that learners will have good access to digital technologies to enhance their learning and will, in return, expect the learners to agree to be responsible users.

Acceptable use agreement

I understand that I must use school systems in a responsible way, to ensure that there is no risk to my safety or to the safety and security of the systems and other users.

For my own personal safety:

- I understand that the school will monitor my use of systems, devices and digital communications
- I will keep my username and password safe and secure – I will not share it, nor will I try to use any other person's username and password. I understand that I should not write down or store a password where it is possible that someone may steal it
- I will be aware of "stranger danger", when I am communicating online
- I will not disclose or share personal information about myself or others when online (this could include names, addresses, email addresses, telephone numbers, age, gender, educational details, financial details, etc.)
- If I arrange to meet people off-line that I have communicated with online, I will do so in a public place and take an adult with me
- I will immediately report any unpleasant or inappropriate material or messages or anything that makes me feel uncomfortable when I see it online.

I understand that everyone has equal rights to use technology as a resource and:

- I understand that the school systems and devices are primarily intended for educational use and that I will only use them for personal or recreational use if I have permission
- I will only make large downloads or uploads that might take up internet capacity and prevent other users from being able to carry out their work, if I have permission
- I will only use the school systems or devices for online gaming, online gambling, internet shopping, file sharing, or video broadcasting (eg YouTube), if I have permission of a member of staff to do so. (schools should amend this section to take account of their policy on each of these issues).

Online safety policy template for schools

I will act as I expect others to act toward me:

- I will respect others' work and property and will only access, copy, remove or alter any other user's files, with the owner's knowledge and permission
- I will be polite and responsible when I communicate with others, I will not use strong, aggressive or inappropriate language and I appreciate that others may have different opinions
- I will only take or distribute images of others with their permission.

I recognise that the school has a responsibility to maintain the security and integrity of the technology it offers me and to ensure the smooth running of the school:

- I will only use my own personal device(s) in school if I have permission ([schools should amend this section in the light of their mobile devices policies](#)). I understand that, if I do use my own device(s) in the school, I will follow the rules set out in this agreement, in the same way as if I was using school equipment
- I understand the risks and will not try to upload, download or access any materials which are illegal or inappropriate or may cause harm or distress to others, nor will I try to use any programmes or software that might allow me to bypass the filtering/security systems in place to prevent access to such materials
- I will immediately report any damage or faults involving equipment or software, however this may have happened
- I will only open hyperlinks in emails or attachments to emails, if I know and trust the person/organisation who sent the email, and have no concerns about the validity of the email (due to the risk of the attachment containing viruses or other harmful programmes)
- I will only install/ store programmes on a school device, if I have permission
- I will only use social media sites with permission and at the times that are allowed ([schools should amend this section to take account of their policy on access to social media](#)).

When using the internet for research or recreation, I recognise that:

- I should ensure that I have permission to use the original work of others in my own work
- where work is protected by copyright, I will not try to download copies (including music and videos)
- when I am using the internet to find information, I should take care to check that the information that I access is accurate, as I understand that the work of others may not be truthful and may be a deliberate attempt to mislead me.

I understand that I am responsible for my actions, both in and out of school:

- I understand that the school also has the right to take action against me if I am involved in incidents of inappropriate behaviour, that are covered in this agreement, when I am out of school and where they involve my membership of the school community (examples would be online bullying, use of images or personal information)
- I understand that if I fail to comply with this acceptable use agreement, I will be subject to disciplinary action. This may include ([schools should amend this section to provide relevant actions as per their behaviour policies](#)) loss of access to the school network/internet, detentions, suspensions, contact with parents and in the event of illegal activities involvement of the police.

Please complete the sections below / on the next page to show that you have read, understood and agree to the rules included in the acceptable use agreement. If you do not sign and return this agreement, access will not be granted to school systems and devices.

Learner acceptable use agreement form

This form relates to the learner acceptable use agreement, to which it is attached.

Please complete the sections below to show that you have read, understood and agree to the rules included in the acceptable use agreement. If you do not sign and return this agreement, access will not be granted to school systems. ([Schools will need to decide if they require learners to sign, or whether they wish to simply make them aware through education programmes/awareness raising](#)).

I have read and understand the above and agree to follow these guidelines when:

Online safety policy template for schools

- I use the school systems and devices (both in and out of school)
- I use my own devices in the school (when allowed), e.g. mobile phones, gaming devices, cameras etc
- I use my own equipment out of the school in a way that is related to me being a member of this school, e.g. communicating with other members of the school, accessing school email, learning platform, website, etc.

Name of Learner:

Group/Class

Signed:

Date:

Parent/Carer Countersignature (optional)

Note: It is for schools to decide whether or not they require parents/carers to sign the Parent/carers acceptable use agreement (see template later in this document). This includes a number of other permission forms (including digital and video images/biometric permission/cloud computing permission).

Some schools may, instead, wish to add a countersignature box for parents/carers to this learner acceptable use agreement.

A3 Staff (and volunteer) acceptable use agreement template

Sections that include advice or guidance are written in **BLUE**. It is anticipated that schools will remove these sections from their final AUA document. Schools should review and amend the contents of this AUA to ensure that it is consistent with their online safety policy and other relevant school policies. Due to the number of optional statements and the advice/guidance sections included in this template, it is anticipated that the final AUA will be more concise.

School policy

New technologies have become integral to the lives of children and young people in today's society, both within schools and in their lives outside school. The internet and other digital communications technologies are powerful tools, which open up new opportunities for everyone. These technologies can stimulate discussion, promote creativity and stimulate awareness of context to promote effective learning. They also bring opportunities for staff to be more creative and productive in their work. All users should have an entitlement to safer internet access at all times.

This acceptable use agreement is intended to ensure:

- that staff and volunteers will be responsible users and stay safe while using the internet and other communications technologies for educational, personal and recreational use
- that school systems and users are protected from accidental or deliberate misuse that could put the security of the systems and users at risk
- that staff are protected from potential risk in their use of digital technologies in their everyday work.

The school will try to ensure that staff and volunteers will have good access to digital technologies to enhance learning opportunities and will, in return, expect staff and volunteers to agree to be responsible users.

Acceptable use agreement

I understand that I must use school digital technologies in a responsible way, to ensure that there is no risk to my safety or to the safety and security of the systems and other users. I recognise the value of the use of ICT for enhancing learning and will ensure that learners receive opportunities to gain from the use of digital technologies. I will, where possible, educate the young people in my care in the safe use of ICT and embed online safety in my work with young people.

For my professional and personal safety:

- I understand that the school will monitor my use of the ICT systems, email and other digital communications
- I understand that the rules set out in this agreement also apply to use of school ICT systems (e.g. laptops, email, VLE etc.) out of school, and to the transfer of personal data (digital or paper based) out of school (schools should amend this section in the light of their policies which relate to the use of systems and equipment out of school)
- I understand that the school digital technology systems are primarily intended for educational use and that I will only use the systems for personal or recreational use within the policies and rules set down by the school (schools should amend this section in the light of their policies which relate to the personal use, by staff and volunteers, of school systems)
- I will not disclose my username or password to anyone else, nor will I try to use any other person's username and password. I understand that I should not write down or store a password where it is possible that someone may steal it
- I will immediately report any illegal, inappropriate or harmful material or incident, I become aware of, to the appropriate person

I will be professional in my communications and actions when using school ICT systems:

- I will only access, copy, remove or alter any other user's files, with their express permission

Online safety policy template for schools

- I will communicate with others in a professional manner, I will not use aggressive or inappropriate language and I appreciate that others may have different opinions
- I will ensure that when I take and/or publish images of others I will do so with their permission and in accordance with the school's policy on the use of digital/video images. I will only use my personal equipment to record these images, if I have permission to do so. Where these images are published, (e.g. on the school website/learning platform) it will not be possible to identify by name, or other personal information, those who are featured
- I will only use chat and social networking sites in school in accordance with the school's policies. (schools should amend this section to take account of their policy on access to social networking and similar sites)
- I will only communicate with learners and parents/carers using official school systems. Any such communication will be professional in tone and manner. (schools should amend this section to take account of their policy on communications with learners and parents/carers. Staff should be made aware of the risks attached to using their personal email addresses/mobile phones/social networking sites for such communications)
- I will not engage in any online activity that may compromise my professional responsibilities.

The school and the local authority have the responsibility to provide safe and secure access to technologies and ensure the smooth running of the school :

- When I use my mobile devices (laptops/mobile phones/USB devices etc) in school, I will follow the rules set out in this agreement, in the same way as if I was using school equipment. I will also follow any additional rules set by the school about such use. I will ensure that any such devices are protected by up to date anti-virus software and are free from viruses. (schools should amend this section in the light of their policies which relate to the use of staff devices)
- I will not use personal email addresses on the school digital technology systems. (schools should amend this section in the light of their email policy – some schools will choose to allow the use of staff personal email addresses on the premises)
- I will not open any hyperlinks in emails or any attachments to emails, unless the source is known and trusted, or if I have any concerns about the validity of the email (due to the risk of the attachment containing viruses or other harmful programmes)
- I will ensure that my data is regularly backed up, in accordance with relevant school policies
- I will not try to upload, download or access any materials which are illegal (child sexual abuse images, criminally racist material, extremist material or adult pornography covered by the Obscene Publications Act) or inappropriate or may cause harm or distress to others. I will not try to use any programmes or software that might allow me to bypass the filtering/security systems in place to prevent access to such materials
- I will only make large downloads or uploads that might take up internet capacity and prevent other users from being able to carry out their work, with permission
- I will only install or attempt to install/store programmes on devices or if this is allowed in school policies (schools/academies should amend this section in the light of their policies on installing programmes/altering settings)
- I will not disable or cause any damage to school equipment, or the equipment belonging to others
- I will only transport, hold, disclose or share personal information about myself or others, as outlined in the school/LA Personal data policy (or other relevant policy). Where digital personal data is transferred outside the secure local network, it must be encrypted. Paper based protected and restricted data must be held in lockable storage
- I understand that data protection policy requires that any staff or learner data to which I have access, will be kept private and confidential, except when it is deemed necessary that I am required by law or by school policy to disclose such information to an appropriate authority
- I will immediately report any damage or faults involving equipment or software, however this may have happened

Online safety policy template for schools

When using the internet in my professional capacity or for school sanctioned personal use:

- I will ensure that I have permission to use the original work of others in my own work
- Where work is protected by copyright, I will not download or distribute copies (including music and videos).

I understand that I am responsible for my actions in and out of the school:

- I understand that this acceptable use agreement applies not only to my work and use of school digital technology equipment in school, but also applies to my use of school systems and equipment off the premises and my use of personal equipment on the premises or in situations related to my employment by the school
- I understand that if I fail to comply with this acceptable use agreement, I could be subject to disciplinary action. This could include ([schools should amend this section to provide relevant sanctions as per their behaviour policies](#)) a warning, a suspension, referral to Governors and/or the Local Authority and in the event of illegal activities the involvement of the police.

I have read and understand the above and agree to use the school digital technology systems (both in and out of school) and my own devices (in school and when carrying out communications related to the school) within these guidelines.

Staff/Volunteer Name:

Signed:

Date:

A4 Parent/carer acceptable use agreement template

Digital technologies have become integral to the lives of children and young people, both within schools and outside school. These technologies provide powerful tools, which create new opportunities for everyone. They can stimulate discussion, promote creativity and stimulate awareness of context to promote effective learning. Young people should have an entitlement to safe internet access at all times.

This Acceptable Use Policy is intended to ensure that:

- young people will be responsible users and stay safe while using the internet and other digital technologies for educational, personal and recreational use
- school systems and users are protected from accidental or deliberate misuse that could put the security of the systems and users at risk
- parents and carers are aware of the importance of online safety and are involved in the education and guidance of young people with regard to their online behaviour.

The school will try to ensure that learners will have good access to digital technologies to enhance their learning and will, in return, expect the learners to agree to be responsible users. A copy of the learner Acceptable Use Agreement is attached to this permission form, so that parents/carers will be aware of the school expectations of the young people in their care.

Parents are requested to sign the permission form below to show their support of the school in this important aspect of the school's work. ([Schools will need to decide whether or not they wish parents to sign the acceptable use agreement on behalf of their child](#))

Permission Form

Parent/Carers Name:..... Learner's Name

As the parent/carer of the above learner(s), I give permission for my son/daughter to have access to the internet and to digital technology systems at school.

Either: (KS2 and above)

I know that my son/daughter has signed an acceptable use agreement and has received, or will receive, online safety education to help them understand the importance of safe use of technology and the internet – both in and out of school.

Or: (Foundation)

I understand that the school has discussed the acceptable use agreement with my son/daughter and that they have received, or will receive, online safety education to help them understand the importance of safe use of technology and the internet – both in and out of school.

I understand that the school will take every reasonable precaution, including applying monitoring and filtering systems, to ensure that young people will be safe when they use the internet and digital technology systems. I also understand that the school cannot ultimately be held responsible for the nature and content of materials accessed on the internet and using mobile technologies.

I understand that my son's/daughter's activity on the digital technology systems will be monitored and that the school will contact me if they have concerns about any possible breaches of the acceptable use agreement.

I will encourage my child to adopt safe use of the internet and digital technologies at home and will inform the school if I have concerns over my child's online safety.

[As the school is collecting personal data by issuing this form, it should inform parents/carers as to:](#)

[Who will have access to this form.](#)

Online safety policy template for schools

Where this form will be stored.

How long this form will be stored for.

How this form will be destroyed.

Signed Date:

Use of Digital/Video Images

The use of digital / video images plays an important part in learning activities. Learners and members of staff may use digital cameras to record evidence of activities in lessons and out of school. These images may then be used in presentations in subsequent lessons.

Images may also be used to celebrate success through their publication in newsletters, on the school website and occasionally in the public media. Where an image is publically shared by any means, only your child's **delete as relevant** first name/initials will be used.

The school will comply with data protection legislation and request parents/carers permission before taking images of members of the school. We will also ensure that when images are published that the young people cannot be identified by the use of their names.

In accordance with guidance from the Information Commissioner's Office, parents/carers are welcome to take videos and digital images of their children at school events for their own personal use (as such use is not covered by the Data Protection Act). To respect everyone's privacy and in some cases protection, these images should not be published / made publicly available on social networking sites, nor should parents/carers comment on any activities involving other learners in the digital / video images.

Parents/carers are requested to sign the permission form below to allow the school to take and use images of their children and for the parents/carers to agree.

As the school is collecting personal data by issuing this form, it should inform parents/carers as to:

This form (electronic or printed)	The images
Who will have access to this form.	Where the images may be published. Such as; Twitter, Facebook, the school website, local press, etc. (see relevant section of form below)
Where this form will be stored.	Who will have access to the images.
How long this form will be stored for.	Where the images will be stored.
How this form will be destroyed.	How long the images will be stored for.
	How the images will be destroyed.
	How a request for deletion of the images can be made.

Digital/Video Images Permission Form

Parent/Carers Name:

Online safety policy template for schools

Learner Name(s):.....

As the parent /carer of the above learner, I agree to the school taking digital/video images of my child/children. Yes / No

I agree to these images being used:

• to support learning activities. Yes / No

• in publicity that reasonably celebrates success and promotes the work of the school. Yes / No

Insert statements here that explicitly detail where images are published by the school Yes / No

I agree that if I take digital or video images at, or of – school events which include images of children other than my own, I will abide by these guidelines in my use of these images. Yes / No

Signed:

Use of Biometric Systems

If the school uses biometric systems (e.g. fingerprint / palm recognition technologies) to identify learners for access, attendance recording, charging, library lending etc it must (under the “Protection of Freedoms” and Data Protection legislation) seek permission from a parent or carer.

The school uses biometric systems for the recognition of individual learners in the following ways (the school should describe here how it uses the biometric system).

Biometric technologies have certain advantages over other automatic identification systems as learners do not need to remember to bring anything with them (to the canteen or library) so nothing can be lost, such as a swipe card.

The school has carried out a data privacy impact assessment and is confident that the use of such technologies is effective and justified in a school context.

No complete images of fingerprints / palms are stored and the original image cannot be reconstructed from the data. Meaning that it is not possible, for example, to recreate a learner’s fingerprint or even the image of a fingerprint from what is in effect a string of numbers.

As the school is collecting special category personal data and **delete as appropriate** sharing this with a third party, it should inform parents/carers about:

This form (electronic or printed)	the data shared with the service provider
who will have access to this form	what data will be shared
where this form will be stored	who the data will be shared with
how long this form will be stored for	who will have access to the data
how this form will be destroyed	where the data will be stored
	how long the data will be stored for
	how the data will be destroyed

Online safety policy template for schools

	how consent to process the biometric data can be withdrawn.
--	---

Parent/Carer Name:

Learner Name(s):

As the parent /carer of the above learner(s), I agree to the school using biometric recognition systems, as described above Yes / No

I understand that the images cannot be used to create a whole [fingerprint/palm print](#) of my child and that these images will not be shared with anyone outside the school Yes / No

Signed:

Further guidance

- Each parent /carer of the child should be notified by the school that they are planning to process their child's biometrics and notified that they are able to object.
- In order for a school to process children's biometrics at least one parent /carer must consent and no parent / carer has withdrawn consent. This needs to be in writing.
- The child can object or refuse to participate in the processing of their biometric data regardless of parents' /carer's consent.
- Schools must provide reasonable alternative means of accessing services for those pupils who will not be using an automated biometric recognition system.
- Permission only needs to be collected once during the period that the learner attends the school, but new permission is required if there are changes to the biometric systems in use.

Use of Cloud Systems Permission Form

Schools that use cloud hosting services may be required to seek parental permission to set up an account for learners.

Schools will need to review and amend the section below, depending on which cloud hosted services are used.

The school uses **insert cloud service provider name** for learners and staff. This permission form describes the tools and learner responsibilities for using these services.

The following services are available to each learner as part of the school's online presence in **insert cloud service provider name**

Using **insert cloud service provider name** will enable your child to collaboratively create, edit and share files and websites for school related projects and communicate via email with other learner and members of staff. These services are entirely online and available 24/7 from any internet-connected computer.

The school believes that use of the tools significantly adds to your child's educational experience.

As the school is collecting personal data and sharing this with a third party, it should inform parents/carers about:

This form (electronic or printed) who will have access to this form	The data shared with the service provider what data will be shared
--	---

Online safety policy template for schools

where this form will be stored	who the data will be shared with
how long this form will be stored for	who will have access to the data.
how this form will be destroyed.	where the data will be stored.
	how long the data will be stored for.
	how the data will be destroyed.
	how a request for deletion of the data can be made.

Do you consent to your child to having access to this service?	Yes / No
--	----------

Learner Name(s):

Parent / Carers Name:.....

Signed:

Date:

Learner acceptable use agreement

On the following pages we have copied, for the information of parents and carers, the learner acceptable use agreement. It is suggested that when the learner AUA is written that a copy should be attached to the parents/carers AUA to provide information for parents and carers about the rules and behaviours that learners have committed to by signing the form.

A5 Acceptable Use Agreement for community users template

This acceptable use agreement is intended to ensure:

- that community users of school digital technologies will be responsible users and stay safe while using these systems and devices
- that school systems, devices and users are protected from accidental or deliberate misuse that could put the security of the systems and users at risk

Online safety policy template for schools

- that users are protected from potential risk in their use of these systems and devices.

Acceptable use agreement

I understand that I must use school systems and devices in a responsible way, to ensure that there is no risk to my safety or to the safety and security of the systems, devices and other users. This agreement will also apply to any personal devices that I bring into the school

- I understand that my use of school systems and devices and digital communications will be monitored.
- I will not use a personal device that I have brought into school for any activity that would be inappropriate in a school setting.
- I will not try to upload, download or access any materials which are illegal (child sexual abuse images, criminally racist material, extremist material, adult pornography covered by the Obscene Publications Act) or inappropriate or may cause harm or distress to others. I will not try to use any programmes or software that might allow me to bypass the filtering/security systems in place to prevent access to such materials.
- I will immediately report any illegal, inappropriate or harmful material or incident, I become aware of, to the appropriate person.
- I will not access, copy, remove or otherwise alter any other user's files, without permission.
- I will ensure that if I take and/or publish images of others I will only do so with their permission. I will not use my personal equipment to record these images, without permission. If images are published it will not be possible to identify by name, or other personal information, those who are featured.
- I will not publish or share any information I have obtained whilst in the school on any personal website, social networking site or through any other means, unless I have permission from the school.
- I will not, without permission, make large downloads or uploads that might take up internet capacity and prevent other users from being able to carry out their work.
- I will not install or attempt to install programmes of any type on a school device, nor will I try to alter computer settings, unless I have permission to do so.
- I will not disable or cause any damage to school equipment, or the equipment belonging to others.
- I will immediately report any damage or faults involving equipment or software, however this may have happened.
- I will ensure that I have permission to use the original work of others in my own work.
- Where work is protected by copyright, I will not download or distribute copies (including music and videos).
- I understand that if I fail to comply with this Acceptable Use Agreement, the school has the right to remove my access to school systems/devices.

As the school is collecting personal data by issuing this form, it should inform community users about:

who will have access to this form
where this form will be stored
how long this form will be stored for
how this form will be destroyed

I have read and understand the above and agree to use the school digital technology systems (both in and out of school) and my own devices (in school and when carrying out communications related to the school) within these guidelines.

Name Signed Date:

B1 School technical security policy template (including filtering and passwords)

Suggestions for use

Within this template sections which include information or guidance are shown in **BLUE**. It is anticipated that schools would remove these sections from their completed policy document, though this will be a decision for the group that produces the policy.

Where sections in the template are written in **ITALICS** it is anticipated that schools would wish to consider whether or not to include that section or statement in their completed policy.

Where sections are highlighted in BOLD text, it is the view of the Welsh Government that these would be an essential part of a school online safety policy.

The template uses various terms such as school. Users will need to choose which term to use for their circumstances and delete the other accordingly.

Introduction

Effective technical security depends not only on technical measures, but also on appropriate policies and procedures and on good user education and training. The school will be responsible for ensuring that the school infrastructure/network is as safe and secure as is reasonably possible and that:

- users can only access data to which they have right of access
- no user should be able to access another's files (other than that allowed for monitoring purposes within the school's policies)
- access to personal data is securely controlled in line with the school's personal data policy
- logs are maintained of access by users and of their actions while users of the system
- there is effective guidance and training for users
- there are regular reviews and audits of the safety and security of school computer systems
- there is oversight from senior leaders and these have impact on policy and practice.

If the school has an externally managed ICT service, it is the responsibility of the school to ensure that the managed service provider carries out all the online safety measures that might otherwise be carried out by the school itself (as suggested below). It is also important that the managed service provider is fully aware of the school online safety policy/ acceptable use agreements. The school should also check their local authority/other relevant body policies/guidance on these technical issues if the managed service is not provided by the authority.

Responsibilities

The management of technical security will be the responsibility of (insert title) (schools will probably choose the Network Manager/Technical Staff/Head of Computing or other relevant responsible person)

Technical Security

Policy statements

The school will be responsible for ensuring that their infrastructure/network is as safe and secure as is reasonably possible and that policies and procedures approved within this policy are implemented. It will also need to ensure that the relevant people receive guidance and training and will be effective in carrying out their responsibilities:

- **school technical systems will be managed in ways that ensure that the school meets recommended technical requirements** (if not managed by the Local Authority, these may be outlined in Local Authority/other relevant body technical/online safety policy and guidance)

Online safety policy template for schools

- there will be regular reviews and audits of the safety and security of school technical systems
- servers, wireless systems and cabling must be securely located and physical access restricted
- appropriate security measures are in place to protect the servers, firewalls, switches, routers, wireless systems, work stations, mobile devices etc from accidental or malicious attempts which might threaten the security of the school systems and data
- responsibilities for the management of technical security are clearly assigned to appropriate and well trained staff ([this may be at school, local authority or managed provider level](#))
- all users will have clearly defined access rights to school technical systems. *Details of the access rights available to groups of users will be recorded by the network manager/technical staff/other person and will be reviewed, at least annually, by the online safety group.*
- users will be made responsible for the security of their username and password, must not allow other users to access the systems using their log on details and must immediately report any suspicion or evidence that there has been a breach of security ([see password section below](#))
- ([insert name or role](#)) is responsible for ensuring that software licence logs are accurate and up to date and that regular checks are made to reconcile the number of licences purchased against the number of software installations ([Inadequate licencing could cause the school to breach the Copyright Act which could result in fines or unexpected licensing costs](#))
- *mobile device security and management procedures are in place* ([where mobile devices are allowed access to school systems](#)). (schools may wish to add details of the mobile device security procedures that are in use).
- *school/local authority/managed service provider/technical staff regularly monitor and record the activity of users on the school technical systems and users are made aware of this in the acceptable use agreement.* ([schools may wish to add details of the monitoring programmes that are used](#))
- *remote management tools are used by staff to control workstations and view users activity*
- *an appropriate system is in place (to be described) for users to report any actual/potential technical incident to the online safety co-ordinator/network manager/technician (or other relevant person, as agreed)*
- an agreed policy is in place ([to be described](#)) for the provision of temporary access of “guests”, (e.g. trainee teachers, supply teachers, visitors) onto the school system
- *an agreed policy is in place (to be described) regarding the downloading of executable files and the installation of programmes on school devices by users*
- *an agreed policy is in place (to be described) regarding the extent of personal use that users (staff/learners/community users) and their family members are allowed on school devices that may be used out of school*
- an agreed policy is in place ([to be described](#)) regarding the use of removable media (eg memory sticks/CDs/DVDs) by users on school devices ([see school personal data policy template in the appendix for further detail](#))
- the school infrastructure and individual workstations are protected by up to date software to protect against malicious threats from viruses, worms, trojans etc.
- personal data cannot be sent over the internet or taken off the school site unless safely encrypted or otherwise secured. ([see school personal data policy template in the appendix for further detail](#))

Password Security

A safe and secure username/password system is essential if the above is to be established and will apply to all school technical systems, including networks, devices, email and learning platform). You can find out more about passwords, why they are important and how to manage them in our blog article. You may wish to share this with staff members to help explain the significance of passwords as this is helpful in explaining why they are necessary and important. [Where sensitive data is in use – particularly when accessed on mobile devices – schools may wish to use more secure forms of authentication e.g. two factor authentication such as the use of hardware tokens and if so should add a relevant section in this policy. Where this is adopted, the policy should state clearly that such items as hardware tokens must be stored separately from the device when in transit – to avoid both being lost/stolen together.](#)

Policy Statements:

- **These statements apply to all users.**

Online safety policy template for schools

- All school networks and systems will be protected by secure passwords.
- All users have clearly defined access rights to school technical systems and devices. Details of the access rights available to groups of users will be recorded by the Network Manager (or other person) and will be reviewed, at least annually, by the online safety group (or other group).
- All users (adults and learners) have responsibility for the security of their username and password, must not allow other users to access the systems using their log on details and must immediately report any suspicion or evidence that there has been a breach of security.
- Passwords must not be shared with anyone.
- All users will be provided with a username and password by xxxxx (insert name or title) (see section on password generation in technical notes) who will keep an up to date record of users and their usernames.

Password requirements:

- Passwords should be long. Good practice highlights that passwords over 12 characters in length are considerably more difficult to compromise than shorter passwords. Passwords generated by using a combination of unconnected words that are over 16 characters long are extremely difficult to crack. Password length trumps any other special requirements such as uppercase/lowercase letters, number and special characters. Passwords should be easy to remember, but difficult to guess or crack.
- Passwords should be different for different accounts, to ensure that other systems are not put at risk if one is compromised and should be different for systems used inside and outside of school
- Passwords must not include names or any other personal information about the user that might be known by others
- Passwords must be changed on first login to the system
- *The school may wish to recommend to staff and learners (depending on age) that they make use of a 'password vault' these can store passwords in an encrypted manner and can generate very difficult to crack passwords. There may be a charge for these services.*
- *Passwords should not be set to expire as long as they comply with the above, but should be unique to each service the user logs into.*

Learner passwords:

Primary schools will need to decide at which point they will allocate individual usernames and passwords to pupils. They may choose to use class log-ons for Foundation Phase (though increasingly children are using their own passwords to access programmes). Schools need to be aware of the risks associated with not being able to identify any individual who may have infringed the rules set out in the policy and the Acceptable Use Agreement (AUA). Use by learners in this way should always be supervised and members of staff should never use a class log on for their own network/internet access. Schools should also consider the implications of using whole class log-ons when providing access to learning environments and applications, which may be used outside school.

- **Records of learner usernames and passwords for foundation phase learners can be kept in an electronic or paper-based form, but they must be securely kept when not required by the user.** *Password complexity in foundation phase should be reduced (for example 6 character maximum) and should not include special characters. Where external systems have different password requirements the use of random words or sentences should be encouraged.*
- Password requirements for learners at Key Stage 2 and above should increase as learners progress through school.
- Users will be required to change their password if it is compromised. *Some schools may choose to reset passwords at the start of each academic year to avoid large numbers of forgotten password reset requests where there is no user-controlled reset process. (Note: passwords should not be regularly changed but should be secure and unique to each account.)*
- Learners will be taught the importance of password security, this should include how passwords are compromised, and why these password rules are important.

Online safety policy template for schools

Schools may wish to add to this list for all or some learners any of the relevant policy statements from the staff section above.

Notes for technical staff/teams

- **Each administrator should have an individual administrator account, as well as their own user account with access levels set at an appropriate level. Consideration should also be given to using two factor authentication for such accounts.**
- **An administrator account password for the school systems should also be kept in a secure place e.g. school safe. This account and password should only be used to recover or revoke access. Other administrator accounts should not have the ability to delete this account.** (*A school should never allow one user to have sole administrator access*)
- **Any digitally stored administrator passwords should be hashed using a suitable algorithm for storing passwords (e.g. Bcrypt or Scrypt). Message Digest algorithms such as MD5, SHA1, SHA256 etc. should not be used.**
- *It is good practice that where passwords are used there is a user-controlled password reset process to enable independent, but secure re-entry to the system. This ensures that only the owner has knowledge of the password.*
- *Where user-controlled reset is not possible, passwords for new users, and replacement passwords for existing users will be allocated by xxxxx (insert title) (schools may wish to have someone other than the school's technical staff carrying out this role e.g. an administrator who is easily accessible to users). Good practice is that the password generated by this change process should be system generated and only known to the user. This password should be temporary and the user should be forced to change their password on first login. The generated passwords should also be long and random.*
- *Where automatically generated passwords are not possible, then a good password generator should be used by xxxxx (insert title) to provide the user with their initial password. There should be a process for the secure transmission of this password to limit knowledge to the password creator and the user. The password should be temporary and the user should be forced to change their password on the first login.*
- *Requests for password changes should be authenticated by (the responsible person) to ensure that the new password can only be passed to the genuine user (the school will need to decide how this can be managed – possibly by requests being authorised by a line manager for a request by a member of staff or by a member of staff for a request by a learner)*
- **Suitable arrangements should be in place to provide visitors with appropriate access to systems which expires after use.** (*For example, your technical team may provide pre-created user/password combinations that can be allocated to visitors, recorded in a log, and deleted from the system after use.*)
- **In good practice, the account is “locked out” following six successive incorrect log-on attempts.**
- **Passwords shall not be displayed on screen, and shall be securely hashed when stored (use of one-way encryption).**

Training/Awareness:

It is essential that users should be made aware of the need for keeping passwords secure, and the risks attached to unauthorised access/data loss. This should apply to even the youngest of users. It is also essential that users be taught how passwords are compromised, so they understand why things should be done a certain way. Please see our blog for more details on this.

Members of staff will be made aware of the school's password policy:

- at induction
- through the school's online safety policy and password security policy
- through the acceptable use agreement

Learners will be made aware of the school's password policy:

- in lessons (*the school should describe how this will take place*)
- through the Acceptable Use Agreement

Online safety policy template for schools

Audit/Monitoring/Reporting/Review:

The responsible person ([insert title](#)) will ensure that full records are kept of:

- User Ids and requests for password changes
- *User log-ons*
- *Security incidents related to this policy*

Filtering

Introduction

The filtering of internet content provides an important means of preventing users from accessing material that is illegal or is inappropriate in an educational context. The filtering system cannot, however, provide a 100% guarantee that it will do so, because the content on the web changes dynamically and new technologies are constantly being developed. It is important, therefore, to understand that filtering is only one element in a larger strategy for online safety and acceptable use. It is important that the school has a filtering policy to manage the associated risks and to provide preventative measures which are relevant to the situation in this school. When considering the filtering policy, schools must consult with their provider to ensure that all aspects of the policy will be supported.

Many users are not aware of the flexibility provided by many filtering services at a local level for schools. Where available, schools should use this flexibility to meet their learning needs and reduce some of the frustrations occasionally felt by users who wish to maximise the use of the new technologies.

Schools need to consider carefully the issues raised and decide:

- whether to introduce differentiated filtering for different groups/ages of users, if technically possible
- whether to remove filtering controls for some internet use (eg social networking sites) at certain times of the day or for certain users
- who has responsibility for such decisions and the checks and balances put in place
- what (if any) other system and user monitoring systems will be used to supplement the filtering system and how these will be used.

Responsibilities:

The responsibility for the management of the school's filtering policy will be held by ([insert title](#)). They will manage the school filtering, in line with this policy and will keep records/logs of changes and of breaches of the filtering systems.

To ensure that there is a system of checks and balances and to protect those responsible, changes to the school filtering service must ([schools should choose their relevant responses](#)):

- be logged in change control logs
- be reported to a second responsible person ([insert title](#))
- *either... be reported to and authorised by a second responsible person prior to changes being made ([recommended](#))*
- *or... be reported to a second responsible person ([insert title](#)) every X weeks/months in the form of an audit of the change control logs*
- *be reported to the online safety group every X weeks/months in the form of an audit of the change control logs*

All users have a responsibility to report immediately to ([insert title](#)) any infringements of the school's filtering policy of which they become aware or any sites that are accessed, which they believe should have been filtered.

Users must not attempt to use any programmes or software that might allow them to bypass the filtering/security systems in place to prevent access to such materials.

Online safety policy template for schools

Policy Statements:

Internet access is filtered for all users. Differentiated internet access is available for staff and customised filtering changes are managed by the school. Illegal content is filtered by broadband or filtering provider by actively employing the Internet Watch Foundation CAIC list and other illegal content lists. Filter content lists are regularly updated and internet use is logged and frequently monitored. Ideally, the monitoring process alerts the school to breaches of the filtering policy, which are then acted upon. There is a clear route for reporting and managing changes to the filtering system. Where personal mobile devices are allowed internet access through the school network, filtering will be applied that is consistent with school practice.

- *Either - The school maintains and supports the managed filtering service provided by the internet service provider (ISP) (or other filtering service provider)*
- *and/or – the school manages its own filtering service (NB. If a school decides to remove the external filtering and replace it with another internal filtering system, this should be clearly explained in the policy and evidence provided that the headteacher would be able to show, in the event of any legal issue that the school was able to meet its statutory requirements to ensure the safety of staff/learners)*
- *the school has provided enhanced/differentiated user-level filtering through the use of the (insert name) filtering programme (allowing different filtering levels for different ages/stages and different groups of users – staff/pupils/students, etc.)*
- *in the event of the technical staff needing to switch off the filtering for any reason, or for any user, this must be logged and carried out by a process that is agreed by the Headteacher/Principal (or other nominated senior leader)*
- *mobile devices that access the school internet connection (whether school or personal devices) will be subject to the same filtering standards as other devices on the school systems*
- *any filtering issues should be reported immediately to the filtering provider*
- *requests from staff for sites to be removed from the filtered list will be considered by the technical staff or Service Provider (insert name or title) (n.b. an additional person should be nominated – to ensure protection for the network manager or any other member of staff, should any issues arise re unfiltered access). If the request is agreed, this action will be recorded and logs of such actions shall be reviewed regularly by the online safety group.*

Education/Training/Awareness:

Learners will be made aware of the importance of filtering systems through the online safety education programme (schools may wish to add details). They will also be warned of the consequences of attempting to subvert the filtering system.

Staff users will be made aware of the filtering systems through: (amend as relevant)

- the Acceptable Use Agreement
- induction training
- staff meetings, briefings, training sessions

Parents will be informed of the school's filtering policy through the Acceptable Use Agreement and through online safety awareness sessions/newsletter etc. (amend as relevant)

Changes to the Filtering System:

In this section the school should provide a detailed explanation of:

- how, and to whom, users may request changes to the filtering (whether this is carried out in school or by an external filtering provider)
- the grounds on which they may be allowed or denied (schools may choose to allow access to some sites, e.g. social networking sites for some users, at some times, or for a limited period of time. There should be strong educational reasons for changes that are agreed).
- how a second responsible person will be involved to provide checks and balances (preferably this will be at the time of request, but could be retrospectively through inspection of records/audit of logs)
- any audit/reporting system.

Online safety policy template for schools

Users who gain access to, or have knowledge of others being able to access, sites which they feel should be filtered (or unfiltered) should report this in the first instance to [\(insert title\)](#) who will decide whether to make school level changes (as above).

Monitoring:

Some schools supplement their filtering systems with additional monitoring systems. If this is the case, schools should include information in this section, including – if they wish – details of internal or commercial systems that are in use. They should also ensure that users are informed that monitoring systems are in place.

No filtering system can guarantee 100% protection against access to unsuitable sites. The school will therefore monitor the activities of users on the school network and on school equipment as indicated in the school online safety policy and the acceptable use agreements. *Monitoring will take place as follows: (details should be inserted if the school so wishes).*

Audit/Reporting:

Logs of filtering change controls and of filtering incidents will be made available to: [\(schools should amend as relevant\)](#)

- *the second responsible person (insert title)*
- *online safety group*
- *online safety governor/governors committee*
- *external filtering provider/local authority/police on request*

The filtering policy will be reviewed in the response to the evidence provided by the audit logs of the suitability of the current provision. [\(The evidence might show a large number of requests to remove the filtering from sites – in which case schools might question whether their current level of filtering is too restrictive for educational purposes. Alternatively, a large number of incidents where users try to subvert the filtering system might suggest that improved monitoring/disciplinary action might be necessary\).](#)

Further Guidance:

Schools may wish to seek further guidance. The following is recommended:

- NEN Technical guidance: <http://www.nen.gov.uk/e-security-managing-and-maintaining-e-securitycyber-security-in-schools/>
- [NEN –School e-Security Checklist](#)
- [Somerset Technical Guidance for schools](#) – this checklist is particularly useful where a school uses external providers for its technical support/security:
- Prevent duty - schools in England (and Wales) are required “*to ensure children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet in school, including by establishing appropriate levels of filtering*” ([Revised Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales, 2015](#)).
- [Welsh Government - Respect and Resilience - Community Cohesion](#) - Guidance and associated tool to support the development of community cohesion and prevent extremism in schools and other educational settings in Wales.
- In response to the above, the UK Safer Internet Centre produced guidance for schools on “[Appropriate filtering and appropriate monitoring](#)”.

B2 School personal data advice and guidance

Suggestions for use

This document is for advice and guidance purposes only. It is anticipated that schools will use this advice alongside their own data protection policy. This document is not intended to provide legal advice and the school is encouraged to seek their own legal counsel when considering their management of personal data.

The template uses the terms learners to refer to the children or young people at the institution.

School personal data handling

Recent publicity about data breaches suffered by organisations and individuals continues to make the area of personal data protection a current and high profile issue for schools, and other organisations. It is important that the school has a clear and well understood personal data handling policy in order to minimise the risk of personal data breaches. A breach may arise from a theft, a deliberate attack on your systems, the unauthorised or malicious use of personal data by a member of staff, accidental loss, or equipment failure. In addition:

- no school or individual would want to be the cause of a data breach, particularly as the impact of data loss on individuals can be severe, put individuals at risk and affect personal, professional or organisational reputation
- schools are “data rich” and the introduction of electronic storage and transmission of data has created additional potential for the loss of data
- the school will want to avoid the criticism and negative publicity that could be generated by any personal data breach
- the school is subject to a wide range of legislation related to data protection and data use, with significant penalties for failure to observe the relevant legislation
- it is a legal requirement for all schools to have a Data Protection Policy and be able to demonstrate compliance with data protection law.

Schools have always held personal data on the pupils in their care, and increasingly this data is held digitally and accessible not just in school but also from remote locations. It is important to stress that the data protection laws apply to all forms of personal data, regardless of whether it is held on paper or in electronic format. However, as it is part of an overall online safety policy template, this document will place particular emphasis on data which is held or transferred digitally.

Schools will need to carefully review their policy, in the light of pertinent Local Authority regulations and guidance and changes in legislation.

Introduction

Schools and their employees must do everything within their power to ensure the safety and security of any material of a personal or sensitive nature, including personal data.

It is the responsibility of all members of the school community to take care when handling, using or transferring personal data, that it cannot be accessed by anyone who does not:

- have permission to access that data
- need to have access to that data.

Data breaches can have serious effects on individuals and / or institutions concerned, can bring the school into disrepute and may well result in disciplinary action, criminal prosecution and fines imposed by the Information Commissioner. Particularly, all transfer of data is subject to risk of loss or contamination.

Online safety policy template for schools

Anyone who has access to personal data must know, understand and adhere to the relevant school policy which brings together the statutory requirements contained in relevant data protection legislation and relevant regulations and guidance (where relevant from the Local Authority / Parent Organisation).

Legislative Context

With effect from 25th May 2018, the data protection arrangements for the UK changed following the implementation of the European Union General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). This represents a significant shift in legislation and in conjunction with the Data Protection Act 2018 replaces the Data Protection Act 1998. These two documents are intended to be read side-by-side.

The GDPR provides the principles and rights which apply across the European Union. The Data Protection Act 2018 covers the areas outside of the EU GDPR and provides the UK-specific details such as; how to handle education and safeguarding information.

Are schools in Wales required to comply?

In short, yes. Any natural or legal person, public authority, agency or other body which processes personal data is considered a 'data controller'. Given the nature of schools and the personal data required in a variety of forms to operate a school this means that all educational establishments in the UK are required to comply.

Guidance for schools is available on the [Information Commissioner's Office](#) website including information about the new regulations.

Personal Data

The school and its employees will have access to a wide range of personal information and data. The data may be held in a digital format or on paper records. Personal data is information that relates to an identified or identifiable living individual This will include:

- personal information about members of the school community – including learners, members of staff and parents/carers e.g. names, addresses, contact details, legal guardianship contact details, health records, disciplinary records
- curricular / academic data e.g. class lists, learner progress records, reports, references
- professional records e.g. employment history, taxation and national insurance records, appraisal records and references
- any other information that might be disclosed by parents/carers or by other agencies working with families or staff members.

Special categories of personal data

The following is a list of personal data listed in the [GDPR](#) as a 'special category'.

"revealing racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, or trade union membership, and the processing of genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a natural person, data concerning health or data concerning a natural person's sex life or sexual orientation"

In order to lawfully process special category data, you must identify both a [lawful basis](#) and a [separate condition for processing special category data](#). You should decide and document this before you start processing the data.

Consent

Online safety policy template for schools

Consent (which is one of the lawful bases to use data) under the regulation has changed. Consent is defined as:

“in relation to the processing of personal data relating to an individual, means a freely given, specific, informed and unambiguous indication of the individual’s wishes by which the individual, by a statement or by a clear affirmative action, signifies agreement to the processing of the personal data”

This means that where a school is relying on consent as the basis for processing personal data that consent has to be clear, meaning that pre-ticked boxes, opt-out or implied consent are no longer suitable. The GDPR does not specify an age of consent for general processing but schools should consider the capacity of pupils to freely give their informed consent.

The Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) gives clear advice on when it’s appropriate to [use consent](#) as a lawful base. It states:

“Consent is appropriate if you can offer people real choice and control over how you use their data and want to build their trust and engagement. But if you cannot offer a genuine choice, consent is not appropriate. If you would still process the personal data without consent, asking for consent is misleading and inherently unfair.”

You should only use consent if none of the other lawful bases is appropriate. If you do so, you must be able to cope with people saying no (and/or changing their minds), so it’s important that you only use consent for optional extras, rather than for core information the school requires in order to function. Examples;

- consent would be appropriate for considering whether a child's photo could be published in any way.
- if your school or requires learner details to be stored in an MIS, it would not be appropriate to rely on consent if the learner cannot opt out of this. In this case, you could apply the public task lawful base.

Consent is just one of the [six lawful bases](#) for processing data:

1. Consent
2. Contract: the processing is necessary for a contract you have with the individual, or because they have asked you to take specific steps before entering into a contract
3. Legal obligation: the processing is necessary for you to comply with the law
4. Vital interests: the processing is necessary to protect someone’s life
5. Public task: the processing is necessary for you to perform a task in the public interest or for your official functions, and the task or function has a clear basis in law
6. Legitimate interests: processing is necessary for the purposes of the legitimate interests pursued by the controller or by a third party, except where such interests are overridden by the interests or fundamental rights and freedoms of the data subject which require protection of personal data, in particular where the data subject is a child. (This cannot apply if you are a public authority processing data to perform your official tasks).

Previously maintained schools were able to rely on the ‘legitimate interests’ justification. But under the new laws, this has been removed for Public Bodies (which includes schools). However, public bodies should consider using the Public Task lawful base whenever they are undertaking a task that is part of their statutory function.

Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA)

Online safety policy template for schools

Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA) identify and address privacy risks early on in any project so that you can mitigate them before the project goes live.

DPIAs should be carried out by Data Managers (where relevant) under the support and guidance of the DPO. Ideally you should conduct a DPIA before processing activity starts. However, some may need to be retrospective in the early stages of compliance activity.

The risk assessment will involve:

- recognising the risks that are present
- judging the level of the risks (both the likelihood and consequences)
- prioritising the risks.

According to the ICO a DPIA should contain:

- a description of the processing operations and the purpose
- an assessment of the necessity and proportionality of the processing in relation to the purpose
- an assessment of the risks to individuals
- the measures in place to address risk, including security and to demonstrate that you comply.

Or more simply and fully:

- who did you talk to about this?
- what is going to happen with the data and how – collection, storage, usage, disposal
- how much personal data will be handled (number of subjects)
- why you need use personal data in this way
- what personal data (including if it's in a 'special category') are you using
- at what points could the data become vulnerable to a breach (loss, stolen, malicious)
- what are the risks to the rights of the individuals if the data was breached
- what are you going to do in order to reduce the risks of data loss and prove you are compliant with the law.

DPIA is an ongoing process and should be re-visited at least annually to verify that nothing has changed since the processing activity started.

Secure storage of and access to data

The school should ensure that systems are set up so that the existence of protected files is hidden from unauthorised users and that users will be assigned a clearance that will determine which files are accessible to them. Access to protected data will be controlled according to the role of the user. Members of staff will not, as a matter of course, be granted access to the whole management information system.

[Good practice](#) suggests that all users will use strong passwords made up from a combination of simpler words. User passwords must never be shared.

Personal data may only be accessed on machines that are securely protected. Any device that can be used to access personal data must be locked if left (even for very short periods) and set to auto lock if not used for five minutes.

All storage media must be stored in an appropriately secure and safe environment that avoids physical risk, loss or electronic degradation.

Online safety policy template for schools

Personal data should only be stored on school equipment. Private equipment (i.e. owned by the users) must not be used for the storage of school personal data.

When personal data is stored on any portable computer system, USB stick or any other removable media:

- The data must be encrypted and password protected
- The device must be password protected
- The device must offer approved virus and malware checking software
- The data must be securely deleted from the device, in line with school policy once it has been transferred or its use is complete.

The school will need to set its own policy as to whether data storage on removal media is allowed, even if encrypted. Some organisations do not allow storage of personal data on removable devices.

The school should have a clear policy and procedures for the automatic backing up, accessing and restoring of all data held on school systems, including off-site backups.

The school should have clear policy and procedures for the use of “Cloud Based Storage Systems” (for example Dropbox, Microsoft 365, Google Drive) and is aware that data held in remote and cloud storage is still required to be protected in line with the Data Protection Act. The school will ensure that it is satisfied with controls put in place by remote / cloud based data services providers to protect the data.

As a Data Controller, the school is responsible for the security of any data passed to a “third party”. Data Protection clauses must be included in all contracts where personal data is likely to be passed to a third party.

All paper based personal data must be held in lockable storage, whether on or off site.

Secure transfer of data and access out of school

The school recognises that personal data may be accessed by users out of school or transferred to the local authority or other agencies. In these circumstances:

- Users may not remove or copy sensitive or restricted or protected personal data from the school or authorised premises without permission and unless the media is encrypted and password protected and is transported securely for storage in a secure location
- Users must take particular care that computers or removable devices which contain personal data must not be accessed by other users (e.g. family members) when out of school
- When restricted or protected personal data is required by an authorised user from outside the organisation’s premises (for example, by a member of staff to work from their home), they should preferably have secure remote access to the management information system or learning platform
- If secure remote access is not possible, users must only remove or copy personal or sensitive data from the organisation or authorised premises if the storage media, portable or mobile device is encrypted and is transported securely for storage in a secure location
- Users must protect all portable and mobile devices, including media, used to store and transmit personal information using approved encryption software
- Particular care should be taken if data is taken or transferred to another country, particularly outside Europe, and advice should be taken from the local authority (if relevant) in this event.

Online safety policy template for schools

Disposal of data

The school should implement a document retention schedule that defines the length of time data is held before secure destruction. The Information and Records Management Society [Toolkit for schools](#) provides support for this process. The school must ensure the safe destruction of personal data when it is no longer required.

The disposal of personal data, in either paper or electronic form, must be conducted in a way that makes reconstruction highly unlikely. Electronic files must be securely disposed of, and other media must be shredded, incinerated or otherwise disintegrated.

A Destruction Log should be kept of all data that is disposed of. The log should include the document ID, classification, date of destruction, method and authorisation.

Audit Logging / Reporting / Incident Handling

In the GDPR, organisations are required to keep records of processing activity. This must include:

- the name and contact details of the data controller
- where applicable, the name and contact details of the joint controller and data protection officer
- the purpose of the processing
- to whom the data has been/will be disclosed
- description of data subject and personal data
- where relevant the countries it has been transferred to
- under which condition for processing the data has been collected
- under what lawful basis processing is being carried out
- where necessary, how it is retained and destroyed
- a general description of the technical and organisational security measures.

Clearly, in order to maintain these records good auditing processes must be followed, both at the start of the exercise and on-going throughout the lifetime of the requirement. Therefore, audit logs will need to be kept to:

- provide evidence of the processing activity and the DPIA
- record where, how and to whom data has been shared
- log the disposal and destruction of the data
- enable the school to target training at the most at-risk data
- record any breaches that impact on the data

Data Breaches

From 25 May 2018, if you experience a personal data breach you need to consider whether this poses a risk to people. You need to consider the likelihood and severity of any risk to people's rights and freedoms, following the breach. When you've made this assessment, if it's likely there will be a risk then you must notify the ICO; if it's unlikely then you don't have to report it. You do not need to report every breach to the ICO.

A personal data breach means a breach of security leading to the accidental or unlawful destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure of, or access to, personal data. This includes breaches that are the result of both accidental and deliberate causes. It also means that a breach is more than just about losing personal data.

The school should have a policy for reporting, logging, managing and recovering from information risk incidents, which establishes a:

- "responsible person" for each incident

Online safety policy template for schools

- communications plan, including escalation procedure
- plan of action for rapid resolution
- plan of action of non-recurrence and further awareness raising

All significant [data protection incidents must be reported](#) through the DPO to the Information Commissioner's Office based upon the local incident handling policy and communication plan. The new laws require that this notification should take place within 72 hours of the breach being detected, where feasible.

Data Mapping

The process of data mapping is designed to help schools identify with whom their data is being shared in order that the appropriate contractual arrangements can be implemented. If a third party is processing personal data on your behalf about your learners then this processor has obligations on behalf of the school to ensure that processing takes place in compliance with data protection laws.

Data subject's right of access

Data subjects have a number of rights in connection with their personal data. They have the right:

- to be informed – Privacy Notices
- of access – Subject Access Requests
- to rectification – correcting errors
- to erasure – deletion of data when there is no compelling reason to keep it
- to restrict processing – blocking or suppression of processing
- to portability – Unlikely to be used in a school context
- to object – objection based on grounds pertaining to their situation
- related to automated decision making, including profiling

Several of these could impact schools, such as the right of access. You need to put procedures in place to deal with [Subject Access Requests](#). These are written or verbal requests to see all or a part of the personal data held by the Controller in connection with the individual. Controllers normally have 1 calendar month to provide the information, unless the case is unusually complex in which case an extension can be obtained.

Individuals have the right to know:

- if the Controller holds personal data about them
- a description of that data
- the purpose for which the data is processed
- the sources of that data
- to whom the data may be disclosed
- a copy of all the personal data that is held about them.

A school must not disclose

- if doing so would cause serious harm to the individual
- child abuse data
- adoption records
- statements of special educational needs

Online safety policy template for schools

Your school or must provide the information free of charge. However, if the request is clearly unfounded or excessive – and especially if this is a repeat request – you may charge a reasonable fee.

Fee

The school should pay the relevant fee to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

Responsibilities

Every maintained school is required to appoint a Data Protection Officer as a core function of 'the business'

The Data Protection Officer (DPO) can be internally or externally appointed.

They must have:

- expert knowledge
- timely and proper involvement in all issues relating to data protection
- the necessary resources to fulfil the role
- access to the necessary personal data processing operations
- a direct reporting route to the highest management level

The data controller must:

- not give the DPO instructions regarding the performance of tasks
- ensure that the DPO does not perform a duty or role that would lead to a conflict of interests
- not dismiss or penalise the DPO for performing the tasks required of them

As a minimum a Data Protection Officer must:

- inform, as necessary, the controller, a processor or an employee of their obligations under the data protection laws
- provide advice on a data protection impact assessment
- co-operate with the Information Commissioner
- act as the contact point for the Information Commissioner
- monitor compliance with policies of the controller in relation to the protection of personal data
- monitor compliance by the controller with data protection laws

The school may also wish to appoint a Data Manager. Schools are encouraged to separate this role from that of Data Protection Officer, where possible. This person will keep up to date with current legislation and guidance and will:

- determine and take responsibility for the school's information risk policy and risk assessment
- oversee the System Controllers

The school may also wish to appoint System Controllers for the various types of data being held (e.g. learner information / staff information / assessment data etc.). These Controllers will manage and address risks to the information and will understand:

- what information is held, for how long and for what purpose
- how information has been amended or added to over time, and
- who has access to the data and why.

Online safety policy template for schools

Everyone in the school has the responsibility of handling protected or sensitive data in a safe and secure manner.

Governors are required to comply fully with this policy in the event that they have access to personal data, when engaged in their role as a Governor (either in the school or elsewhere if on school business).

Training & awareness

All staff must receive data handling awareness / data protection training and will be made aware of their responsibilities. This should be undertaken regularly. You can do this through:

- Induction training for new staff
- Staff meetings / briefings / INSET
- Day to day support and guidance from System Controllers

Freedom of Information Act

All schools must have a Freedom of Information Policy which sets out how it will deal with FOI requests. FOI aims to increase transparency and accountability in public sector organisations as part of a healthy democratic process. Whilst FOI requests are submitted by an individual, the issue is for the school to consider whether the requested information should be released into the public domain. FOI links to data protection law whenever a request includes personal data. Good advice would encourage the school to:

- delegate to the Headteacher day-to-day responsibility for FOI policy and the provision of advice, guidance, publicity and interpretation of the school's policy
- consider designating an individual with responsibility for FOI, to provide a single point of reference, coordinate FOI and related policies and procedures, take a view on possibly sensitive areas and consider what information and training staff may need
- consider arrangements for overseeing access to information and delegation to the appropriate governing body
- proactively publish information with details of how it can be accessed through a Publication Scheme (see Model Publication Scheme below) and review this annually
- ensure that a well-managed records management and information system exists in order to comply with requests
- ensure a record of refusals and reasons for refusals is kept, allowing the school to review its access policy on an annual basis

Model Publication Scheme

The Information Commissioner's Office provides schools and organisations with a [model publication scheme](#) which they should complete. The school's publication scheme should be reviewed annually.

The ICO produce [guidance on the model publication scheme](#) for schools. This is designed to support schools complete the [Guide to Information for Schools](#).

Information to Parents/carers – the Privacy Notice

In order to comply with the fair processing requirements in data protection law, the school will inform parents/carers of all learners of the data they collect, process and hold on the learners, the purposes for which the data is held and the third parties (e.g. LA etc.) to whom it may be passed. This privacy notice will be passed to parents/carers for example in the prospectus, newsletters, reports or a specific letter / communication or you could publish it on your website and keep it updated there. Parents/carers of young people who are new to the school will be provided with the privacy notice through an appropriate mechanism.

Online safety policy template for schools

Parental permission for use of cloud hosted services

Schools that use cloud hosting services are advised to seek appropriate consent to set up an account for learners.

Use of Biometric Information

Biometric information is special category data. The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, included measures that affect schools that use biometric recognition systems, such as fingerprint identification and facial scanning:

- For all pupils in schools under 18, they must obtain the written consent of a parent before they take and process their child's biometric data
- They must treat the data with appropriate care and must comply with data protection principles as set out in the Data Protection Act
- They must provide alternative means for accessing services where a parent or pupil has refused consent

[New advice](#) to schools makes it clear that they are not able to use pupils' biometric data without parental consent. Schools may wish to incorporate the parental permission procedures into revised consent processes. (see [Appendix A4 Parent / Carer Acceptable Use Agreement](#))

Privacy and Electronic Communications

Schools should be aware that they are subject to the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations in the operation of their websites.

B3 School Mobile Technologies Policy Template (inc. BYOD/BYOT)

Mobile technology devices may be a school owned/provided or privately owned smartphone, tablet, notebook / laptop or other technology that usually has the capability of utilising the school's wireless network. The device then has access to the wider internet which may include the school's learning platform and other cloud based services such as email and data storage.

The key to considering the use of mobile technologies is that the learners, staff and wider school community understand that the primary purpose of having their personal device at school is educational and that this is irrespective of whether the device is school owned/provided or personally owned. The mobile technologies policy should sit alongside a range of policies including but not limited to the safeguarding policy, anti-bullying

Online safety policy template for schools

policy, acceptable use agreement, policies around theft or malicious damage and the behaviour policy. Teaching about the safe and appropriate use of mobile technologies should be included in the online safety education programme.

A policy that completely prohibits pupil/student, staff or visitors from bringing mobile technologies to the school/academy could be considered to be unreasonable and unrealistic for school/academy to achieve. For example, many parents/carers would also be concerned for health and safety reasons if their child were not allowed to carry a mobile phone and many staff and visitors use mobile phones to stay in touch with family. Contractors require mobile technologies for legitimate business reasons.

Potential benefits of mobile technologies

Research has highlighted the widespread uptake of mobile technologies amongst adults and children of all ages. Web-based tools and resources have changed the landscape of learning. Learners now have at their fingertips unlimited access to digital content, resources, experts, databases and communities of interest. By effectively maximizing the use of such resources, schools not only have the opportunity to deepen learning, but they can also develop digital literacy, fluency and citizenship in learners that will prepare them for the high-tech world in which they will live, learn and work.

For further reading, please refer to the “ NEN Technical Strategy Guidance Note 5 – Bring your own device” - <http://www.nen.gov.uk/bring-your-own-device-byod/>

Considerations

There are a number of issues and risks to consider when implementing mobile technologies, these include; security risks in allowing connections to your school network, filtering of personal devices, breakages and insurance, access to devices for all learners, avoiding potential classroom distraction, network connection speeds, types of devices, charging facilities, total cost of ownership

Schools may consider implementing the use of mobile technologies as a means of reducing expenditure on school provided devices. However, it is important to remember that the increased network management costs and overheads involved in implementing this properly are likely to counterbalance or outweigh any savings.

The use of mobile technologies brings both real benefits and challenges for the whole school community – including teachers - and the only effective way for a school to implement these successfully is to involve the whole school community from the outset. Before the school embarks on this path, the risks and benefits must be clearly identified and shared with all stakeholders.

[A range of mobile technology implementations is possible. Schools should consider the following statements and remove those that do not apply to their planned implementation approach.](#)

- **The school has addressed broadband performance and capacity to ensure that core educational and administrative activities are not negatively affected by the increase in the number of connected devices**
- **The school has provided technical solutions for the safe use of mobile technology for school devices and for personal devices**
- **For all mobile technologies, filtering will be applied to the school internet connection and attempts to bypass this are not permitted**
- **Where mobile broadband (e.g. 3G and 4G) use is allowed in the school, users are required to follow the same acceptable use requirements as they would if using school owned devices.**
- **Mobile technologies must only be used in accordance with the law**
- **Mobile technologies are not permitted to be used in certain areas within the school site such as changing rooms, toilets and swimming pools.**
- **Learners will be educated in the safe and appropriate use of mobile technologies as part of the online safety curriculum**
- The school Acceptable Use Agreements for staff, learners, parents and carers will give consideration to the use of mobile technologies

Online safety policy template for schools

- The school allows: (the school should complete the table below to indicate which devices are allowed and define their access to school systems)

	School Devices			Personal Devices		
	School owned and allocated to a single user	School owned for use by multiple users	Authorised device ⁹	Pupil/Student owned	Staff owned	Visitor owned
Allowed in school	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes / No ¹⁰	Yes / No ¹⁰	Yes / No ¹⁰
Full network access	Yes	Yes	Yes			
Internet only						
No network access						

School devices

- All school devices are controlled through the use of mobile device management (MDM) software
- Appropriate access control is applied to all mobile devices according to the requirements of the user (e.g internet only access, network access allowed, shared folder network access)
- All school devices must be suitably protected via a passcode/password/pin (and encryption where relevant). Those devices allocated to members of staff must only be accessed and used by members of staff
- Appropriate exit processes are implemented for devices no longer used at a school location or by an authorised user. These may include; revoking the link between MDM software and the device, removing proxy settings, ensuring no sensitive data is removed from the network, uninstalling school-licensed software etc.
- The software/apps originally installed by the school must remain on the school owned device in usable condition and be easily accessible at all times. From time to time the school may add software applications for use in a particular lesson. Periodic checks of devices will be made to ensure that users have not removed required apps
- The school will ensure that school devices contain the necessary apps for school work. Apps added by the school will remain their property and will not be accessible to learners on authorised devices once they leave the school roll. Any apps bought by the user on their own account will remain theirs
- The school is responsible for keeping devices up to date through software, security and app updates. The device is virus protected and should not be capable of passing on infections to the network. Where user intervention or support for this process is required, this will be made clear to the user
- School devices are provided to support learning. It is expected that learners will bring devices to school as required
- The changing of settings (exceptions include personal settings such as font size, brightness, etc.) that would stop the device working as it was originally set up and intended is not permitted

⁹ Authorised device – purchased by the pupil/family through a school-organised scheme. This device may be given full access to the network as if it were owned by the school

¹⁰ The school should add below any specific requirements about the use of personal devices in school, e.g. storing in a secure location, use during the school day, liability, taking images etc

Online safety policy template for schools

- *All school devices are subject to routine monitoring*
- *Pro-active monitoring has been implemented to monitor activity ([details should be added here](#))*

Personal devices

It is for the school to decide whether/or/not personal devices are permitted on school/academy premises and should clearly communicate this in their policies and acceptable use agreements.

Where the school is located in a position with a good 3G/4G signal, the school should provide guidance on the usage of this internet connectivity given that devices using these connections will not be covered by the normal school filtering. Schools should be aware that it is illegal to block (without an appropriate Ofcom licence) telephone/wireless signals.

When personal devices are permitted:

- *all personal devices are restricted through the implementation of technical solutions that provide appropriate levels of filtered network access*
- *personal devices are brought into the school entirely at the risk of the owner and the decision to bring the device in to the school lies with the user (and their parents/carers) as does the liability for any loss or damage resulting from the use of the device in the school*
- *staff personal devices should not be used to contact learners or their families, nor should they be used to take images of learners*
- *the school accepts no responsibility or liability in respect of lost, stolen or damaged devices while at the school or on activities organised or undertaken by the school (the school recommends insurance is purchased to cover that device whilst out of the home)*
- *the school accepts no responsibility for any malfunction of a device due to changes made to the device while on the school network or whilst resolving any connectivity issues*
- *the school recommends that the devices are made easily identifiable and have a protective case to help secure them as the devices are moved around the school. Pass-codes or PINs should be set on personal devices to aid security*
- *the school is not responsible for the day to day maintenance or upkeep of the user's personal device such as the charging of any device, the installation of software updates or the resolution of hardware issues*
- *personal devices should be charged before being brought to the school as the charging of personal devices is not permitted during the school day*

User behaviour

Users are expected to act responsibly, safely and respectfully in line with current acceptable use agreements, in addition;

- **the sending of abusive or inappropriate messages or content via mobile phones or personal devices is forbidden by any member of the community and any breaches will be dealt with as part of the discipline/behaviour policy**
- **guidance is made available by the school to users concerning where and when mobile devices may be used ([the school will need to decide this](#))**
- **devices may not be used in tests or exams**
- **users are responsible for keeping their device up to date through software, security and app updates. The device is virus protected and should not be capable of passing on infections to the network**
- **users are responsible for charging their own devices and for protecting and looking after their devices while in the school**

Online safety policy template for schools

- **devices must be in silent mode on the school site and on school buses**
- **users should be mindful of the age limits for app purchases and use and should ensure they read the terms and conditions before use.**
- **learners must only photograph people with their permission and must only take pictures or videos that are required for a task or activity. All unnecessary images or videos will be deleted immediately**
- *devices may be used in lessons in accordance with teacher direction*
- *staff owned devices should not be used for personal purposes during teaching sessions, except in emergency situations*
- *printing from personal devices will not be possible*

Visitors

Visitors should be provided with information about how, where and when they are permitted to use mobile technology on the site, in line with local safeguarding arrangements. They should also be informed about the school policy on taking images.

Residential settings

Where a school has residential provision it should consider how they might balance the needs of keeping young people safe when using digital technologies and protecting the school with the importance of young people being able to communicate with friends and family and engage in appropriate online activities in a similar way to their peers in non-residential settings. The school should provide suitable statements within this policy and/or in acceptable use agreements

Similar consideration should be given to how and when learners may access digital technologies if engaged in residential activities away from the site.

Insurance

Schools that have implemented an authorised device approach (1:1 deployment) may wish to consider how they will insure these devices and should include details of the claims process in this policy.

B4 Social Media Template Policy

Social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) is a broad term for any kind of online platform which enables people to directly interact with each other. However some games, for example Minecraft or World of Warcraft and video sharing platforms such as You Tube have social media elements to them.

The school recognises the numerous benefits and opportunities which a social media presence offers. Staff, parents and carers and learners are actively encouraged to find creative ways to use social media. However, there are some risks associated with social media use, especially around the issues of safeguarding, bullying and personal reputation. This policy aims to encourage the safe use of social media by the school its staff, parents and carers and learners.

Scope

This policy is subject to the school's codes of conduct and acceptable use agreements.

This policy:

- applies to all staff and to all online communications which directly or indirectly, represent the school
- applies to such online communications posted at any time and from anywhere
- encourages the safe and responsible use of social media through training and education
- *defines the monitoring of public social media activity pertaining to the school*

The school respects privacy and understands that staff and learners may use social media forums in their private lives. However, personal communications likely to have a negative impact on professional standards and/or the school's reputation are within the scope of this policy.

Professional communications are those made through official channels, posted on a school account or using the school name. All professional communications are within the scope of this policy.

Personal communications are those made via a personal social media accounts. In all cases, where a personal account is used which associates itself with, or impacts on the school, it must be made clear that the member of staff is not communicating on behalf of the school with an appropriate disclaimer. Such personal communications are within the scope of this policy.

Personal communications which do not refer to or impact upon the school are outside the scope of this policy.

Digital communications with learners are also considered. Staff may use social media to communicate with learners via a school social media account for teaching and learning purposes but must consider whether this is appropriate and consider the potential implications.

Organisational control

Roles & Responsibilities

- Senior Leadership Team (SLT)
 - facilitating training and guidance on Social Media use
 - developing and implementing the Social Media policy
 - taking a lead role in investigating any reported incidents
 - making an initial assessment when an incident is reported and involving appropriate staff and external agencies as required
 - receive completed applications for Social Media accounts
 - approve account creation
- Administrator / Moderator
 - create the account following SLT approval
 - store account details, including passwords securely
 - be involved in monitoring and contributing to the account

Online safety policy template for schools

- control the process for managing an account after the lead staff member has left the school (closing or transferring)
- Staff
 - know the contents of and ensure that any use of social media is carried out in line with this and other relevant policies
 - attending appropriate training
 - regularly monitoring, updating and managing content he/she has posted via school accounts
 - adding an appropriate disclaimer to personal accounts when naming the school

Managing accounts

- Process for creating new accounts

The school community is encouraged to consider if a social media account will help them in their work, eg a history department Twitter account, or a “Friends of the school” Facebook page. Anyone wishing to create such an account must present a business case to the school Senior Leadership Team which covers the following points:-

 - the aim of the account
 - the intended audience
 - how the account will be promoted
 - who will run the account (at least two staff members should be named)
 - will the account be open or private/closed

Following consideration by the SLT an application will be approved or rejected. In all cases, the SLT must be satisfied that anyone running a social media account on behalf of the school has read and understood this policy and received appropriate training. This also applies to anyone who is not directly employed by the school, including volunteers or parents.

Monitoring

- **School accounts must be monitored regularly and frequently** (preferably 7 days a week, including during holidays). Any comments, queries or complaints made through those accounts must be responded to within 24 hours (or on the next working day if received at a weekend) even if the response is only to acknowledge receipt. Regular monitoring and intervention is essential in case a situation arises where bullying or any other inappropriate behaviour arises on a school social media account.

Behaviour

- **The school requires that all users using social media adhere to the standard of behaviour as set out in this policy and other relevant policies.**
- **Digital communications by staff must be professional and respectful at all times and in accordance with this policy.** Staff will not use social media to infringe on the rights and privacy of others or make ill-considered comments or judgments about staff. School social media accounts must not be used for personal gain. Staff must ensure that confidentiality is maintained on social media even after they leave the employment of the school.
- Users must declare who they are in social media posts or accounts. Anonymous posts are discouraged in relation to school activity.
- If a journalist makes contact about posts made using social media staff must follow the school media policy before responding.
- Unacceptable conduct, (e.g. defamatory, discriminatory, offensive, harassing content or a breach of data protection, confidentiality, copyright) will be considered extremely seriously by the school and will be reported as soon as possible to a relevant senior member of staff, and escalated where appropriate.
- The use of social media by staff while at work may be monitored, in line with school policies. *The school permits reasonable and appropriate access to private social media sites. However, where excessive use is suspected, and considered to be interfering with relevant duties, disciplinary action may be taken*

Online safety policy template for schools

- The school will take appropriate action in the event of breaches of the social media policy. Where conduct is found to be unacceptable, the school will deal with the matter internally. Where conduct is considered illegal, the school will report the matter to the police and other relevant external agencies and may take action according to the disciplinary policy.

Legal considerations

- Users of social media should consider the copyright of the content they are sharing and, where necessary, should seek permission from the copyright holder before sharing.
- Users must ensure that their use of social media does not infringe upon relevant data protection laws, or breach confidentiality.

Handling abuse

- When acting on behalf of the school, handle offensive comments swiftly and with sensitivity.
- If a conversation turns and becomes offensive or unacceptable, school users should block, report or delete other users or their comments/posts and should inform the audience exactly why the action was taken
- If you feel that you or someone else is subject to abuse by colleagues through use of a social networking site, then this action must be reported using the agreed school protocols.

Tone

- The tone of content published on social media should be appropriate to the audience, whilst retaining appropriate levels of professional standards. Key words to consider when composing messages are:
 - engaging
 - conversational
 - informative
- friendly (on certain platforms, eg. Facebook)

Use of images

- School use of images can be assumed to be acceptable, providing the following guidelines are strictly adhered to.
- **permission to use any photos or video recordings should be sought in line with the school's digital and video images policy.** If anyone, for any reason, asks not to be filmed or photographed then their wishes should be respected
- **under no circumstances should staff share or upload learner pictures online other than via school owned social media accounts**
- staff should exercise their professional judgement about whether an image is appropriate to share on school social media accounts. Students should be appropriately dressed, not be subject to ridicule and must not be on any school list of children whose images must not be published
- if a member of staff inadvertently takes a compromising picture which could be misconstrued or misused, they must delete it immediately.

Personal use

Staff

- personal communications are those made via a personal social media accounts. In all cases, where a personal account is used which associates itself with, or impacts on, the school, it must be made clear that the member of staff is not communicating on behalf of the school with an appropriate disclaimer. Such personal communications are within the scope of this policy
- personal communications which do not refer to or impact upon the school are outside the scope of this policy
- where excessive personal use of social media in the school is suspected, and considered to be interfering with relevant duties, disciplinary action may be taken
- *the school permits reasonable and appropriate access to private social media sites.*

Online safety policy template for schools

Pupil/Students

- staff are not permitted to follow or engage with current or prior learners of the school on any personal social media network account
- the school's education programme should enable the learners to be safe and responsible users of social media
- learners are encouraged to comment or post appropriately about the school. Any offensive or inappropriate comments will be resolved by the use of the school's behaviour policy

Parents/Carers

- if parents/carers have access to a school learning platform where posting or commenting is enabled, parents/carers will be informed about acceptable use
- the school has an active parent and carer education programme which supports the safe and positive use of social media. This includes information on the website
- parents and carers are encouraged to comment or post appropriately about the school. In the event of any offensive or inappropriate comments being made, the school will ask the parent/carer to remove the post and invite them to discuss the issues in person. If necessary, refer parents to the school's complaints procedures.

Monitoring posts about the school

- as part of active social media engagement, it is considered good practice to pro-actively monitor the Internet for public postings about the school
- the school should effectively respond to social media comments made by others according to a defined policy or process.

Appendix

Managing your personal use of Social Media:

- "nothing" on social media is truly private
- social media can blur the lines between your professional and private life. Don't use the school logo and/or branding on personal accounts
- check your settings regularly and test your privacy
- keep an eye on your digital footprint
- keep your personal information private
- regularly review your connections – keep them to those you want to be connected to
- when posting online consider; Scale, Audience and Permanency of what you post
- if you want to criticise, do it politely
- take control of your images – do you want to be tagged in an image? What would children or parents say about you if they could see your images?
- know how to report a problem

Managing school social media accounts

The Do's

- Check with a senior leader before publishing content that may have controversial implications for the school
- use a disclaimer when expressing personal views
- make it clear who is posting content
- use an appropriate and professional tone
- be respectful to all parties
- ensure you have permission to 'share' other peoples' materials and acknowledge the author
- express opinions but do so in a balanced and measured manner
- think before responding to comments and, when in doubt, get a second opinion
- seek advice and report any mistakes using the school's reporting process
- consider turning off tagging people in images where possible

Online safety policy template for schools

The Don'ts

- Don't make comments, post content or link to materials that will bring the school into disrepute
- don't publish confidential or commercially sensitive material
- don't breach copyright, data protection or other relevant legislation
- consider the appropriateness of content for any audience of school accounts, and don't link to, embed or add potentially inappropriate content
- don't post derogatory, defamatory, offensive, harassing or discriminatory content
- don't use social media to air internal grievances

B5 School policy template - Online safety group terms of reference

1. PURPOSE

To provide a consultative group that has wide representation from the school community, with responsibility for issues regarding online safety and the monitoring the online safety policy including the impact of initiatives. [Depending on the size or structure of the school this group may be part of the safeguarding group. The group will also be responsible for regular reporting to the full governing body.](#)

2. MEMBERSHIP

2.1 The online safety group will seek to include representation from all stakeholders.

The composition of the group should include (n.b. in small schools one member of staff may hold more than one of these posts): [add/delete where appropriate]

- Senior Leadership Team (SLT) member/s
- safeguarding officer
- teaching staff member
- support staff member
- online safety co-ordinator (not ICT coordinator by default)
- governor
- parent/carer
- technical support staff (where possible)
- community users (where appropriate)
- *learner representation* – for advice and feedback. *Learner voice is essential in the make up of the online safety group, but learners would only be expected to take part in meetings where deemed relevant.*

2.2 Other people may be invited to attend the meetings at the request of the Chairperson on behalf of the group to provide advice and assistance where necessary

2.3 Group members must declare a conflict of interest if any incidents being discussed directly involve themselves or members of their families.

2.4 Group members must be aware that many issues discussed by this group could be of a sensitive or confidential nature

2.5 When individual members feel uncomfortable about what is being discussed they should be allowed to leave the meeting with steps being made by the other members to allow for these sensitivities

Online safety policy template for schools

3. CHAIRPERSON

The group should select a suitable chairperson from within the group. Their responsibilities include:

- scheduling meetings and notifying group members
- inviting other people to attend meetings when required by the group
- guiding the meeting according to the agenda and time available
- ensuring all discussion items end with a decision, action or definite outcome
- making sure that notes are taken at the meetings and that these with any action points are distributed as necessary

4. DURATION OF MEETINGS

Meetings shall be held [insert frequency] for a period of [insert number] hour(s). A special or extraordinary meeting may be called when and if deemed necessary.

5. FUNCTIONS

These are to assist the online safety co-ordinator (or other relevant person) with the following: [add/delete where relevant]

- to keep up to date with new developments in the area of online safety
- to (at least) annually review and develop the online safety policy in line with new technologies and incidents
- to monitor the delivery and impact of the online safety policy
- to monitor the log of reported online safety incidents (anonymous) to inform future areas of teaching/learning/training.
- to co-ordinate consultation with the whole school community to ensure stakeholders are up to date with information, training and/or developments in the area of online safety. This could be carried out through[add/delete as relevant]:
 - staff meetings
 - learner forums (for advice and feedback)
 - governors meetings
 - surveys/questionnaires for learners, parents/carers and staff
 - parents evenings
 - website/learning platform/newsletters
 - online safety events
 - Internet Safety Day (annually held on the second Tuesday in February)
 - other methods
- to ensure that monitoring is carried out of Internet sites used across the school (if possible)
- to monitor filtering/change control logs (e.g. requests for blocking/unblocking sites).
- to monitor the safe use of data across the [school]
- to monitor incidents involving online bullying for staff and pupils

6. AMENDMENTS

The terms of reference shall be reviewed annually from the date of approval. They may be altered to meet the current needs of all group members, by agreement of the majority

The above Terms of Reference for [insert name of organisation] have been agreed

Signed by (SLT):

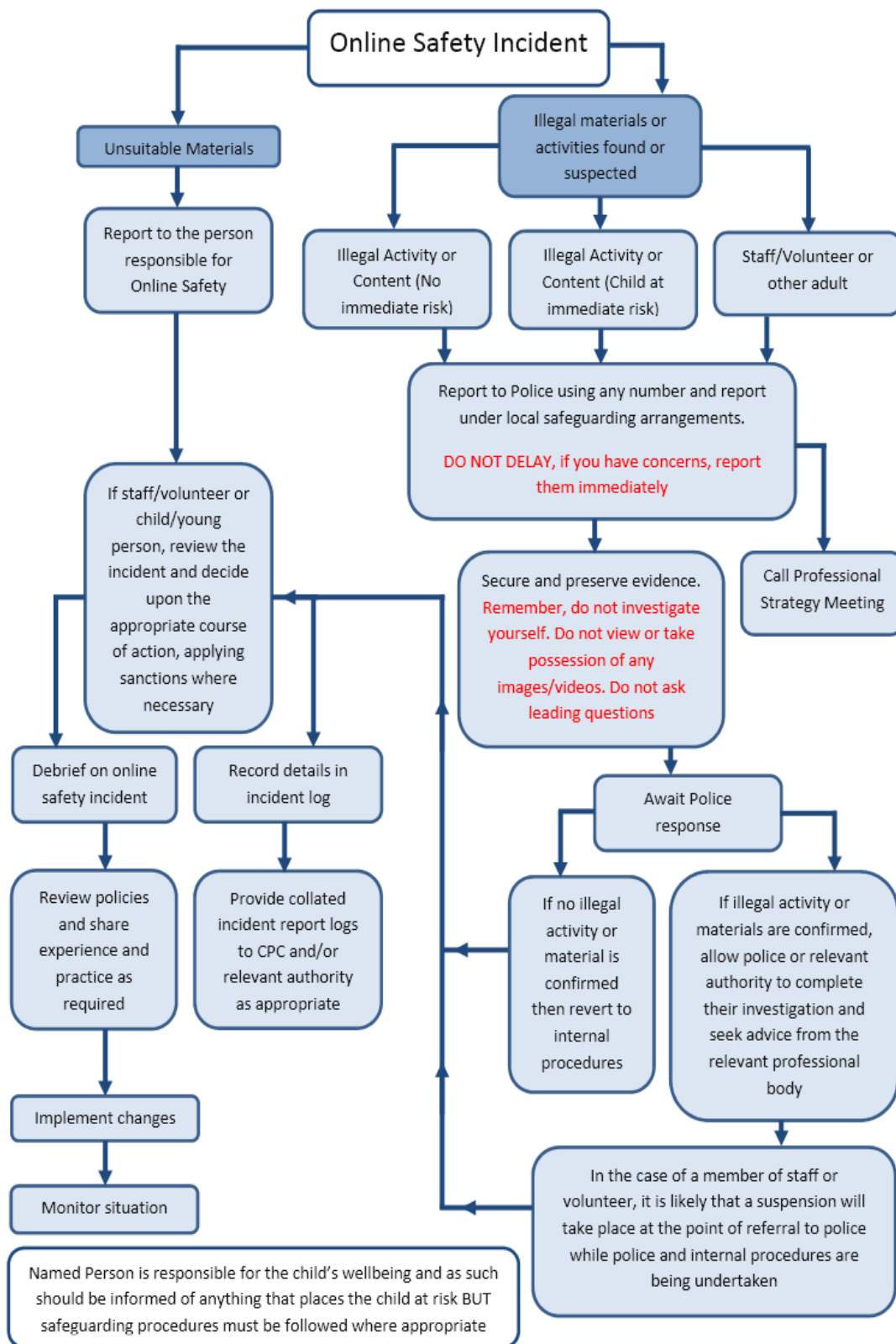
Date:

Date for review:

Acknowledgement

This template terms of reference document is based on one provided to schools by Somerset County Council

C1 Responding to incidents of misuse – flow chart



C2 Record of reviewing devices/internet sites

(responding to incidents of misuse)

Group	
Date	
Reason for investigation	

Details of first reviewing person

Name	
Position	
Signature	

Details of second reviewing person

Name	
Position	
Signature	

Name and location of computer used for review (for web sites)

--

Web site(s) address/device

Reason for concern

Web site(s) address/device	Reason for concern

Conclusion and action proposed or taken

C3 Reporting Log Template

Group:

Date	Time	Incident	Action Taken		Incident Reported By	Signature
			What?	By Whom?		

C4 Training Needs Audit Log Template

Group:

Relevant training the last 12 months	Identified Training Need	To be met by	Cost	Review Date		

C5 Summary of Legislation

Schools should be aware of the legislative framework under which this online safety policy template and guidance has been produced. It is important to note that in general terms an action that is illegal if committed offline is also illegal if committed online.

It is recommended that legal advice is sought in the advent of an online safety issue or situation.

Computer Misuse Act 1990

This Act makes it an offence to:

- erase or amend data or programs without authority;
- obtain unauthorised access to a computer;
- “eavesdrop” on a computer;
- make unauthorised use of computer time or facilities;
- maliciously corrupt or erase data or programs;
- deny access to authorised users.

Data Protection Act 2018

Controls how personal information is used by organisations, businesses or the government. The Data Protection Act 2018 is the UK’s implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Everyone responsible for using personal data has to follow strict rules called ‘data protection principles’. They must make sure the information is:

- used fairly, lawfully and transparently
- used for specified, explicit purposes
- used in a way that is adequate, relevant and limited to only what is necessary
- accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date
- kept for no longer than is necessary
- handled in a way that ensures appropriate security, including protection against unlawful or unauthorised processing, access, loss, destruction or damage

There is stronger legal protection for more sensitive information, such as:

- race
- ethnic background
- political opinions
- religious beliefs
- trade union membership
- genetics
- biometrics (where used for identification)
- health
- sex life or orientation

Your rights

Under the Data Protection Act 2018, you have the right to find out what information the government and other organisations store about you. These include the right to:

- be informed about how your data is being used
- access personal data
- have incorrect data updated
- have data erased
- stop or restrict the processing of your data
- data portability (allowing you to get and reuse your data for different services)
- object to how your data is processed in certain circumstances

You also have rights when an organisation is using your personal data for:

- automated decision-making processes (without human involvement)
- profiling, for example to predict your behaviour or interests

Freedom of Information Act 2000

The Freedom of Information Act gives individuals the right to request information held by public authorities. All public authorities and companies wholly owned by public authorities have obligations under the Freedom of Information Act. When responding to requests, they have to follow a number of set procedures.

Communications Act 2003

Sending by means of the Internet a message or other matter that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character; or sending a false message by means of or persistently making use of the Internet for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety is guilty of an offence liable, on conviction, to imprisonment. This wording is important because an offence is complete as soon as the message has been sent: there is no need to prove any intent or purpose.

Malicious Communications Act 1988

It is an offence to send an indecent, grossly offensive, or threatening letter, electronic communication or other article to another person. It is also an offence to send information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.

Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000

It is an offence for any person to intentionally and without lawful authority intercept any communication. Where the system controller has given express consent monitoring or keeping a record of any form of electronic communications is permitted, in order to:

- establish the facts
- ascertain compliance with regulatory or self-regulatory practices or procedures
- demonstrate standards, which are or ought to be achieved by persons using the system
- investigate or detect unauthorised use of the communications system
- prevent or detect crime or in the interests of national security
- ensure the effective operation of the system
- monitoring but not recording is also permissible in order to
- ascertain whether the communication is business or personal
- protect or support help line staff

Trade Marks Act 1994

This provides protection for Registered Trade Marks, which can be any symbol (words, shapes or images) that are associated with a particular set of goods or services. Registered Trade Marks must not be used without permission. This can also arise from using a Mark that is confusingly similar to an existing Mark.

Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988

It is an offence to copy all, or a substantial part of a copyright work. There are, however, certain limited user permissions, such as fair dealing, which means under certain circumstances permission is not needed to copy small amounts for non-commercial research or private study. The Act also provides for Moral Rights, whereby authors can sue if their name is not included in a work they wrote, or if the work has been amended in such a way as to impugn their reputation. Copyright covers materials in print and electronic form, and includes words, images, and sounds, moving images, TV broadcasts and other media (e.g. You Tube).

Criminal Justice & Public Order Act 1994/Public Order Act 1986

This defines a criminal offence of intentional harassment, which covers all forms of harassment, including sexual. A person is guilty of an offence if, with intent to cause a person harassment, alarm or distress, they:

- use threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour, or disorderly behaviour; or
- display any writing, sign or other visible representation, which is threatening, abusive or insulting, thereby causing that or another person harassment, alarm or distress.

Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006/Public Order Act 1986

This Act makes it a criminal offence to threaten people because of their faith, or to stir up religious hatred by displaying, publishing or distributing written material which is threatening. Other laws already protect people from threats based on their race, nationality or ethnic background.

Protection from Harassment Act 1997

A person must not pursue a course of conduct, which amounts to harassment of another, and which he knows or ought to know amounts to harassment of the other. A person whose course of conduct causes another to fear, on at least two occasions, that violence will be used against him is guilty of an offence if he knows or ought to know that his course of conduct will cause the other so to fear on each of those occasions.

Protection of Children Act 1978

It is an offence to take, permit to be taken, make, possess, show, distribute or advertise indecent images of children in the United Kingdom. A child for these purposes is anyone under the age of 18. An image of a child also covers pseudo-photographs (digitally collated or otherwise). A person convicted of such an offence is liable to imprisonment for a term of not more than 10 years, or to a fine or to both.

Sexual Offences Act 2003

A grooming offence is committed if you are over 18 and have communicated with a child under 16 at least twice (including by phone or using the Internet) it is an offence to meet them or travel to meet them anywhere in the world with the intention of committing a sexual offence. Causing a child under 16 to watch a sexual act is illegal, including looking at images such as videos, photos or webcams, for your own gratification. It is also an offence for a person in a position of trust to engage in sexual activity with any person under 18, with whom they are in a position of trust. (Typically, teachers, social workers, health professionals, connexions staff fall in this category of trust). Any sexual intercourse with a child under the age of 13 commits the offence of rape.

Public Order Act 1986

This Act makes it a criminal offence to stir up racial hatred by displaying, publishing or distributing written material which is threatening. Like the Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006 it also makes the possession of inflammatory material with a view of releasing it a criminal offence.

Obscene Publications Act 1959 and 1964

Publishing an "obscene" article is a criminal offence. Publishing includes electronic transmission.

Human Rights Act 1998

This does not deal with any particular issue specifically or any discrete subject area within the law. It is a type of "higher law", affecting all other laws. In the school context, human rights to be aware of include:

- the right to a fair trial
- the right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence
- freedom of thought, conscience and religion
- freedom of expression
- freedom of assembly

- prohibition of discrimination
- the right to education
- the right not to be subjected to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

The school is obliged to respect these rights and freedoms, but should balance them against those rights, duties and obligations, which arise from other relevant legislation.

The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

Requires schools to seek permission from a parent/carer to use Biometric systems

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015

Places a responsibility on schools to participate in work to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism, and challenge extremist ideas that support or are shared by terrorist groups.

C6 Links to other organisations or documents

These may help those who are developing or reviewing an online safety policy.

Welsh Government

- National Online Safety Plan for children and young people in Wales – July 2018
- [Welsh Government - Respect and Resilience - Community Cohesion](#) - Guidance and associated tool to support the development of community cohesion and prevent extremism in schools and other educational settings in Wales.

UK Safer Internet Centre

- [Safer Internet Centre](#)
- [South West Grid for Learning](#)
- [Childnet](#)
- [Professionals Online Safety Helpline](#)
- [Internet Watch Foundation](#)

CEOP

- <http://ceop.police.uk/>
- [ThinkUKnow](#)

Others

- INSAFE - <http://www.saferinternet.org/ww/en/pub/insafe/index.htm>
- UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) - www.education.gov.uk/ukccis
- Netsmartz - <http://www.netsmartz.org/>

Cyberbullying

- Welsh Government – [Anti Bullying Guidance](#)
- Scottish Anti-Bullying Service, Respectme - <http://www.respectme.org.uk/>
- Scottish Government - [Better relationships, better learning, better behaviour](#)
- Anti-Bullying Network - <http://www.antibullying.net/cyberbullying1.htm>
- Cyberbullying.org - <http://www.cyberbullying.org/>

- Enable – EU funded anti-bullying project - <http://enable.eun.org/>

Sexting

- [UKCCIS - Sexting in schools](#) (available in English and Welsh)
- [UKSIC – Responding to and managing sexting incidents](#)

Social Networking

- Digizen – [Social Networking](#)
- [Connectsafely Parents Guide to Facebook](#)
- [UKSIC – Social Media Guides](#)

Curriculum

- [Welsh Government – Digital Competence Framework](#)
- [DCF Professional Learning Needs Tool](#)
- [SWGfL Online Safety Resource \(accessed through Hwb\)](#)
- UKCCIS – [Education for a Connected World- Framework](#)
- Teach Today – www.teachtoday.eu/
- Insafe - [Education Resources](#)

Mobile Devices/BYOD

Cloudlearn Report [Effective practice for schools moving to end locking and blocking](#)

NEN - [Guidance Note - BYOD](#)

Data Protection

[Welsh Government - Information, guidance and templates to support schools in the implementation of our information management strategy \(IMS\) and to ensure biometric data is properly collected and processed.](#)

- Information Commissioners Office:
 - [ICO Guide for Organisations \(general information about Data Protection\)](#)
 - [ICO Guides for Education \(wide range of sector specific guides\)](#)
 - [DfE advice on Cloud software services and the Data Protection Act](#)
 - [ICO Guidance on Bring Your Own Device](#)
 - [ICO Guidance on Cloud Computing](#)
 - [ICO - Guidance we gave to schools - September 2012](#)
 - [IRMS - Records Management Toolkit for Schools](#)
 - [NHS - Caldicott Principles \(information that must be released\)](#)
 - [ICO Guidance on taking photos in schools](#)
 - [Dotkumo - Best practice guide to using photos](#)

Professional Standards/Staff Training

- [General Teaching Council for Wales - The Code of Professional Conduct and Practice](#)
- Kent - Safer Practice with Technology

- [Childnet/TDA - Social Networking - a guide for trainee teachers & NQTs](#)
- [Childnet/TDA - Teachers and Technology - a checklist for trainee teachers & NQTs](#)
- [UK Safer Internet Centre Professionals Online Safety Helpline](#)

Infrastructure/Technical Support

- [Somerset - Questions for Technical Support](#)
- [NEN - Guidance Notes](#)

Working with parents and carers

- [Vodafone Digital Parents Magazine](#)
- [Childnet Webpages for Parents & Carers](#)
- [Get Safe Online - resources for parents](#)
- [Teach Today - resources for parents workshops/education](#)
- [The Digital Universe of Your Children - animated videos for parents \(Insafe\)](#)
- [Cerebra - Learning Disabilities, Autism and Internet Safety - a Parents' Guide](#)
- [Insafe - A guide for parents - education and the new media](#)
- [Internetmatters.org](#)

C7 Glossary of terms

AUA	Acceptable use agreement – see templates earlier in this document
CEOP	Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (part of UK Police, dedicated to protecting children from sexual abuse, providers of the Think U Know programmes.
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
FOSI	Family Online safety Institute
EA	Education Authority
ICO	Information Commissioners Office
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ICTMark	Quality standard for schools provided by NAACE
INSET	In Service Education and Training
IP address	The label that identifies each computer to other computers using the IP (internet protocol)
ISP	Internet Service Provider
ISPA	Internet Service Providers' Association
IWF	Internet Watch Foundation
LA	Local Authority
LAN	Local Area Network
MIS	Management Information System
NEN	National Education Network – works with the Regional Broadband Consortia (e.g. SWGfL) to provide the safe broadband provision to schools across Britain.
Ofcom	Office of Communications (Independent communications sector regulator)
SWGfL	South West Grid for Learning Trust – the Regional Broadband Consortium of SW Local Authorities – is the provider of broadband and other services for schools and other organisations in the SW
TUK	Think U Know – educational Online safety programmes for schools, young people and parents.
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment (a software system designed to support teaching and learning in an educational setting.
WAP	Wireless Application Protocol

Copyright of the SWGfL School Online safety policy Templates is held by SWGfL. Schools and other educational institutions are permitted free use of the templates. Any person or organisation wishing to use the document for other purposes should seek consent from SWGfL and acknowledge its use.

Every reasonable effort has been made to ensure that the information included in this template is accurate, as at the date of publication in October 2018. However, SWGfL cannot guarantee its accuracy, nor can it accept liability in respect of the use of the material whether in whole or in part and whether modified or not. Suitable legal/professional advice should be sought if any difficulty arises in respect of any aspect of this new legislation or generally to do with school conduct or discipline.

Agenda Item 11

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 23.11.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 24.11.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **9th December 2020**

Report Subject: **Local Government Education Services
Safeguarding Policy**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr J Collins, Executive Member Education**

Report Submitted by: **Lynn Phillips, Corporate Director Education**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
27.08.20	X	24.11.20			8.10.20	09.12.20		

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek the Executive Committee's approval of the Blaenau Gwent Local Government Education Services Safeguarding Policy following its annual review.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 The Education Directorate Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy was originally adopted in April 2015 and has been reviewed on an annual basis. The attached draft policy has been reviewed and updated for the 2020-2021 academic year and now encompasses arrangements for all educational settings.
 - 2.2 In order to fulfil its safeguarding responsibilities, the Council is required to provide model policies and procedures for maintained schools on all aspects of child protection. The policies and procedures must be consistent with Welsh Government guidance and local arrangements. The attached draft policy covers all employees and volunteers in Blaenau Gwent's Education Directorate and educational settings. Employees of commissioned services are required to follow their organisation's safeguarding policies e.g. Education Achievement Service, Gwent Ethnic Minority Service, Youth Offending Service and Shared Resources Service (SRS). These policies are quality assured on an annual basis by the Safeguarding in Education Manager prior to the commencement of each academic year.
 - 2.3 All education and training providers in Wales are inspected by Estyn and a new framework was introduced in the Autumn term 2017. Safeguarding will be inspected under inspection area four, 'Care, Support and Guidance' and as such the model policy is cognisant of the Local Government Education Services (LGES) framework.

2.4 The inspection of local authority education services for children and young people covers the statutory functions of the local authority, including the local authority youth service.

2.5 Children in Wales (CIW) and Estyn jointly inspect care and education in regulated non-school settings eligible for funding for part-time education. These joint inspections evaluate the care provided for all children up to the age of twelve and the education of three and four-year-old children that do not receive education in a maintained setting for children aged three and four years old.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 The Education and Learning and Social Services Scrutiny Committee (Safeguarding) considered the draft strategy document and supported the policy with no amendments.

3.2 Option 1 – The Executive Committee approve the Education Directorate Safeguarding Policy prior to its distribution to schools.

Option 2 – The Executive Committee suggest amendment to the Policy prior to approval and distribution to schools.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 **Statutory Responsibilities**

All schools have statutory duties to operate in a way that takes into account the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This is a statutory duty under section 175 of the Education Act 2002.

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 sets out the responsibilities in terms of the promotion of well-being, places a duty on local authorities to arrange or provide for services which contribute to the prevention of abuse or neglect and ensures all agencies give sufficient priority to safeguarding.

The Wales Safeguarding Procedures (2019) are national procedures which guide safeguarding practice. They are applicable for all practitioners and managers working in Wales.

4.2 **Blaenau Gwent Wellbeing Plan**

This report is in line with the following objectives as set out in the Blaenau Gwent Wellbeing Plan of:

- Blaenau Gwent wants everyone to have the best start in life; and,
- Blaenau Gwent wants safe and friendly communities.

5. Implications Against Each Option

5.1 Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)

There are no direct financial implications.

5.2 Risk including Mitigating Actions

Failure of educational establishments to adopt rigorous arrangements for safeguarding poses significant potential risk to children and other education users. Settings are required to have safeguarding policies and procedures in place, reviewed annually, in accordance with local and national guidance. Providing a safeguarding policy for adoption by all education settings ensures that an appropriate policy is available to mitigate risk.

5.3 Legal

Under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, Local Authorities, governing bodies of maintained schools and FE institutions must have regard to Welsh Government Circular 158/2015, 'Keeping Learners Safe', for the purpose of meeting their duties, and should exercise their functions in a way that takes into account the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 sets out the responsibilities in terms of the promotion of well-being, places a duty on local authorities to arrange or provide for services which contribute to the prevention of abuse or neglect and ensures all agencies give sufficient priority to safeguarding.

5.4 Human Resources

There are no direct staffing or workforce implications arising from this report.

6. Supporting Evidence

6.1 Performance Information and Data

The Local Government Education Services Safeguarding Policy has been reviewed. Updates have been made to the following areas of the policy:

- Reference to Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2019, replacing previous reference to All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008;
- Inclusion of the Blaenau Gwent Youth Service safeguarding policy in appendix 3 of the policy;
- Inclusion of the safeguarding data collection protocol; and,
- Inclusion of a COVID-19 annex to reflect the current situation and reinforce the procedures for reporting concerns. This appendix can be updated regularly as the emergency situation develops and changes.

Adoption of the policy is monitored through the safeguarding matrix, which is overseen by the Safeguarding in Education Manager.

6.2 Expected outcome for the public

Learners are provided with a safe learning environment, with the policy supporting settings to respond appropriately to concerns.

- 6.3 **Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)**
This policy has been consulted upon with Education DMT, Social Services, Youth Service, Early Years, Organisational Development and Community Safety.
- 6.4 **Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)**
Ensuring that the Council and its education settings operate robust safeguarding practices, informed by policy, is essential to the wellbeing of all learners in Blaenau Gwent.
- 6.5 **Preventative focus**
Having an effective policy in place supports educational establishments to adopt practice to keep learners safe and identify concerns early.
- 6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**
Gwent Safeguarding is the statutory multi-agency partnership Board responsible for making sure safeguarding is at the core of all services provided across the region
- Education forms part of this multi-agency partnership.
- 6.7 **Integration (across service areas)**
Within the context of the legal framework and associated guidance, it is important that education settings, schools and governing bodies ensure that appropriate safeguarding procedures are in place and arrangements regarding safer recruitment are rigorously followed in order to safeguard children.
- 6.8 **EqIA**
An equality impact assessment has been completed and there are no positive or adverse impacts in relation to the revised safeguarding policy.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

- 7.1 The adoption of this policy will be monitored by the Safeguarding in Education Manager through the safeguarding matrix.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Education Directorate LGES Safeguarding Policy

Keeping Learners Safe

<http://learning.gov.wales/docs/learningwales/publications/150114-keeping-learners-safe-en.pdf>

(Former) Governors Wales

<http://www.governorswales.org.uk/>

Disclosure and Barring Service

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>

**Education Directorate
Local Government Education Services
Safeguarding Policy**

June 2020



Contact Information

Safeguarding Manager – Leanne Tetley	01495 355584	Leanne.Tetley@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk
Safeguarding in Education Manager – Sarah Dixon	01495 356016 07815 005241	Sarah.Dixon@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk
Information, advice and assistance – Social services	01495 315700	dutyteam@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk
Families First team manager – Rachel Price	01495 355584	familiesfirstduty@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk
Brynmawr locality team manager – Pam Smith	01495 356093	Pam.Smith@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk
Abertillery locality team manager – Hannah Harwood	01495 356099	Hannah.Harwood@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk
Tredegar locality team manager – Claire Evans	01495 355099	Claire.Evans@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk
Ebbw Vale locality team manager – Tanya Coad	01495 255773	Tanya.Coad@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk
14+ team manager – Beth Thomas	01495 356027	Beth.Thomas@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk
Disabilities team manager – Sarah Savage	01495 355321	Sarah.Savage@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk
Children Looked After Education Coordinator	01495 357712	Catherine.Edwards@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk
PREVENT Lead	07791 875737	Helena.hunt@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk
Youth Service Manager – Joanne Sims	01495 357866	Joanne.Sims@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk
Sarah Jones – Protection of Adults at risk (POVA) Coordinator	01495 354613	Sarah.Jones@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk
Strategic Safeguarding Lead for Education Directorate SSL – Michelle Jones	01495 355823	Michelle.Jones@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk
Deputy – Claire Gardner	01495 355603	Claire.Gardner@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk
South East Wales Emergency Duty Team (SEWEDT) - after 5pm, weekends and Bank Holidays.	0800 328 4432.	N/A
Domestic Abuse	01495 291202	info@pheonixdas.co.uk
Modern Day Slavery/Trafficking – Training and Victim Support (BAWSO)	0800 731 8147 01633 213213	www.bawso.org.uk
Gwent Safeguarding Executive Member – John Mason	N/A	www.gwentsafeguarding.org.uk

With regard to Safeguarding across the Council as a whole The Local Authority Designated Officer is the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Manager in Social Services. Sarah Dixon, the Safeguarding in Education Manager, covers the responsibilities laid out in WG circular no 009/2014, 'Safeguarding children in Education: - Handling allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff'. Sarah Dixon is the first point of contact with schools, education settings and education directorate staff for advice regarding safeguarding and child protection issues arising in education settings in relation to adults who work with children.”

Document version	Author	Date of issue	Changes made
1.0	Sarah Dixon	April 2015	Updated to reflect changes in WG Guidance, Keeping Learners Safe 158/2015
2.0	Sarah Dixon	May 2016	Update to reflect changes in legislation: Counter Terrorism and security Act 2015
3.0	Sarah Dixon	May 2017	Annual review and updated to reflect changes in contact details and the change to Information, Advice and Assistance team.
4.0	Sarah Dixon	Aug 2018	Annual review. Updated to reflect changes in contact details and Local Government Education Services (LGES) framework
5.0	Sarah Dixon	June 2019	Annual review. Updated to reflect changes in contact details.
6.0	Sarah Dixon	June 2020	Annual review. Updated with reference to the Wales Safeguarding Procedures and to include details of safeguarding data collection, BG Youth Service policy and COVID 19 procedures

CONTENTS

Section		Page
1	Introduction	5
2	Scope/Relevant Legislation	6
3	What is Safeguarding	6
4	Preventative Approach	7
5	Responsibilities for Safeguarding in Education	7
	• The Role of the Governing Body in Maintained Schools	8
	• Responsibilities of Head Teachers/Managers	10
	• Role of the Designated Person in schools	10
	• Reporting Concerns	11
	• Training	12
Appendices:		
	Appendix 1- Example Policy template for education settings/schools	13
	Appendix 2 – Example policy template for early years settings	24
	Appendix 3 – Policy template for Blaenau Gwent Youth Service	36
	Appendix 4 – Types of Harm	49
	Appendix 5 – How to Make a Report	50
	Appendix 6 – Professional Allegations/Concerns Flowchart and procedures	52
	Appendix 7 – Safeguarding file - Transfer of Records	53
	Appendix 8 – Community Cohesion-Preventing Extremism	55
	Appendix 9 – Secure and Shelter Procedure (guidance)	57
	Appendix 10 - Associated Policies, Guidance and Advice	59
	Appendix 11 – Safeguarding Data Protocol	61
	Appendix 12 – COVID 19 Annex (this annex will be reviewed in line with changes as a result of Welsh Government advice)	63

INTRODUCTION

Safeguarding children and adults at risk of abuse is everybody's responsibility.

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is committed to ensuring that everyone living within the County Borough is safe and protected and that our statutory responsibilities to safeguard and protect children, young people and adults at risk are effectively met. This is reflected in the wellbeing plan. Objectives include Blaenau Gwent having safe and friendly communities and everyone having the best start in life.

Children are defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. Education services provide support to young people up to the age of 25 years. This policy covers all children and adults at risk.

All Local Government Education Services (LGES) are required to have safeguarding policies and procedures in place. The Council seeks assurance from its commissioned services that these policies and procedure are in place and this is validated by the Safeguarding in Education manager on an annual basis. Settings will need to assure themselves that commissioned services and those activities which extend beyond the school day (and not in the direct control of the setting) have appropriate safeguarding arrangements in place.

It is recommended that the policy format recorded in Keeping Learners Safe (Welsh Government circular 158/2015) is used as the basis for all establishments, organisations and services linked to Education. This format can be adapted to meet the needs and requirements of those linked to Education and can be used as the starting point for specifically constructed policies to suit their roles and responsibilities in working with and supporting children and young people.

Other information for children, parents, staff, volunteers and governors could be added as appendices to the main policy. This could include methods of internal recording of concerns and guidance and advice to children, staff and parents in raising concerns.

The policy should be dated and also notification when the next formal review is intended. Where appropriate the date of approval by the Governing Body or Management would be important to be recorded on the policy.

Basic items from the policy could be included in school/ education setting and or organisation's publications for parents and children. A full copy of the policy must be made available to parents on request, but a nominal cost may be incurred.

SCOPE

For the purposes of this policy, 'workforce' is defined as those engaged by the Council, including permanent and temporary employees, students, volunteers, workers employed by employment agencies, contractors and consultants. Where the term 'practitioner' is used, it describes anyone in paid employment and unpaid volunteers.

This policy covers all education settings within Blaenau Gwent.

While practitioners and contractors are likely to have varied levels of contact with children, young people and adults at risk as part of their duties, everyone should be aware of the potential indicators of abuse and neglect and be clear about what to do if they have concerns.

All education settings must have their own safeguarding policies and procedures which are in keeping with this document and local, regional and national procedures and guidance. An example policy template can be found at appendix 1.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

- Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 requiring local authorities and non-maintained settings to have arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the well-being and welfare of the children on their care.
- Children Act 1989/2004
- Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014
- The Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011
- The Equality Act 2010
- Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015
- Wales Safeguarding Procedures <https://safeguarding.wales/>

WHAT IS SAFEGUARDING?

Safeguarding means preventing and protecting children and adults from abuse or neglect and educating those around them to recognise the signs and dangers.

The Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014 defines abuse and neglect:

'Abuse' means physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial abuse and includes abuse taking place in any setting, whether in a private dwelling, an institution or any other place. 'Financial abuse' includes:

- Having money or other property stolen;
- Being defrauded;
- Being put under pressure in relation to money or property;
- Having money or other property misused.

‘Neglect’ means a failure to meet a person’s basic physical, emotional, social or psychological needs which is likely to result in an impairment of the person’s well-being for example, impairment of the person’s health

A full glossary of terms can be found in the [Wales Safeguarding Procedures](https://safeguarding.wales/glossary.html)
<https://safeguarding.wales/glossary.html>

PREVENTATIVE APPROACH

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council wants safe and friendly communities. With regard to this, the council is committed to the development of approaches to ensure organisations meet the same Council objective. Local Government Education Services will be expected to respond to the needs of children/adults at risk, understand how to establish a positive culture of safeguarding and adhere to the principles of partnership working, promoting prevention and early intervention.

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SAFEGUARDING IN EDUCATION

Overview

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults who may be at risk of harm.

All **practitioner**s working for or on behalf of the Council have a **“duty to report”** any concerns they may have for the welfare and/or protection of children and adults at risk. The process to follow to make reports is contained in Appendix 5.

The Council promotes safer recruitment policy and practice. Safe recruitment procedures will be implemented in accordance with local, regional and national guidance. Education settings will implement the relevant Recruitment and Selection Policy and the Manager’s Guide to Volunteers in the Workplace.

Practitioners working with children and young people are required to undergo a DBS check, at the appropriate level, which is updated on a three year rolling programme. Education settings must maintain a record of DBS checks, recording the certificate number and date of issue. To ensure compliance with GDPR, original/photocopied certificates should not be retained. All school governors should undergo a DBS check at the appropriate level, upon appointment and renewed at the start of each term of office.

Where **practitioner**s have safeguarding concerns or suspicions about other **practitioner**s or contractors these should be reported through safeguarding procedures. **Practitioner**s should also be aware of the statutory protection provided by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (“PIDA”) that protects employees against victimisation if they speak

about concerns about conduct or practice within a school which is potentially illegal, corrupt, improper, unsafe or unethical, or which amounts to malpractice.

All **practitioner**s will be made aware of their safeguarding responsibilities as part of their induction to their employment. Additional training will be undertaken appropriate to the **practitioner**'s role and responsibilities.

Any person responsible for, or working with, children or adults at risk in any capacity, whether paid or unpaid, is considered both legally and morally, to owe them a duty of care. This includes a duty to behave in a manner that does not threaten, harm or put people at risk of harm from others.

All **practitioner**s have a responsibility to conduct themselves in their private lives in a manner that does not compromise their position in the workplace or call into question their suitability to work with children or adults at risk.

Each local government education setting/school is responsible for nominating a Designated Senior Person (DSP) and deputy DSP with responsibility for safeguarding. All DSP's will be invited to termly DSP meetings with the Safeguarding in Education Manager.

The Role of the Governing Body in Schools

The Council's agreed statutory partnership agreement sets out the responsibilities of school's governing bodies, which are summarised below:

Governing Bodies of schools are accountable for ensuring effective policies and procedures are in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and monitoring its compliance with them

Governing Bodies should ensure that their schools:

- Have effective child protection policies and procedures in place that are:
 - In accordance with local authority guidance and locally agreed interagency procedures
 - Inclusive of services that extend beyond the school day (e.g. community activities on school premises)
 - Reviewed at least annually
 - Made available to parents/carers upon request
 - Provided in a format appropriate to the understanding of children, particularly where schools cater for children with additional needs
- Operate safe recruitment procedures in line with Local Authority policy and 'Keeping Learners Safe' guidance. Safe recruitment procedures must take account of the need to safeguard children and young people, including arrangements to ensure that all appropriate checks are carried out on new staff

and volunteers who will work with children, including relevant DBS checks and professional registration (if required).

- Ensure that the head teacher/principal and all other **practitioners** who work with children undertake appropriate training to equip them with the knowledge and skills that are necessary to carry out their responsibilities for child protection effectively, which is kept up to date with refresher training
- Ensure that any agency staff who work with children have the relevant pre-employment checks and DBS checks in place
- Give clear guidance to volunteers/temporary staff providing cover during short-term absences and who will be working with children and young people on the organisation's arrangements for child protection and their responsibilities.
- Ensure that the governing body remedies, without delay, any deficiencies or weaknesses in regard to child protection arrangements that are brought to its attention.
- Ensure that the designated senior person (DSP) for child protection, the designated governor and the chair of governors undertakes training in inter-agency working that is provided by, or to standards agreed by, the Safeguarding Children Board and refresher training to keep their knowledge and skills up to date, in addition to basic child protection training.
- Provide a copy of the school's safeguarding self-evaluation to the Safeguarding in Education Manager during the first half of the autumn term
- Ensure that data for the safeguarding matrix is provided twice a year to the Safeguarding in Education Manager

The Governing Body of a school controls the use of the school premises both during and outside school hours, except where a trust deed allows a person other than the governing body to control the use of the premises, or a transfer of control agreement has been made. Governors can enter into transfer of control agreements in order to share control of the school premises with another body, or transfer control to it. The other body, known as the 'controlling body', will control the occupation and use of the premises during the times specified in the agreement.

Transferring control of the premises to local community groups, sports association and service providers can enable school facilities to be used without needing ongoing management or administrative time from school staff.

Where the governing body provides services or activities directly under the supervision or management of school staff, the school's arrangements for child protection will apply. Where services or activities are provided separately by another body, the governing body must confirm that the body concerned has appropriate policies and procedures in place in regard to safeguarding children and child protection and there are arrangements to liaise with the school on these matters where appropriate.

Responsibilities of Head Teachers/ Managers

Head teachers and Principals of schools / Managers should ensure that all **practitioners** (including supply staff and volunteers):

- Are aware of child protection policies and procedures, as adopted, are fully implemented and followed by all **practitioners**
- Ensure understanding and compliance with pre-employment, DBS and Professional Registration requirements
- Can access sufficient resources and time to enable them to discharge their responsibilities, including taking part in strategy discussions and other inter-agency meetings, and contributing to the assessment of children.
- Understand the procedures for safeguarding children, and feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and that such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner in accordance with Welsh Government Procedures for Whistleblowing in Schools (Model Policy).
- As part of their induction, are given a written statement about the school's policy and procedure, and the name and contact details of the DSP for child protection.

Head teachers/ Managers should also:

- Provide timely updates to the Safeguarding in Education Manager in line with the safeguarding data protocol (Appendix 11)
- Participate in the Quality Assurance processes in a timely manner
- Ensure that the safeguarding processes are reviewed annually and shared with staff, and, in schools, the governing body

Role of the Designated Person in schools and educational settings

The Designated Senior Person (DSP) for safeguarding fulfills an essential role in developing and implementing policies that help to safeguard adults and children from all forms of abuse and create a safe environment.

Each setting should identify a DSP with lead responsibility for safeguarding matters.

The DSP should know how to recognise and identify the signs of abuse and neglect and know when it is appropriate to make a report to the relevant investigating agency.

The role involves providing advice and support to other **practitioners**, making reports to and liaising and working with other agencies as necessary. The DSP role is not to investigate allegations, but they must keep the head teacher/ Manager informed of all adult/child protection issues in the establishment.

The DSP must be a senior member of the leadership team with the status and authority within the organisation to carry out the duties of the post, including committing resources to child protection matters, and where appropriate, directing other staff.

Dealing with individual cases may be a responsibility of other staff members, but it is important that a senior member of staff takes responsibility for this area of work.

In many schools and settings, a single DSP will be sufficient, but a deputy should be available to act in their absence. In establishments which are organised on different sites or with separate management structures, there should be a DSP for each part of the site. In large organisations, or those with a large number of adult/child protection concerns, it may be necessary to have a number of deputies to deal with the responsibilities.

The establishment must also make arrangements to cover the role of DSP when that person is unavailable. In many cases, there will be a deputy DSP in place and larger settings may have a team of staff working together.

The DSP will take responsibility for the establishment's safeguarding practice, policy, procedures and professional development, working with other agencies as necessary. The head teacher/ Manager should ensure that the DSP:

- Is given sufficient time and resources to carry out the role effectively, which should be explicitly defined in the post holder's job description.
- Has access to required levels of training and support to undertake the role, including ongoing professional development and regular participation at DSP meetings.
- Has time to attend and provide reports and advice to case conferences and other interagency meetings as required

Reporting Concerns

The DSP should act as a point of contact and a source of support, advice and guidance to staff within the setting/ establishment when deciding whether to make a report by liaising with relevant agencies.

The DSP is responsible for making reports about allegations of suspected abuse to the relevant investigating agencies.

In the event of a DSP and deputy being unavailable, the person holding the concern has a duty to report to the relevant agency.

Where allegations relate to cases of suspected abuse or allegations of abuse against **practitioners**, the relevant process is set out in the example template policy (appendix 1, under the heading, 'What to do if a child tells you they have been abused by a **practitioner** (including volunteers)').

All **practitioner**s and contractors have a responsibility to share their concerns in accordance with this policy and to undertake relevant training.

Children - Further guidance and the relevant Multi Agency Referral Form to make a report can be found through the Gwent Safeguarding website, at <https://www.gwentsafeguarding.org.uk/en/Children/Report/Report-a-child-at-risk.aspx>

Adults - Further guidance and the appropriate referral form for reporting an adult at risk can be found through the Gwent Safeguarding website <https://www.gwentsafeguarding.org.uk/en/Adults/Report/Report-an-adult-at-risk.aspx>

Training

All staff must have safeguarding training that equips them to carry out their role. This training should be refreshed at intervals not exceeding three years.

In addition to the safeguarding Children and/or adults training, all staff must complete Group 1 training on Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) as outlined in the National Training Framework and training on Preventing Extremism. Links to online PREVENT training are contained in Appendix 8.

Example policy template for schools/education settings

Child Protection Policy for (Name of School /Setting)

1. Introduction

The school/setting fully recognises the contribution it makes to safeguarding.

There are three main elements to our policy: -

- Prevention through the teaching and pastoral support offered to children/adults at risk
- Procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases of abuse. Because of our contact with children and adults at risk, school and education staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse; and
- Support to those pupils and adults at risk who may have been abused.

This policy applies to all **practitioners**, (staff and volunteers) working in the school/education setting. In the case of schools, it is the Governing Body's policy. It is recognised by this school/setting that all **practitioners** that come into contact with children and adults at risk can often be the first point of disclosure. This first point of contact is an important part of the safeguarding process, and it is essential that all **practitioners** are aware of and implement the school's/ setting's procedures as noted in this policy.

2. Prevention

This school/setting recognises that high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and good lines of communication with a trusted adult helps to safeguard children and adults at risk at our school /education setting.

The school/setting will therefore: -

- Establish and maintain an ethos where children and adults at risk feel secure, are encouraged to talk and share their concerns and will be listened to;
- Ensure that children and adults at risk know that all adults in this school/setting can be approached if they are worried or concerned about matters that concern them or their siblings or friends.
- Include in the activities and in the curriculum, opportunities which equip children and adults at risk with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse and to know to whom to turn for help; and

- Include in the activities and in the curriculum, material which will help children and adults at risk develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life, particularly with regard to childcare and parenting skills.

3. Procedures

At this school/setting we will follow the [Wales Safeguarding Procedures](https://safeguarding.wales/) 2019, <https://safeguarding.wales/> and other guidance and protocols that have been endorsed and agreed by the South East Wales Safeguarding Children Board. (SEWSCB), and the Gwent Wide Adult Safeguarding Board (GWASB) accessed via www.gwentsafeguarding.org.uk .

The school/ setting will: -

- A. Ensure it has a designated senior person (DSP) and deputy for safeguarding, who have undertaken the appropriate training.
- B. Recognise the role of the designated senior person and arrange support and training. The school/setting will look to Council's Safeguarding in Education Manager and Gwent Safeguarding for guidance and support in assisting the school's designated senior person.
- C. Ensure that all **practitioners**, along with every governor, know: -
 - the name, contact details and role of the designated senior person (DSP), the deputy DSP and, in schools, the designated governor responsible for safeguarding;
 - in schools, that it is the lead person and/or their deputy who have the responsibility for making reports within timescales, by completing the agreed multi-agency referral form. In other settings, the reporting process will follow procedures agreed for that setting
 - that they have an individual responsibility for sharing concerns using the proper channels and within the timescales agreed.
 - how to take forward those concerns where the DSP is unavailable
 - that the DSP and deputy will seek advice from the Social Services Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA), and /or the Safeguarding in Education Manager if necessary when a report is being considered. When out of hours, advice will be sought from the South East Wales Emergency Duty Team (SEWEDT) Team; **if in doubt a report must be sent.**
- D. Ensure that all **practitioners** are aware of the need to be alert to signs of abuse and know how to respond to a person who may disclose abuse.
- E. Ensure that all **practitioners** will be offered and expected to attend appropriate training and updates as arranged/directed by the school/setting.
- F. Ensure that parents have a clear understanding of the responsibility placed on the setting and its staff for safeguarding by setting out their obligations in the school prospectus and/or other forms of communications. In particular, there is a clear obligation that 'the welfare of the child is paramount' and in some

circumstances this may mean that the parents are not initially informed of a report made by the setting about a child.

G. Provide training for all **practitioners** so that they: -

- Understand their personal responsibility;
- Are cognisant of agreed local procedures
- Understand the need to be vigilant in identifying suspected cases of abuse; and
- Know how to support a person who discloses abuse, particularly the do's and don'ts

H. For schools, notify Social Services if: -

- a pupil on the child protection register is excluded either for a fixed term or permanently; and
- there is an unexplained absence of a pupil on the child protection register of more than two days' duration from school (or one day following a weekend).

I. Work to develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding safeguarding matters including attendance at initial and review child protection conferences and core groups and support these with the submission of written reports.

J. Keep written records of concerns about children and adults at risk (noting date, event and action taken), even where there is no need to report the matter to agencies immediately.

K. Ensure that all records and files are kept secure and in locked locations. The DSP is responsible for the security, compilation and storage of all records and should be able to access and produce them in times of need. It is the responsibility of the DSP to ensure that any transfer of records is conducted via the Authority's agreed protocol and procedures for the 'Transfer of Sensitive Information' (Appendix7)

L. Adhere to the procedures set out in the Welsh Government guidance circular 002/2013 'Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedures for School Staff'.

M. Ensure that all recruitment and selection procedures follow national and local guidance and the Council's Recruitment and Selection policy. Schools will seek advice and guidance from the Council's Organisational Development Department on recruitment and selection.

N. In schools, designate a governor for safeguarding who will oversee the school's policy and practice. This governor will feed back to the Governing Body on safeguarding matters as and when required, and will be required to write an annual report to the Governing Body on the school's safeguarding activities.

4. Supporting the person at Risk

At this education setting/school we recognise that children/adults at risk who are at risk, suffer abuse, or witness violence may be deeply affected by this.

At this education setting/school we will endeavour to be patient and supportive to the person at risk.

This education setting/school will endeavour to support people through: -

- The content of the activities and the curriculum to encourage self-esteem and self-motivation (see section 2 of this policy on Prevention);
- The ethos of the school/setting which: -
 - promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment; and
 - Gives pupils/adults at risk a sense of being valued (see section 2 on Prevention);
- The setting/school's behaviour policy which is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in the setting. All practitioners will agree a consistent approach which focuses on the behaviour of the offence but does not damage the pupil's sense of self-worth. The school will endeavour to ensure that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable, but that each individual is valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred
- Liaison with other agencies who support the student such as Social Services, Child and Adolescent Mental Health services, the Educational Psychology Service, Education Welfare Service and advocacy services; and
- Keeping records and notifying Social Services if there is a recurrence of a concern with the individual.

When a pupil/child on the child protection register leaves, we will transfer the sensitive information to the new school /setting immediately (Using the procedure outlined in appendix 7, Safeguarding File – Transfer of Records). The DSP will be central to this process, and if not already done, will inform Social Services of the move.

5. Behaviour

This setting/school has a behaviour policy which clearly states our values and expectations. This is a separate policy which is reviewed on a regular basis by the Governing Body and can be located (State where)

6. Bullying

The setting/school's policy on Bullying has been set out in (a separate document/ the behaviour policy etc.) (It would be useful to note any guidance from the Authority within any documentation.) This policy/information is reviewed annually by Governors and can be located (State where)

7. Physical Intervention

The setting/school's policy on physical intervention has been set out in (a separate document/ the school's behaviour policy etc.) (It would be useful to note any guidance, support and training provided by the Authority within any documentation.) It is reviewed annually by the governing body and is consistent with the Welsh Government guidance on Safe and Effective intervention – use of reasonable force and searching for weapons 097/2013 This policy/information can be located (State where).

8. Keeping Safe Online

The school/setting's policy on Online Safety has been set out in (a separate document/ the setting/school IT policy etc.) It would be useful to note any guidance, support and training provided by the Authority within any documentation. This policy/information can be located. (State where)

9. Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

This school/setting recognises that statistically children and young people with behavioural difficulties and disabilities are most vulnerable to abuse. Practitioners who deal with children with profound and multiple disabilities, sensory impairment and or emotional and behaviour problems need to be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse. The school's policy on SEN has been set out in (A separate document). This policy/information can be located. (State where)

10. Care Experienced Children

This school/setting recognises that Children Looked After (CLA) are often the most vulnerable. Advice and guidance can be sought from the Local Authority's Education Coordinator for Children Looked After.

11. Community Cohesion – Preventing Extremism

This school/setting is committed to providing a safe environment for all of our students and **practitioners**. There is no place for extremist views of any kind in our setting. Where we become aware of information involving identification of potential instances of extremism and radicalisation, we will refer to Children's/Adult Services in the same way as for all safeguarding concerns. The Local Authority has 'Secure and Shelter' (Lockdown) procedures that may be activated in response to any number of situations and includes the requirement to carry out practice procedures (appendix 9).

Our policy statement for community cohesion is attached as appendix 8: Community Cohesion – Preventing Extremism.

12. Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDA&SV)

The Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 aims to improve arrangements for the prevention of gender based violence, abuse and sexual violence.

The protection of victims and support for people affected is underpinned by the 'Ask and Act' duty placed on public service staff to ask potential victims about the possibility that they may be experiencing VAWDASV and act so as to reduce suffering and harm.

The regional VAWDASV board has also prioritised a 'whole school approach' to training and support in order to continue a preventative agenda to domestic abuse. This approach is relevant for all education settings.

The school/setting's policy on VAWDASV has been set out in (a separate document/ the schools VAWDASV policy etc.). This policy/information can be located. (State where)

The school participates in Operation Encompass. The purpose of Operation Encompass is to safeguard and support these children and young people who have witnessed and/or been present at the time of a domestic abuse incident. Operation Encompass aims to ensure that appropriate **practitioners** are made aware at the earliest possible stage in order to provide relevant and tailored support to children and young people in a way that means they feel safe and included.

13. Modern Slavery

Modern slavery describes forced labour practices with the perpetrator – the slave master- trapping and controlling the victim. The most common form of modern slavery is sexual exploitation. Labour exploitation is the second most common form of slavery occurring most frequently in the agricultural, food, hospitality and construction sectors. Victims may be vulnerable UK or foreigner citizens. Police, Local Authorities, the National Crime Agency and the Gangmasters Labour and Abuse Authority who encounter a potential victim of modern slavery or human trafficking have a duty to notify the Home Office under Section 52 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

Modern slavery is a hidden, pervasive crim targeted towards those individuals most vulnerable. The Council and BAWSO are first responding organisations to cases of slavery. Training and victim support regarding Modern Slavery can be found at BAWSO, www.bawso.org.uk

14. Safer Schools' Partnership

The Safer Schools' partnership allows the safe and legal sharing of information that will ensure children can be safeguarded where they are identified as being at risk of or involved in crime and anti-social behavior. This is a multi-agency risk assessment

approach. Specific advice on this can be sought from the Safeguarding in Education Manager.

15. Transfer of school records

Where children are transferred to or from this school, we will ensure appropriate record keeping of the transfer of child protection records through the use of the Safeguarding File – Transfer of records proforma. (See appendix 7).

16. Out of Hours

After 5pm and on weekends and bank holidays, the South East Wales Emergency Duty Team can be contacted on 0800 328 4432

17. Information for staff/volunteers

a) What to do if a person tells you they have been abused or harmed:

A person may confide in any **practitioner**. **Practitioners** to whom an allegation is made should remember: -

- Yours is a listening role, do not interrupt them when they are freely recalling events. Limit any questions to clarifying your understanding of what is being said. Any questions should be framed in an open manner so not to lead;
- In schools, you must report orally to the **Designated Senior Person (DSP) for safeguarding** immediately (or in their absence, their Deputy), to inform them of what has been disclosed. In the unlikely event of both being absent, seek out the most senior person in the school;
- For other education settings, the process outlined in the setting's own procedures must be followed.
- Make a note of the discussion, as soon as is reasonably practical (but within 24 hours) to pass on to the DSP. The note which should be clear in its use of terminology, should record the time, date, place, and people who were present and should record answers/responses in exactly the way they were said as far as possible. This note will in most cases be the only written record of what has been disclosed, and as it is the initial contact, an important one in the process. Remember, your note of the discussion may be used in any subsequent formal investigation and/or court proceedings. It is advised that you retain a copy in a safe place;
- Do not give undertakings of absolute confidentiality. You will need to express this in age/developmental related ways as soon as appropriately possible during the disclosure. This may result in the person 'clamming up' and not completing the disclosure, but you will still be required to share the fact that they have a shared a concern with you to the DSP. Often what is initially shared is the tip of an iceberg;

- That a person may be waiting for a case to go to criminal court, may have to give evidence or in the case of a child, may be awaiting care proceedings.
- You may have a future role in terms of supporting or monitoring the person, for example, contributing to an assessment or in the case of a child, implementing child protection plans. You can ask the DSP for an update on concerns shared, but they are restricted by procedures and confidentiality and may be limited in their response. The level of feedback will be on a need to know, but whatever is shared is strictly confidential and not for general consumption with others.
- When making a report about an 'adult at risk', consent is not required to make the report, but it would be helpful to know if the adult at risk consents to the adult safeguarding process.

b) What to do if a person tells you they have been abused by a **practitioner (including volunteers):**

*If an allegation of abuse is made against a **practitioner**, this must be reported in accordance with the information below.*

Where the allegation is made against a **practitioner**, reports to Children's/adult services are made in the same way as for all allegations of abuse

Where an allegation is against a **practitioner** you should refer to authority's guidance which takes into account the Welsh Government's guidance circular 002/2013 Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedures for School Staff and Welsh Government guidance circular 009/2014 Safeguarding Children in Education: Handling allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff. (A summary of procedures is included in appendix 6: Professional Allegations/Concerns).

If an allegation of abuse is made against a **practitioner** this must be reported to the Head Teacher/ manager.

If the concern is about the Head Teacher, this must be reported to the Chair of Governors and if the concern is about a manager, it must be reported to the next line manager.

The matter must also be discussed with the Safeguarding in Education Manager. In the absence of the Safeguarding in Education Manager, do not delay, contact the Social Services Information, Advice and Assistance Team.

If there is an allegation against a Local Authority Officer then this must be communicated to the Corporate Director for Education (Interim), Lynn Phillips Tel: 01495 355603/ 07772379795 and the Strategic Safeguarding Lead (SSL) for the Education Directorate, Michelle Jones Tel: 01495 355823 mobile 07881815904

If the concern is about the SSL, then the Corporate Director for Education is to be contacted. If there is a concern about the Corporate Director for Education, then this should be referred to the Chief Officer/Head of Paid Service.

Upon receipt of an allegation/concern about a **practitioner** in a school, the Head teacher/manager (or where appropriate, the Chair of Governors), will:

- obtain details of the allegation in writing, signed and dated
- Keep a record of dates, times, location and names of potential witnesses.
- Not investigate the allegation, or interview pupils, or discuss the allegation with the member of staff, but should consider, in consultation with the Senior Officer, whether the allegation requires further investigation and if so by whom.
- inform the Chair of Governors / manager
- Contact the Safeguarding in Education Manager who, together with Children's Services will give urgent consideration as to whether or not there is sufficient substance to the allegation to warrant an investigation: The outcome will either be:
 - i. without foundation
 - ii. internal disciplinary procedures
 - iii. a report under the safeguarding procedures
- In the case of adults at risk, further advice can be sought from the Protection of Adults at risk (POVA) Coordinator, Sarah Jones (01495 354613)

Pending the outcome of this process, interim safeguarding arrangements will be necessary. This will require a risk assessment to be completed and documented by the Head teacher/Chair of Governors/manager. This should ensure that there is no contact between the person who is the subject of the allegation and the person who has been accused of the allegation. Interim safeguarding measures should also be put in place regarding the contact that takes place between any other child(ren)/adult at risk and the person against whom the allegation has been made.

The sharing of information about an allegation must be handled sensitively and must be restricted to those who have a need to know in order to safeguard.

Information about the child, adult at risk or family must not be shared with the individual against whom the allegation was made or anyone representing them.

The matter must be treated confidentially and will not be discussed with **practitioners**. Each establishment, organisation or service will keep and maintain records which detail allegations of abuse against any **practitioner** working for them, whether in a paid or

voluntary capacity, whatever the outcome. There are clear requirements of when this information is to be shared with legal or statutory organisations such as DBS and the Education Workforce Council (EWC). Advice and guidance for the sharing of this specific information **must** be sought from Organisational Development

c) Confidentiality

The school/setting and **practitioners** are fully aware of confidentiality issues if a person divulges that they are or have been abused. A person may only feel confident to confide in a **practitioner** if they feel that the information will not be divulged to anyone else. However, **practitioners** have a professional responsibility to share relevant information with the designated statutory agencies when a child is experiencing child welfare concerns or an adult is an 'adult at risk'.

It is important that each **practitioner** deals with this sensitively. When responding, **practitioners** should explain that they must inform the appropriate people who can help, but they will only tell those who need to know in order to be able to help. **Practitioners** should reassure the person and tell them that their situation will not be common knowledge within the setting. Be aware that it may well have taken significant courage to disclose the information and they may also be experiencing conflicting emotions, involving feelings of guilt, embarrassment, disloyalty (if the abuser is someone close) and hurt.

Remember the pastoral responsibility of the Education Service. Ensure that only those with a professional involvement, i.e. the DSP and Head teacher/Manager, have access to safeguarding records. At all other times, they should be kept secure and separate from the person's main file.

18. Training

The school/setting will ensure that the designated senior person and deputy will have received initial training when starting their role and continued professional updates as required. Specific updates as suggested by national and local requirements will be central to the DSP/deputy DSP development.

Designated teachers and senior members of staff responsible for safeguarding must attend training in multi-agency safeguarding procedures, and must undertake refresher training on a regular basis not exceeding three years.

All **practitioners** will be regularly updated during the year as appropriate from the DSP, but will receive specific awareness raising training within a 3-year period.

Members of school governing bodies must also receive awareness raising training and the Chair of governors and the nominated governor for safeguarding will be offered opportunities for more specific training.

In addition to the safeguarding Children and/or adults training, all staff must complete Group 1 training on Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) as outlined in the National Training Framework and training on Preventing Extremism. Links to online PREVENT training are contained in Appendix 8.

All educational settings and partners working with children and adults at risk in Blaenau Gwent must keep records of training and carry out regular audits to ensure that all **practitioner** training for safeguarding is kept up to date. Educational establishments and partner agencies will be required to provide information on **practitioner** training to the Council and the Safeguarding Board upon request.

The Designated Senior Person for safeguarding at this school/setting is:-

.....

The Deputy Designated Senior Person for safeguarding at this school/setting is:-

.....

The designated governor for safeguarding at this school is:-

.....

The Council's Safeguarding in Education Manager is:-

Sarah.Dixon@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk 07815 005241; 01495 356016

Social Services can be contacted as follows:-

Telephone- **01495-315700**

Out of hours number **0800 328 4432**

This policy was updated on _____ by _____

This policy was presented and accepted by the Governing Body on _____

This staff were made aware of this policy and or updates on _____

This policy will be reviewed on _____

Example policy template for Early Years, Childcare and play

Safeguarding Policy for (Name of Setting)

.....(setting) believes that children have the right to be completely secure from both the fear and reality of abuse, and we are committed to safeguarding all children in our care from harm. The **practitioners** at (setting) fully recognises the contribution it makes to safeguard children and complies with **Wales Safeguarding Procedures** 2019, Gwent Safeguarding Children's Board and Blaenau Gwent authority's safeguarding policy.

We recognise the key role that.....(setting) can play in working with children and their families to seek early help to address any emerging concerns to help prevent problems from escalating, in preventing abuse by providing our children with good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection. Our setting will therefore:

- establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure, respected and valued, where children are encouraged to talk and are always listened to;
- ensure that all children know there is an adult in the setting whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty;
- encourage positive emotional health and well-being, self-esteem and self-assertiveness;
- promote a caring, safe and secure environment;
- have regard to the characteristics, culture and beliefs of the child and their family (including, for example language) whilst recognising the paramountcy of safeguarding the individual;
- liaise and work together with all other support services and those agencies involved in early intervention services and the safeguarding of children and young people;
- providing continuous support to a child about whom there have been concerns;

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of National and Gwent Children's Safeguarding Boards' guidance and protocols that seek to protect children, namely:

- Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 requiring local authorities and non-maintained settings to have arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the well-being and welfare of the children on their care.
- Children Act 1989. Children and Family (Wales) Measure 2010
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- The Equality Act 2010
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

- Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014
- Domestic abuse (Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015)
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- **Wales Safeguarding Procedures** 2019
- The UNCRC seven core aims for children and young people in Wales
- Relevant Welsh Government guidance on safeguarding children

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers working at
(setting).

We aim to:-

- Ensure that all children are never placed at risk while in the care of(setting);
- Support child's health and development in ways that foster security, confidence and independence;
- Ensure that the child's best interests are paramount and as far as reasonably practicable, have regard to the child's views, wishes and feelings, so that they receive the care and support they need before a problem escalates;
- Ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all times;
- Ensure parents are fully aware of our safeguarding/child protection policies and procedures when they register with the setting and are kept informed of all updates when they occur;
- **Practitioners** should always seek to be transparent with people they are working with about circumstances where they may need to share information with social services and/or the police;
- Regularly review and update this policy with staff and parents;
- Ensure that all staff have regard to this guidance when fulfilling their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse - safeguarding and promoting the welfare, health and well-being of children in their care;
- Ensure that all staff regularly revise Safeguarding issues and procedures and sign a declaration that they have understood and will adhere to the setting's policies and procedures;
- That **practitioners** understand their duty to seek early help to address any emerging concerns to help avoid problems escalating;
- To provide a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm;
- To emphasise the need for good levels of communication between all members of staff;
- To develop a structured procedure within(setting) which will be followed by all members of staff;

- To develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding safeguarding matters including attendance at initial and review child protection conferences and core groups and support with the submission of written reports.
- To ensure that all adults within the setting, who have access to the children, have been checked as to their suitability (including visitors);
- Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) CIW will be notified of any allegations made against staff, managers, any volunteers, students and/or outside agencies in the setting.

Safe recruitment

..... (the setting) operate safe recruitment procedures and ensure that all appropriate checks are carried out on new **practitioners** and volunteers who will work with children, including disclosure and barring checks (DBS) in line with current guidance. We abide by CIW requirements in respect of references and suitability checks for **practitioner**s and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unfit person works at the nursery or has access to the children. All **practitioner**s and temporary **practitioner**s/volunteers providing cover during short-term absences and who will be working with children are given clear guidance of the setting’s arrangements for child protection and their responsibilities during induction.

Children with additional learning needs

We recognise that statistically children and young people with behavioural difficulties and disabilities have an increased risk of being abused compared with their non-disabled/non sensory impaired peers. We also recognise that adults who support children and young people with profound and multiple disabilities, sensory impairment and or emotional and behaviour problems will need to be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse.

Appointed Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) and their responsibilities.

The setting’s Designated Safeguarding Person is
 who will be responsible for supporting **practitioner**s in liaising with Social Services, Gwent Safeguarding Children’s Board and CIW regarding any child protection matter.

The setting’s Deputy Designated Safeguarding Person is
who will be responsible for supporting **practitioner**s in the absence of the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

The Designated Safeguarding Person and their Deputy will:

- act as a source of advice and support within (the setting) and provide a point of contact for **practitioners** who have concerns or information that child or young person may be suffering abuse;
- co-ordinate any necessary reports to Social Services, **however** individual **practitioners** have a duty to report and the responsibility for raising concerns, completing report information, informing Social Services and involvement in any safeguarding processes that follow after a report is made. (e.g. requests for information, attending case conferences etc.)
- support those **practitioners** in our setting who have been involved with a child who has suffered, or was at risk of suffering harm, who may find the situation stressful and upsetting.
- ensure that(the setting) contributes fully to the safeguarding processes e.g. by providing reports, attending meetings or conferences when needed;
- ensure that all **practitioners** and parents/carers are aware of and have access to our setting's safeguarding policy and procedures and the **Wales Safeguarding Procedures**;
- disseminate safeguarding information gained from training and other sources to all **practitioners** in our setting and ensure that newly appointed **practitioners** are aware of their child protection/safeguarding responsibilities;
- inform CIW of any allegations that have been made against managers, **practitioners** and volunteers.

Practitioner commitment

The(setting) is committed to fulfilling its responsibilities in respect of child protection and safeguarding through the provision of support and training to **practitioners**. Therefore,(setting) will ensure that:-

- all **practitioners** have up to date safeguarding training so that they understand their roles and responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at risk of harm, abuse and neglect
- implement safe recruitment practices for all **practitioners**, students and volunteers, including verified references and full and up to date enhanced DBS checks
- all **practitioners** and volunteers are given a copy of the Safeguarding policy during their induction, and have its implications explained to them.
- all **practitioners** are alert to children's needs including any potential or suspected risk of abuse or harm and understand what action they should take
- any **practitioner**, student or volunteer under investigation for the alleged abuse of a child, will be subject to the provisions of the setting's Disciplinary Policy
- all **practitioner**s and volunteers receive regular staff meetings and supervision where opportunities to discuss Safeguarding/Child Protection issues will be made and further support provided if necessary;

- all **practitioners** are aware of any early intervention services that could help prevent any problems escalating;
- All **practitioners** should familiarise themselves with the culture and beliefs of those families they work with. **Practitioners** should not be afraid to ask about particular behaviours and the reasons for them in a sensitive manner and should never overlook potential harmful practices on the basis of cultural sensitivity;
- all **practitioners** are aware of their statutory requirements in respect of the disclosure or discovery of child abuse and the procedure for doing so. All students and volunteers are instructed to report the disclosure or discovery of abuse to the DSP or setting's manager.
- All visitors/contract/external workers will sign a visitor's book and be formally identified before accessing the setting. They will be accompanied whilst on the premises, especially when in the areas the children use.

Supporting Practitioners

We recognise that all **practitioners** working in the setting who has been involved with a child who has suffered, or is at risk of suffering harm, may find the situation stressful and upsetting. We will support the **practitioner** by providing opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the Designated Safeguarding Person and to seek further support if needed.

Recognising Child Abuse

Child abuse can manifest itself in a variety of different ways, some overt and others much less so. A person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family, an institution or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely by a stranger.

Indicators of abuse (although this is by no means an exhaustive list)

- Failure to thrive and meet developmental milestones
- Fearful or withdrawn tendencies
- Aggressive behaviour
- Unexplained injuries to a child or conflicting reports from parents or staff
- Repeated injuries
- Unaddressed illnesses or injuries
- Inappropriately clothed

Types of Harm

- **Physical abuse** - hitting, slapping, over or misuse of medication, undue restraint, or inappropriate sanctions;

- **emotional/psychological abuse** - threats of harm or abandonment, coercive control, humiliation, verbal or racial abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks, witnessing abuse of others;
- **sexual abuse** - forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening, including: physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts; non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways;
- **financial abuse** - this category will be less prevalent for a child but indicators could be: not meeting their needs for care and support which are provided through direct payments; or complaints that personal property is missing.
- **neglect** - failure to meet basic physical, emotional or psychological needs which is likely to result in impairment of health or development.
- **Identity Neglect** – not recognising or addressing the child or young person’s needs in terms of (for example) culture, religion, gender and sexuality.
- **Emotional Neglect** – It also includes not saying anything kind, expressing positive feelings or congratulating a child’s successes, not showing any emotions in interactions with a child

A full glossary of terms can be found in the [Wales Safeguarding Procedures: https://safeguarding.wales/glossary.html](https://safeguarding.wales/glossary.html)

What to do if a practitioner has a concern

The action that (the setting) take to safeguard children will be in line with the [Wales Safeguarding Procedures](#).

It is not the role of any **practitioner** in our setting to investigate and attempt to seek out evidence on matters relating to safeguarding concerns and they must not attempt to do so. **Practitioner**s in our setting all have a role in assisting social services and/or the police and/or CIW by providing information for safeguarding/child protection enquiries. They recognise that sharing information for the purposes of safeguarding is essential and that safeguarding the individual overrides the need to keep information confidential.

Practitioners in our setting will inform the Designated Safeguarding Person of:

- any concerns that a child or young person is suffering or is likely to be suffering some form of abuse;
- any allegations of abuse against a **practitioner**;
- any disclosures of abuse.

Any child currently on the Child Protection Register who is absent without explanation for two days will be referred to the social services team.

Not all child protection information results in a report to Social Services, but small

pieces of information may be significant on their own to create a wider picture.

The **practitioner** who is making the report should seek to obtain consent from parent or carer. This supports positive working relationships between children/young persons and their families. The child and parent/s wish not to report may be over-riden if it is considered by **practitioners** that there is still a need for a report.

It may not be appropriate to seek parent consent:

- ❖ the possibility that the child would be put at further risk;
- ❖ the possibility that a child would be threatened or otherwise coerced into silence;
- ❖ a strong likelihood that important evidence would be destroyed/lost;
- ❖ the parent identified as the alleged abuser
- ❖ the child in question not wishing the parent to be involved at that stage and is competent to take that decision;
- ❖ it is in the public interest.

Practitioners should discuss whether it is appropriate to seek consent from the child and parents with their agency's designated safeguarding person (DSP). If the decision is made not to seek consent this decision must be recorded.

Information that should be included in a report:

- Date of disclosure/concern
- Date and time of the record being made
- Name, address and date of birth of the child/children
- Details about the **cause for concern** regarding risk of harm
- A factual report of what happened, what was witnessed or said – use the child's own words!
- Detailed description of any injuries sustained and any allegations, for example sexual abuse, their sources, timing and location
- A note of any other people involved, family circumstances
- Whether the child is safe currently or is in need of immediate protection and actions taken so far
- Whether consent has been obtained and if not, why not
- Any discussions held with the parent/s (where deemed appropriate)
- Name of the person making the report and their job title
- Signature

The Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) should be informed and given the record. The member of staff should contact Social Services via telephone, to express their concern and Social Services will advise if a report should be made.

- Note the time of the telephone call to Social Services;
- Note the name of the person that is dealing with the telephone call;
- Note the actions to be taken;

If a report is to be made the DSP will support the **practitioner** (report maker) in completing the Multi Agency Referral Form (MARF) and processing the report.

Further guidance and the relevant Multi Agency Referral Form to make a referral can be found through the Gwent Safeguarding website, at

<https://www.gwentsafeguarding.org.uk/en/Children/Report/Report-a-child-at-risk.aspx>

***Remember to create the Picture** so that the person reading the report gets a clear understanding of why you have concerns about a child or children. Make it factual – how you are involved, what did you see, what did you hear, what happened, where did it happen, when did it happen, who else is involved and why you are reporting.

Third Party Information

Practitioners ‘must not leave it to the member of public to contact social services or just advise the person to contact social services directly’. The **practitioner** has a Duty To Report concerns raised by a member of the public. **Practitioners** have a responsibility to report any concerns they are alerted to by the general public – both in their work and private lives. When making a report that comes from a third party or the public **Practitioners** must:

- Record exactly what has been said by the member of public
- Give the information provided to them
- Establish what evidence the member of public has regarding the risk of harm. For example - have they witnessed the abuse, spoken to the individual who is at risk of harm, or heard something?
- Explain that whilst respecting any wish to remain anonymous this may not always be possible, for example if a crime is suspected.

Where possible, members of the public should be encouraged to provide contact details.

The Prevent Duty

As a registered childcare provider we are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, and have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”. This duty is known as the Prevent duty.

As a childcare provider, we as a setting, understand our role in identifying the possible risk to children in our care who may be vulnerable to radicalisation by others, whether in their own family or outside.

.....(setting) is committed to:

- Taking appropriate action when observing concerning behaviour
- Training **practitioners** so that they are able to identify families and children who may be vulnerable to radicalisation
- Build children's resilience to radicalisation by promoting fundamental British values.
 1. Democracy
 2. Rule of law
 3. Independent liberty
 4. Mutual respect and tolerance
- Assist in promoting children's learning in their personal, social and emotional development and understanding of the world
- Report any concerns following our setting's safeguarding procedures

Allegations against a **practitioner**

If an allegation of any form of child abuse is made against a **practitioner**, the following procedure will be adhered to:-

- All allegations of abuse of children by a professional or **practitioner** must be taken seriously and treated accordingly
- All **practitioner**s are made aware and understand that they can approach social services or the police, independently, to discuss any worries they have about abuse, neglect or harm and that they should always do so if;
 - ❖ They have concerns that their manager, designated **practitioner**s or proprietors may be implicated;
 - ❖ They have concerns that the manager, designated **practitioner**s or proprietor will not take the matter seriously and/or act appropriately to protect the child; or
 - ❖ They fear intimidation and/or have immediate concerns for their own or for the service user's safety
- All allegations and suspicions of professional abuse must be referred to Social Services, CIW or to the Police. The setting will follow their safeguarding procedures and submit a report.
- All allegations and concerns must be recorded, dated and signed.
- The setting will have high regard to;
 - ❖ Any concerns about a **practitioner**'s behaviour towards their own children/family members;

- ❖ If there are concerns about the **practitioner**'s behaviour towards children unrelated to their employment or voluntary work;
- ❖ When an allegation is made about historical abuse;
- A responsible senior manager from Social Services will meet with the setting's manager for an initial discussion and establish if further action is to be taken. Social Services will provide guidance and inform the setting's manager on how to proceed.
- If further action is to be taken, the responsible senior manager will arrange a strategy discussion with the police to consider any immediate action to be taken to protect the child, and to arrange a strategy meeting.
- At any point after an allegation is made the setting's manager may decide to suspend the **practitioner**.
- The **practitioner** should be informed that an allegation has been made at the earliest opportunity. Details of what can be shared will be discussed during the strategy discussion.
- The child's parents/carers will be informed of details of the allegations and the procedures to be followed.
- On no account should the allegation be discussed and direct questioning should be avoided if the police wish to interview the **practitioner**
- During the strategy discussion, a decision will be made regarding a Professional Strategy Meeting (PSM). If a PSM is to be held, this will be convened by Children's Services. The PSM should develop an action plan with time scales in order to avoid any necessary delay.
- The **practitioner** will be informed that the child protection enquiry will be carried out in accordance with child protection procedures. The **practitioner** will be reassured that every effort will be made to preserve confidentiality, however information gained which is relevant to disciplinary or criminal proceedings may be disclosed for this purpose.
- If the **practitioner** is a member of a trade union or other professional association they should be advised to contact that organisation. They can request copies of the minutes of the Professional Strategy Meeting if they so wish.
- At the conclusion of the investigation the member of staff must be informed, in writing, within 5 working days about the allegation that was made, the procedures followed and the outcome.
- Arrangements should be made to keep the child and their parents/carers informed of the outcomes.
- Where a **practitioner** is dissatisfied with the enquiries/investigation, or the outcome reached, they should be informed of grievance, complaints or appeals procedures which may be applicable.

Record Keeping

Children's records are freely accessible to parents. However, a written request must be made for personal files on the children as we must take into account data protection rules when disclosing records that refer to third parties.

The designated safeguarding person will ensure that:

- a chronological record of concerns about a child is maintained even if there is no need to make an immediate report;
- all such records are kept confidentially and secure.
- A file is maintained with copies of safeguarding reports, child protection conference minutes, observations, feedback from Social Services, record of injuries, reasons of absence, copies of emails are headed with the child's name, Social Workers name and contact, Health Visitors name and contact and kept within the child's file.

Safe Caring

All **practitioners** will make:-

- Every effort will be made to avoid or minimise time when **practitioners**, students or volunteers are left alone with a child. If **practitioners** are left alone with a child, the door of the room should be kept open and another **practitioner** should be informed
- If a child makes inappropriate physical contact with a **practitioner** this will be recorded fully in the Incident Record Book
- **Practitioners** will never carry out a personal task for children that they can do for themselves. Where this is essential, a **practitioner** will help a child whilst being accompanied by a colleague. Unless a child has a particular need, a **practitioner** should not accompany children into the toilet. **Practitioners** are aware that this and other similar activities could be misconstrued.
- **Practitioners** will be mindful of how and where they touch children, given their age and emotional understanding. Unnecessary or potentially inappropriate physical contact will be avoided at all times.

Confidentiality

Practitioners cannot keep confidential a disclosure or allegation of abuse and must refer the matter to the Designated Safeguarding Person and/or other senior member of staff. It is important that each **practitioner** deals with this sensitively. When responding, the **practitioner** should explain that they must inform the appropriate people who can help, but they will only tell those who need to know in order to be able to help. **Practitioners** should reassure the child/young person and tell them that their situation will not be common knowledge within the setting. Be aware that it may well have taken significant courage to disclose the information and they may also be experiencing conflicting emotions, involving feelings of guilt, embarrassment, disloyalty (if the abuser is someone close) and hurt.

All reports should be made with the knowledge that during any subsequent investigation, the source (i.e. the setting) will be made known to the family.

All suspicions, enquiries and external investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know.

Other practitioners may need to be alerted to concerns about a child or young person, possibly in order to monitor the concern or to gather further evidence prior to a report being made, or to assist in providing appropriate support to a child or young person once a report has been made. Information should only be shared on a strict need to know basis.

Relevant Telephone Numbers

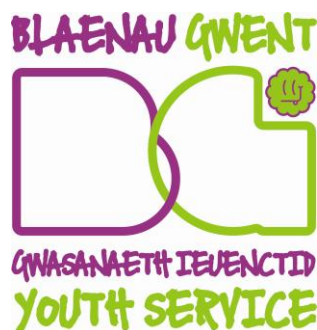
Social Services IAA Team	01495 315700
Social Services out of hours service	0800 328 4432
Gwent Police	01633 838111
Care Inspectorate Wales	0300 7900 126

This policy was updated on _____ by _____

Staff were made aware of this policy and or updates on _____

This policy will be reviewed on _____

Policy template for Blaenau Gwent Youth Service



Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy

Blaenau Gwent Youth Service is committed to safeguarding the welfare of the young people who engage with us through creating and maintaining an environment where young people are listened to and are able to talk safely about any concerns that they may have.

Legislation

Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child states that children have:

‘the right to be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation including sexual abuse by those looking after them.’

It further states that protective measures should, as appropriate, include:

‘effective procedures for prevention, identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow up of instances of child maltreatment.’

The Children Act 1989 (updated in 2004 following the Victoria Climbié Inquiry) legislates for Children in England & Wales. The principles of the Act are to ensure that the welfare and developmental needs of children and young people under the age of 18 are met. This also includes the need to be protected from harm.

Part V of the Act relates to this and states that in addition to **Social Services** only the **Police** and the **NSPCC** have the legal right and responsibility to investigate concerns about child abuse.

However, when working with children and young people **you have a duty of care** and should report any concerns that you may have. If any person has knowledge, concerns or suspicions that a child or young person is suffering, has suffered or is likely to be at risk of harm, it is their responsibility to ensure that the concerns are referred to one of

the agencies that have a statutory duty to make enquiries and intervene when necessary.

The Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2019, takes into account the above legislation and should be used as the main basis for all child protection in Wales. **A copy of this document is available via <https://safeguarding.wales/> and the South East Wales Safeguarding Board (<https://www.gwentsafeguarding.org.uk/en/Home.aspx>) and can be downloaded as an App. It is the responsibility of all staff to familiarise yourself with the documents and it's location.** This policy does not replace this document but provides you with the necessary information and guidance needed to assist you with your duty of care to safeguard young people. This policy sits underneath the **Corporate Child Protection Policy**, which is available via your line manager.

Definitions of Abuse and Neglect

All practitioners should be aware of the definitions of abuse and neglect in the Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014, as well as the signs and indicators of abuse and neglect. This is essential in order to communicate concerns about harm in a meaningful way.

S.130 (4) of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 defines a **child at risk** as a child who:

1. Is experiencing or is at risk of abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm;
2. Has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs).

The Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014 defines abuse and neglect:

'Abuse' means physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial abuse and includes abuse taking place in any setting, whether in a private dwelling, an institution or any other place. 'Financial abuse' includes:

- Having money or other property stolen;
- Being defrauded;
- Being put under pressure in relation to money or property;
- Having money or other property misused.

'Neglect' means a failure to meet a person's basic physical, emotional, social or psychological needs which is likely to result in an impairment of the person's well-being for example, impairment of the person's health

'Harm' means abuse or the impairment of (a) physical or mental health, or (b) physical, intellectual, emotional, social, or behavioural development, (including that suffered from seeing or hearing another person suffer ill treatment)

Types of Harm

- **Physical abuse** - hitting, slapping, over or misuse of medication, undue restraint, or inappropriate sanctions;
- **emotional/psychological abuse** - threats of harm or abandonment, coercive control, humiliation, verbal or racial abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks, witnessing abuse of others;
- **sexual abuse** - forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening, including: physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts; non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways;
- **financial abuse** - this category will be less prevalent for a child but indicators could be: not meeting their needs for care and support which are provided through direct payments; or complaints that personal property is missing.
- **neglect** - failure to meet basic physical, emotional or psychological needs which is likely to result in impairment of health or development.

Pointers for Practice: Signs and Indicators of Possible Abuse, Neglect and Harm In a Child <https://safeguarding.wales/chi/cp/c1p.p2.html?highlight=pointers>

A full glossary of terms can be found in the Wales Safeguarding Procedures: <https://safeguarding.wales/glossary.html>

Safeguarding

If you have a concern that a young person may be at risk of harm (e.g their safety or welfare), but are not in immediate danger or at significant risk then this has to be noted and passed onto your line manager. This may be something that you have heard, seen or had disclosed to you. These cases can be difficult to judge and therefore should be discussed with your line manager, as soon as possible, with action to be taken within the next 24 hours.

Child Protection

If you have a concern, or a young person has made a disclosure that makes you believe that an individual may be at risk of significant or immediate harm you must respond urgently to secure their safety and inform your line manager as soon as possible to inform them of your course of action.

Safeguarding Young People and Staff

(taken from the Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2019)

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales Act 2014, specifies the duty to report both adults and children at risk or where there is reasonable cause to suspect are at risk of harm. You have a duty to report concerns, suspicions, observations or disclosures made to you regarding safeguarding/child protection which involves a member of staff. Note the date, time, location and who was present and report to your line manager. Notes should also be kept of meetings/discussions with clear agreement about what action is to be taken and by whom. If the decision is made that no further action is to be taken, this should also be recorded with the reasons for the decision. These notes should be kept in a confidential file should they be required at a later date. Should there be serious concerns, agencies must not make their own internal decisions about whether it is a disciplinary issue or a child protection matter. These complex considerations should only take place with the involvement of social services and the police. The police have the statutory powers and responsibility for determining whether a criminal investigation is to be undertaken.

Informing Young People

As a youth worker it is important to let young people know, where possible before they make a disclosure, that if you have concerns for their wellbeing that you may need to pass that information on to ensure that they are kept safe from harm. Should a concern need to be referred on, be open and honest with the young person, keeping them informed, as much as possible, of the process and steps taken to secure their safety and/or wellbeing.

Informing Parents/Carers

Where possible parents should be informed that a report to Social Services is being made. Consent should be given by the parent/carer for this to happen. If the parent does not consent, yet the concern is still of enough significant for a report to Social Services then a report should still be submitted. It should be made clear on the form the reasons for consent not being given or reasons that parents could not be contacted to inform them of the report.

Sharing Information Among Professionals

A failure to share information is a common finding of practice reviews.

Effective sharing and exchange of information between professionals is essential in order to safeguard children and young people.

The law is rarely a barrier to disclosure of information. There is no restriction in the Data Protection Act or any other legislation that prevents concerns regarding individuals being highlighted and shared between agencies for the purpose of protecting children. The Bichard and Carlile reports both confirm the need to be aware that concerns from a number of sources, which individually may not be of any significance, can build up a picture which may suggest a child is suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm and therefore requires professionals to act to protect them.

Whenever possible, consent should be obtained before sharing personal information with third parties, but in the public interest in child protection always overrides the public interest in maintaining confidentiality or obtaining consent from families. A child's safety is the paramount consideration in weighing these interests.

Any discussion relating to a young person's welfare should be noted. Note the date, time and who was present at the meeting/discussion. At the end of the meeting/discussion there should be a clear agreement about what action is to be taken and by whom. If the decision is made that no further action is to be taken, this should also be recorded with the reasons for the decision. All concerns about a child or young person's welfare should be documented whether or not further action is taken. These notes should be kept in a confidential file should they be required at a later date.

Pointers for Practice: Seven Golden Rules for Information-Sharing

<https://safeguarding.wales/chi/cp/c3p.p5.html?highlight=information-sharing>

<https://safeguarding.wales/adu/ap/a3pt1p.p7.html?highlight=information-sharing>

Supervision

In addition to regular supervision for staff, where there is a safeguarding/child protection concern, line managers should make additional provision for staff to ensure that procedures have been followed and that support and guidance is given to the referring member/s of staff.

Training

All staff will be expected to keep up to date with child protection policies and procedures. Where this necessitates training then staff will be required to attend. Training in respect of safeguarding and child protection will be ongoing and identified by the youth service. Staff will be informed of when this will take place and will be expected to treat this as a diary priority.

Youth Work Staff Located Offsite

All staff should adhere to the Child Protection/Safeguarding procedures of the youth service. Where a youth provision is based within another setting e.g. schools, then staff should obtain and familiarise themselves with the child protection procedures of that

setting and have available the name and contact details of the designated safeguarding person. Should a safeguarding/child protection issue be raised, staff should firstly seek advice from their line manager. Following this, the designated safeguarding person at the setting should be informed of the concern and any action taken.

Youth Work Staff Working in Out of Hours Provision

Staff working out of hours should adhere to the Child Protection/safeguarding procedures of the youth service. Where concerns are raised then the procedures for Out of Hours Service should be followed.

Protection of Adults at risk (PoVA)

As youth workers we provide services to young people aged 11-25 years. This means that we may come into contact with adults who may need intervention from Social Services. Just as with safeguarding/child protection, we have the same duty of care for adults at risk. This means that staff should act if they:-

- Witness abuse;
- Receive information about abuse, suspected abuse or concerns about the care or treatment of a vulnerable adult;
- Have concerns or suspicions about possible abuse or inappropriate care

As with younger aged young people, adults at risk have the same rights to be fully informed and involved in the safeguarding process and make decisions about their safety and welfare. Adults at risk, if they have the mental capacity, should also have their wishes respected if they seem able to make an informed decision about action and/or intervention unless:

- There is a statutory duty to intervene e.g. a crime has been committed or may well be
- It is in the public interest e.g. another person/s are being put at risk
- It is suspected that they are under the undue influence or someone else

Who are Adults at Risk?

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act states that an 'adult at risk' is an adult who:

- is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect;
- has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs);
- as a result of those needs, is unable to protect him/herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

This definition may include a person who:

- Has learning disabilities
- Has mental health problems
- Is an older person with support/care needs
- Is physically frail or has a chronic illness
- Has a physical or sensory disability
- Misuses drugs or alcohol
- Has social or emotional problems
- Has an autistic spectrum disorder

Abuse can be physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial (includes theft, fraud, pressure about money, misuse of money). It can take place in any setting, whether in a private dwelling, an institution or any other place.

Neglect describes a failure to meet a person's basic needs which is likely to result in an impairment of the person well-being. It can take place in a range of settings, such as private dwelling, residential or day care provision.

The following behaviours could place the adult at risk of abuse or neglect (this list is **not** exhaustive):

- Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV)
- Modern Slavery
- Domestic abuse and violence against men
- Criminal exploitation
- Financial abuse
- Institutional abuse
- Discrimination and hate crime e.g. racial, homophobic, disability
- Forced marriage
- Abuse by another vulnerable adult
- Abuse by children

Pointers for Practice: Signs and Indicators of Possible Abuse and Neglect in an Adult at risk <https://safeguarding.wales/adu/ap/a1p.p2.html?highlight=pointers>

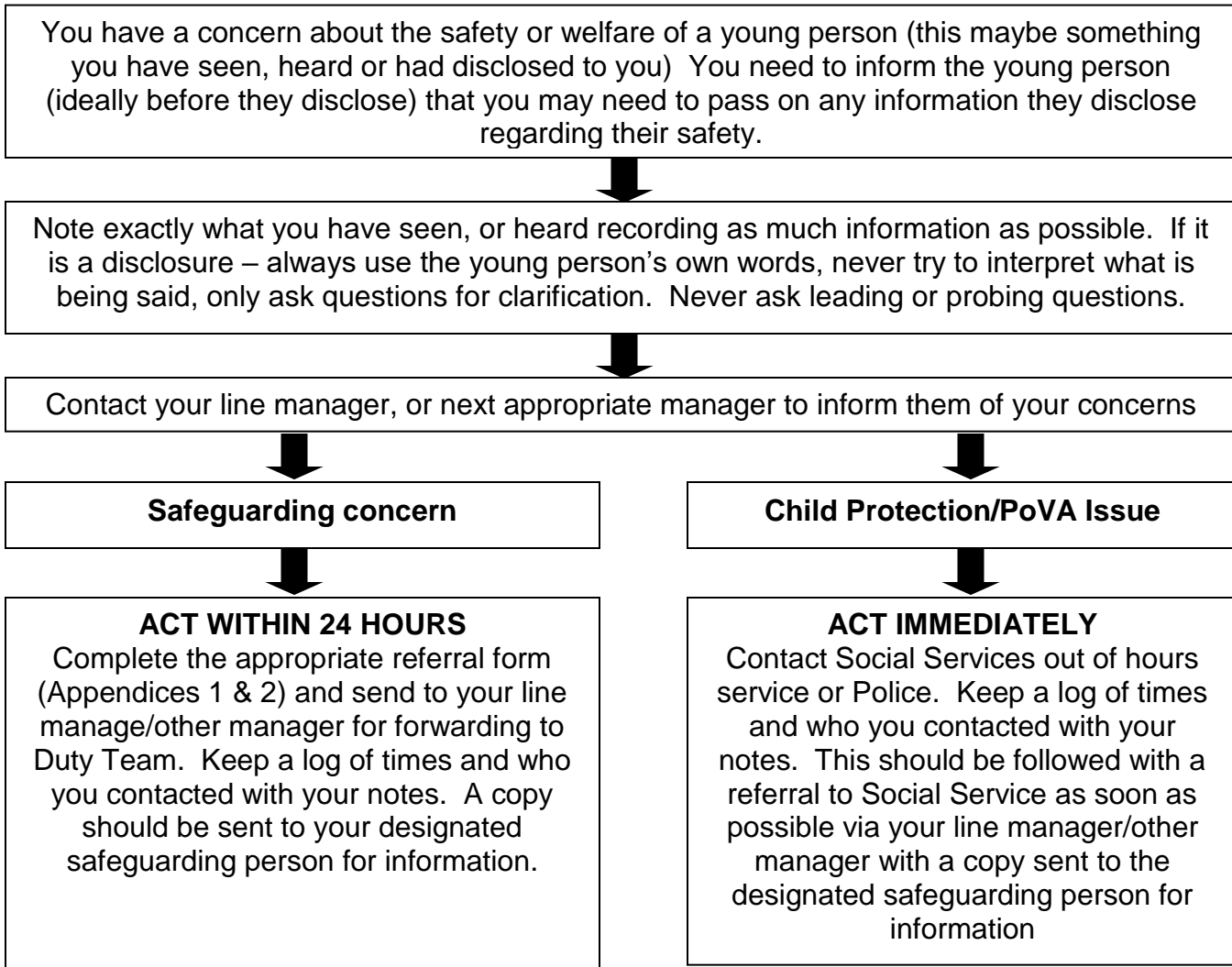
When making the decision to report an adult at risk, you should apply the same procedures as safeguarding/child protection and may need to refer to **the Wales Safeguarding Procedures. It is the responsibility of all staff to familiarise yourself with these procedures and how to access them, <https://safeguarding.wales/>**

The referral numbers for adults at risk are the same as Child Protection. Links to the relevant forms are found here:

<https://www.gwentsafeguarding.org.uk/en/Children/Report/Report-a-child-at-risk.aspx>
<https://www.gwentsafeguarding.org.uk/en/Adults/Report/Report-an-adult-at-risk.aspx>

Full time provision - Safeguarding/Child Protection Procedures

Flow chart



Useful Numbers

Joanne Sims	Youth Service Manager	01495 357866 07772 755435
Claire Madden	Youth Service Development Officer/ Designated Child Protection Officer	01495 357863 07581 628601
Ben Arnold	NEETS Projects Manager	01495 357864 07791 443612
Greg Morgan	Detached Youth Development Officer	01495 355674 07970 208727
Julia Swallow-Edwards	Inspire 2 Achieve Team Lead	01495 355690 07817 760771

Liam Thomas	Engagement and Progression Coordinator	01495 355690 07854 937489
-------------	--	------------------------------

Social Service Referral Telephone Number	01495 315700
--	--------------

Out of Hours Social Services Telephone Numbers	0800 3284432 01495 767045
--	------------------------------

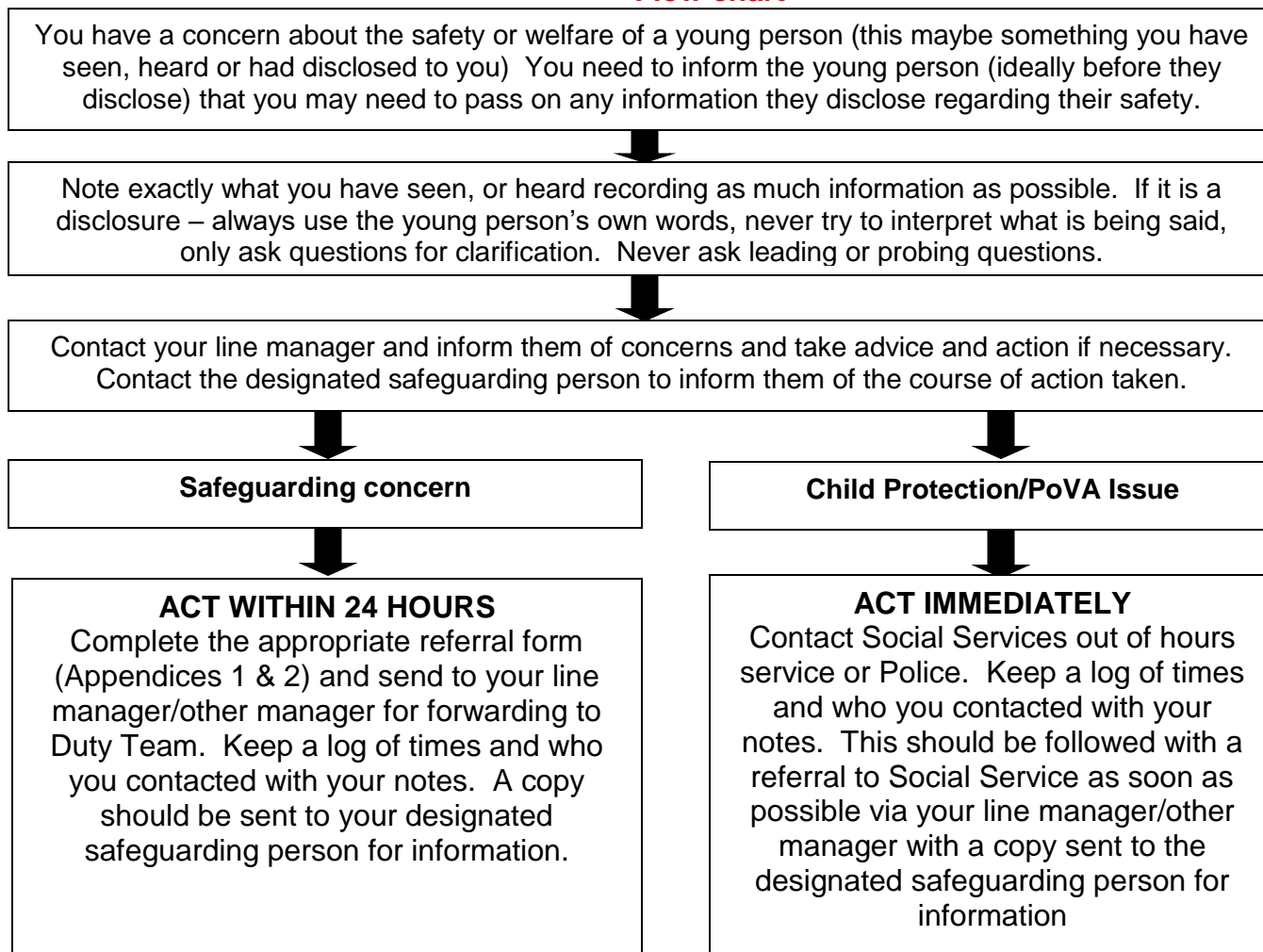
Police	01633 838111
--------	--------------

NSPCC Helpline (for professional advice)	0808 800 5000
--	---------------

Blaenau Gwent Youth Service

Full time Provision located Offsite – Child Protection/Safeguarding Procedures

Flow chart



Useful Numbers

Joanne Sims	Youth Service Manager	01495 357866 07772 755435
Claire Madden	Youth Service Development Officer/ Designated Child Protection Officer	01495 357863 07581 628601
Ben Arnold	NEETS Projects Manager	01495 357864 07791 443612
Greg Morgan	Detached Youth Development Officer	01495 355674 07970 208727
Julia Swallow-Edwards	Inspire 2 Achieve Team Lead	01495 355690 07817 760771

Liam Thomas Engagement and Progression Coordinator 01495 355690
07854 937489

Social Service Referral Telephone Number 01495 315700

Out of Hours Social Services Telephone Numbers 0800 3284432
01495 767045

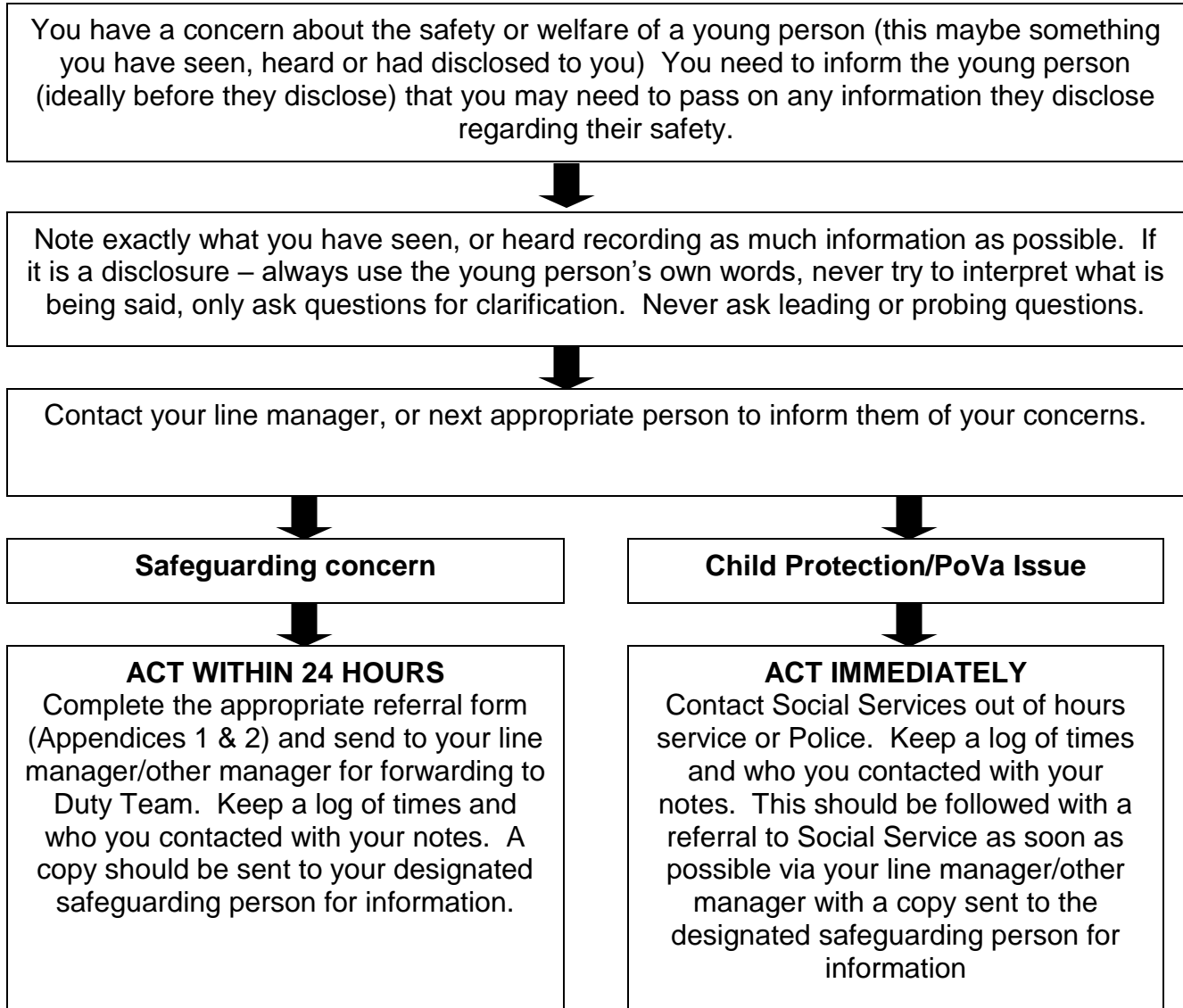
Police 01633 838111

NSPCC Helpline (for professional advice) 0808 800 5000

Blaenau Gwent Youth Service

Out of Hours Provision – Child Protection/Safeguarding Procedures

Flow chart



Useful Numbers

Joanne Sims	Youth Service Manager	01495 357866 07772 755435
Claire Madden	Youth Service Development Officer/ Designated Child Protection Officer	01495 357863 07581 628601
Ben Arnold	NEETS Projects Manager	01495 357864 07791 443612
Greg Morgan	Detached Youth Development Officer	01495 355674

		07970 208727
Julia Swallow-Edwards	Inspire 2 Achieve Team Lead	01495 355690 07817 760771
Liam Thomas	Engagement and Progression Coordinator	01495 355690 07854 937489

Social Service Referral Telephone Number	01495 315700
Out of Hours Social Services Telephone Numbers	0800 3284432 01495 767045
Police	01633 838111
NSPCC Helpline (for professional advice)	0808 800 5000

Types of Harm

All practitioners should be aware of the definitions of abuse and neglect in the Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014, as well as the signs and indicators of abuse and neglect. This is essential in order to communicate concerns about harm in a meaningful way.

A full glossary of terms can be found in the Wales Safeguarding Procedures <https://safeguarding.wales/glossary.html>

S.130 (4) of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 defines a **child at risk** as a child who:

3. Is experiencing or is at risk of abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm;
4. Has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs).

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act states that an 'adult at risk' is an adult who:

- is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect;
- has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs);
- as a result of those needs, is unable to protect him/herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

Types of Harm

- **Physical abuse** - hitting, slapping, over or misuse of medication, undue restraint, or inappropriate sanctions;
- **emotional/psychological abuse** - threats of harm or abandonment, coercive control, humiliation, verbal or racial abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks, witnessing abuse of others;
- **sexual abuse** - forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening, including: physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts; non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways;
- **financial abuse** - this category will be less prevalent for a child but indicators could be: not meeting their needs for care and support which are provided through direct payments; or complaints that personal property is missing.
- **neglect** - failure to meet basic physical, emotional or psychological needs which is likely to result in impairment of health or development.

A full glossary of terms can be found in the Wales Safeguarding Procedures: <https://safeguarding.wales/glossary.html>

How to make a Report

LISTEN

If you are concerned because of something a child or adult at risk is saying, you should not attempt to take any action directly but **you should**:

- Stay calm
- Listen carefully, do not directly question him or her, instead use open questions; what, where, when, who?
- Never stop them talking if they are freely recalling significant events
- Tell them what you will do next and who you will inform (see below)
- Never promise to keep what you have been told secret or confidential
- Make a note of the discussion, taking care to record what was said, when and where it happened and who else was present

SHARE

Any safeguarding concerns should be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Person in the respective service area. With the support of the Designated Safeguarding Person the decision to report a concern to Social Services will be made and responsibility for reporting will be agreed i.e. the staff member or the Designated Safeguarding Person will make the report.

Should the concerns relate to a professional, the same procedure will apply. Educational settings must also contact the safeguarding in education manager

Reports in relation to a concern about a child, young person or adult should be made to Social Services as soon as possible and certainly **within 24 hours**.

Social Services Information, Advice and Assistance Service can be contacted on:

01495 315700

Outside office hours, reports should be made to the South East Wales Emergency Duty Team or if there is immediate risk, to the Police.

The Emergency Duty Team can be contacted on: **0800 328 4432**

Practitioners and providers should be aware that they **cannot remain anonymous** when making a report.

The Duty Worker taking the report should be given as much information as possible if it is available to the reporter. This will include the following:

- Full name of the subject of the concern
- Their date of birth or age
- Their address
- The nature of the concern
- Who may be responsible
- Their name and relationship (if any)
- What happened
- When and where
- What has been done in response
- Whether or not the Police have been informed
- The names and relationship of those with caring responsibility
- The names and ages of any other adults living in the household
- The names of any professionals known to be involved e.g. school, GP
- Any information affecting the potential safety of staff
- The allocated social worker or team if known/if applicable

RECORD

All telephone reports should be confirmed in writing within two working days.

- For Children, a Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF) should be used:

<https://www.gwentsafeguarding.org.uk/en/Children/Report/Report-a-child-at-risk.aspx>

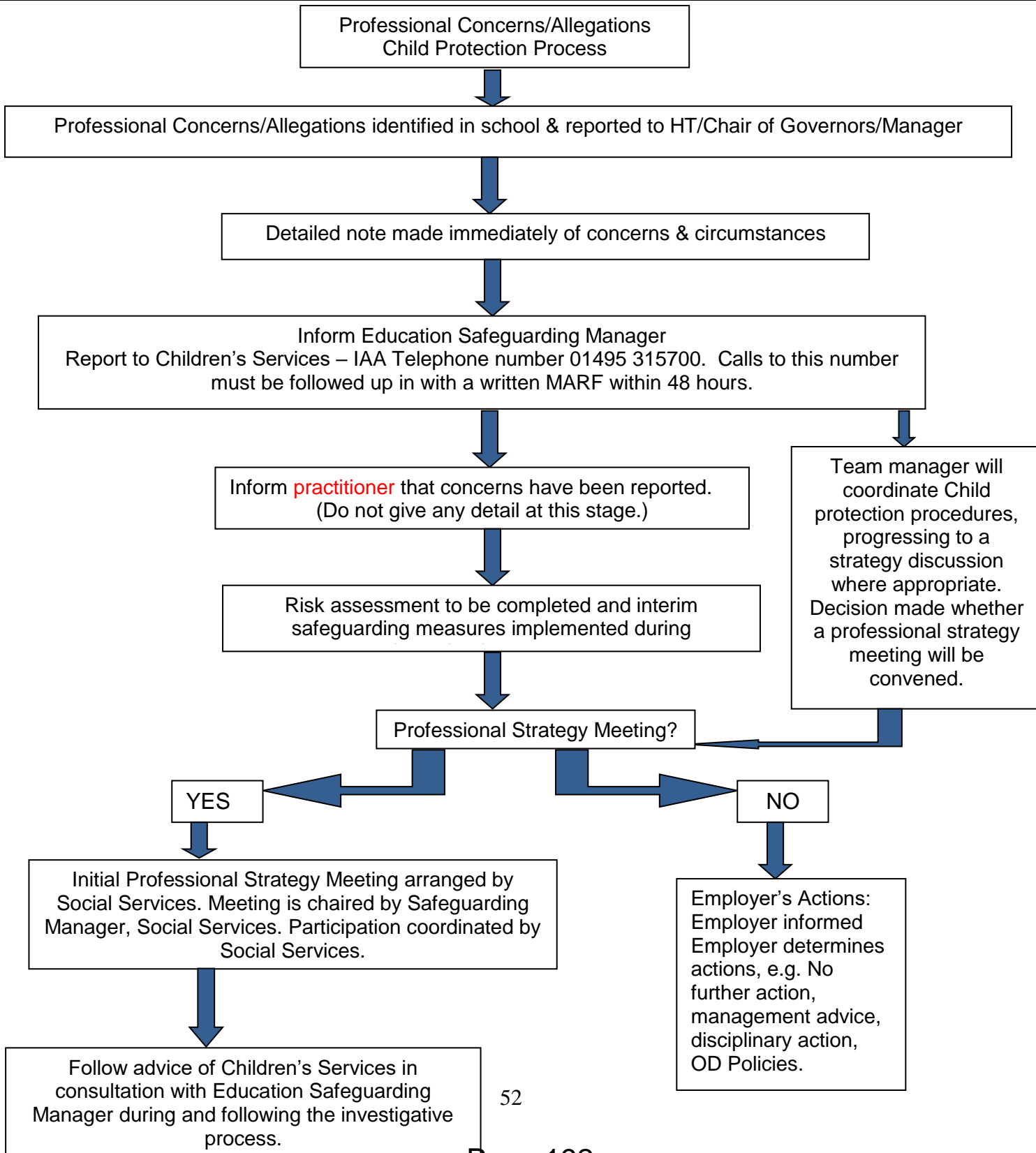
- For an Adult, a Duty to Report form should be used.

<https://www.gwentsafeguarding.org.uk/en/Adults/Report/Report-an-adult-at-risk.aspx>

LISTEN, SHARE, RECORD

PROFESSIONAL CONCERNS/ALLEGATIONS

This Flowchart should be used as a brief checklist of procedure for professional concerns/allegations
 Detailed procedures are outlined in **Wales Safeguarding Procedures**, section 5
 Also refer to Safeguarding Children in Education: Handling Allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff
 009/2014



Safeguarding File - Transfer of Records

A receiving school must be made aware of the existence of a Child's Safeguarding file prior to the child transferring from their original school.

The confidential Safeguarding File must be securely transferred to the new school either in Person, or via secure mail that requires a signature of receipt. This Transfer of Records form should be completed and forwarded with the file to the new school. Either the Head teacher or the Designated Senior Person for safeguarding should sign receipt for the file.

Sending Schools should retain a copy of the signed` Transfer of Records forms as evidence of the transfer, and ensure appropriate signatures are obtained.

Child Name	
DOB	

Name of sending school/setting:		
Date record ended at this school/setting (pupil end date):		
Name of receiving school/setting:		
Date of contact with new school/setting		
Has sensitive and urgent information been shared with new school/setting?	Yes / No	If No, why not?

Name of DSP sending records		
Date file sent		
File passed to (name):		

This section to be completed by the receiving school if file delivered by hand.

Receiving School/setting	
Signed	
Print name and position	
Date	

This section to be completed by the sending school with the postage receipt reference if file sent via secure post as proof of sending.

Reference number of postage receipt	
Name and address of recipient	
Date of postage	

Community Cohesion – Preventing Extremism

Our school/setting is committed to providing a safe environment for all of our children, staff and any visitors. There is no place for extremist views of any kind in our school/setting.

Community cohesion is the term used to describe how everyone in a geographical area lives alongside each other with mutual understanding and respect. A cohesive community is where a person has a strong sense of belonging. It is safe, vibrant and able to be resilient and strong when tensions occur.

Those involved in supporting terrorism look to exploit and radicalise vulnerable people, including children and young people. Since July 2015, the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 introduced a statutory duty on us ‘to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism’

We are aware that young people can be exposed to extremist influences or prejudiced views from an early age which spring from a variety of sources including the internet. At times students, visitors or parents may themselves reflect or display views that may be considered as discriminatory, prejudiced or extremist, including using derogatory language; this will always be challenged and where appropriate dealt with.

Education is a powerful deterrent against this and we will strive to equip young people with the knowledge, skills and resilience to challenge and discuss such issues in a facilitated and informed way. This way our students are enriched, understand and become tolerant of difference and diversity where they can thrive, feel valued and not marginalised.

We have a clear safeguarding framework on how to manage and respond to issues where a pupil develops or expresses extreme views and ideologies, which are considered inflammatory and against the community cohesion ethos of our school. Where such cases are identified a Multi-Agency Referral Form is to be completed and submitted to Children’s Services. The Local Authority Lead Officer for PREVENT should also be contacted.

Safeguarding Channel Panel

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults is everyone’s responsibility. We are committed to working with our partners to protect and support our students, and where a Multi-Agency Referral Form leads to one of our Students needing safeguarding, we will support the Channel programme.

Channel is a multi-agency approach to protect vulnerable people by identifying individuals at risk; assessing the nature and extent of that risk; and developing the most appropriate support plan for the individuals concerned.

Channel is about ensuring that vulnerable children and adults of any faith, ethnicity or background receive support before their vulnerabilities are exploited by those that would want them to embrace terrorism, and before they become involved in criminal terrorist related activity.

Training

We are committed to ensuring that all staff in our school have access to the Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP) and are encouraged to make use of other counter-terrorism related training modules and the reference material below.

Key Points of Contact

..... School's/Setting's Safeguarding Lead

Helena Hunt

Prevent Lead for Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Email: Helena.hunt@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk Tel: 07791 875737

Reference Material

Respect and Resilience – Developing Community Cohesion

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-03/respect-and-resilience-developing-community-cohesion.pdf>

Respect and Resilience – Developing Community Cohesion: Assessment tool:

<https://gov.wales/respect-and-resilience-self-assessment-tool-schools>

Prevent Duty Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>

Channel Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/channel-guidance>

E-learning training on:

PREVENT Awareness:

<https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/edu/screen1.html>

PREVENT Referrals:

<https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/preventreferrals>

Channel Awareness:

<https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/channelawareness>

Website: <http://educateagainsthate.com> Resources for parents and teachers

Secure and Shelter Procedure (example)

Secure and Shelter (Lockdown) procedures may be activated in response to any number of situations, but some of the more typical might be:

- A reported incident / civil disturbance in the local community (with the potential to pose a risk to staff and pupils in the school)
- An intruder on the school site (with the potential to pose a risk to staff and pupils)
- A warning being received regarding a risk locally of air pollution (smoke plume, gas cloud etc.)
- A major fire in the vicinity of the school
- The close proximity of a dangerous dog roaming loose

The school's secure and shelter plan is as follows:

Signal for secure and shelter	
Signal for all clear	

Actions - dependent upon the cause of the activation of Safe and Secure (amend as required)

- *Who sounds the alarm / other form of notification (specify)*
- **Pupils who are outside of the school buildings** are brought inside as quickly as possible and return to their *classroom / other location (specify)* (outside staff will be informed by a senior member of staff)
- **Those inside the school** should remain in their classrooms and check corridors and toilets for pupils or staff
- All external doors and, as necessary, windows are closed (depending on the circumstances, internal classroom doors must also be closed).
- If the cause of the secure and shelter is air pollution, close air vents and switch off extractor fans / air conditioning.
- Blinds should be drawn and pupils sit quietly
- Once in lockdown mode, staff should notify the office immediately of any pupils not accounted for via the internal telephone system and instigate an immediate search for anyone missing
- Staff should encourage the pupils to keep calm

- The school office will establish communication with the Emergency Services
- If it is necessary to evacuate the building, the fire alarm will be sounded and the usual fire evacuation procedure will then take place
- Parents will be notified as soon as it is practicable via Parentmail and the website (only when appropriate via guidance from Emergency Services)
- Pupils will not be released to parents during a safe and secure situation.

All situations are different, once all staff and pupils are safely inside, senior staff will conduct an on-going risk assessment based on advice from the Emergency Services.

This can then be communicated to staff and pupils. Emergency Services will advise as to the best course of action in respect of the prevailing threat.

All Clear

Once the incident has been assessed as safe all classrooms will be either visited by a senior member of staff or via classroom telephone and told the situation is under control and the class can resume activities as normal.

Emergency Services

It is important to keep lines of communication open with Emergency Services as they are best placed to offer advice as a situation unfolds. The school site may or may not be cordoned off by Emergency Services depending on the severity of the incident that has triggered the Lockdown.

Emergency Services and Corporate Communications will support the decision of the Headteacher with regarding the timing of communication to parents.

Safe and Secure Drill

It is of vital importance that the school's Safe and Secure procedures are familiar to all members of the school staff. To achieve this, a drill should be undertaken at least once a year.

Staff will ALWAYS have advance notice of a Safe and Secure drill, therefore if the signal occurs without warning staff must assume it is NOT A DRILL.

Parents will be notified as soon as it is practicable of the drill via Parentmail and the website

Associated Policies, Guidance and Advice

- [Wales Safeguarding Procedures](https://safeguarding.wales/) – 2019
- Keeping Learners Safe: The role of local authorities, governing bodies and proprietors of independent schools under the Education Act 2002. (January 2015)
- <https://gov.wales/keeping-learners-safe>
- Recruitment and selection policy
[http://intranet/organisational-development-\(hr\)/schools-hr/recruitment.aspx](http://intranet/organisational-development-(hr)/schools-hr/recruitment.aspx)
- Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) education toolkit
<https://gov.wales/violence-against-women-domestic-abuse-and-sexual-violence-vawdasv-educational-toolkit>
<https://gov.wales/violence-against-women-domestic-abuse-and-sexual-violence-guidance-governors-0>
- Safeguarding in Education: handling allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff – circular 009/2014 (April 2014)
- <https://gov.wales/handling-allegations-abuse-against-teachers-and-staff>
- Disciplinary and dismissal procedures for school staff- circular 002/2013 (replaces circular 007/2001)
<https://gov.wales/disciplinary-and-dismissal-procedures-school-staff>
- Blaenau Gwent Corporate Safeguarding Policy
http://intranet/media/130044/Corporate_Safeguarding_Policy_May_2017docxv3.pdf
- Procedures for Whistle blowing in Schools and Model policy- circular 036/2007
<https://gov.wales/whistleblowing-schools-guidance-governors>
Blaenau Gwent Whistleblowing policy
<http://intranet/media/92682/Whistleblowing-Policy-for-School-based-staff.pdf>
- Safeguarding Children: Working Together Under the Children Act 2004
https://www.basw.co.uk/system/files/resources/basw_14350-5_0.pdf
- Procedures for reporting misconduct and incompetence in the education workforce in Wales-Welsh Government 168/2015 (replaces 018/2009)
<http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/23182/1/150608-reporting-misconduct-en.pdf>
- Safe and effective intervention-use of reasonable force and searching for weapons, Welsh Government circular 097/2013 (replaces 041/2010).
<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-03/safe-and-effective-intervention-use-of-reasonable-force-and-searching-for-weapons.pdf>
- Children Missing from Education WG circular 002/2017 (replaces circular 006/2010)
<https://gov.wales/children-missing-education>
- Education Records, School Reports and the Common Transfer System - Circular 18/2006
<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-03/educational-records-school-reports-and-the-common-transfer-system-the-keeping-disposal-disclosure-and-transfer-of-pupil-information.pdf>

- Teaching Drama: guidance on Safeguarding Children and Child protection for managers and drama teachers- National Assembly for Wales circular 23/2006
<http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/7299/1/clwych-drama-guidance-e.pdf%3Flang%3Den>
- The Control of School Premises (Wales) Regulations 2008
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2008/136/made>
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2008/136/note/made>

Gwent Safeguarding:

<https://www.gwentsafeguarding.org.uk/en/Home.aspx>

Services for people from Black and Ethnic Minority (BME) backgrounds:

- [BAWSO](http://www.bawso.org.uk/) <http://www.bawso.org.uk/>

Domestic Abuse:

- <https://gov.wales/live-fear-free>
- <https://www.gwentsafeguarding.org.uk/en/VAWDASV/VAWDASV.aspx>
- info@phoenixdas.co.uk

Modern Slavery

<https://gov.wales/live-fear-free/slavery>

Keeping Safe Online

<https://hwb.gov.wales/zones/online-safety/key-information/>

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Safeguarding Data Protocol

Introduction

The governing body of a maintained school is responsible for the conduct and standards of the school; the Council shares the responsibility for standards in schools and discharges these responsibilities for the overall provision of education services in Blaenau Gwent.

The Council provides governing bodies with support through strategic support services that help to create a level of common policy planning and practices that schools share. As part of this, support is provided through the commissioned service known as the South East Wales Education Achievement Service (SEWEAS).

In order to manage the improvement process, there is a need to share information on a timely basis to ensure that appropriate monitoring, evaluation and reporting occurs and where appropriate timely intervention takes place.

The Council and its schools take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously and the purpose of this protocol is to articulate the timeframes in which the data will be shared

Background

This protocol sets out good practice for the exchange of safeguarding information between schools and the local authority in the discharge of statutory functions.

Principles

The Council has a dedicated Safeguarding in Education Manager who will manage the information and the return of the data from schools. Data is to be returned twice a year and a timetable will be established and shared with schools at the start of the Autumn term.

Protocol

The information required is detailed below. The request for information will be generated by a member of Business Support and all information will be sent to the Business Support officer using the return email address Timothy.Griffiths@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk by the dates specified.

The Safeguarding in Education Manager will maintain effective oversight of the information and use it to inform training and support programmes.

Any identified trend which requires immediate intervention will be managed by the Safeguarding in Education Manager.

Training:	<p><i>Dates of safeguarding training that have taken place since the previous data submission for the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole school staff training – individual staff names to be confirmed • Designated and Deputy Designated Senior Person, including title of course • Chair of governors and lead governor for safeguarding • Individual governors <p><i>Date of PREVENT training and who received this training.</i> <i>Date of VAWDASV training and who received this training</i></p>
Policy adoption:	<p><i>Policy adoption dates will be required only where policies have been reviewed and distributed to schools since the previous adoption date:</i></p> <p>Safeguarding policy Online Safety Policy Internet and Social Networking policy Appropriate use of the internet Anti-bullying policy Physical Intervention Safer recruitment policy Volunteer Guidance Whistle Blowing Policy Time-out policy Strategic Equity Plan Partnership Agreement</p>
Governors	<p><i>Confirmation of DBS certificate number and issue date</i> <i>Date of safeguarding training</i></p>
Volunteers:	<p><i>Confirmation of DBS certificate number and issue date</i> <i>Reference details</i> <i>Date of safeguarding training</i></p>

Training

Any training requirements for reporting of the data should be made to the Safeguarding in Education Manager.

Safeguarding Data Reporting Timeframe for 2020/2021 academic year

Date	Start	Half Term Starts	Half Term Ends	Term Ends	Data returned by
Autumn	01/09/2020	26/10/2020	30/10/2020	18/12/2020	13/11/2021
Spring	04/01/2021	15/02/2021	19/02/2021	26/03/2021	N/A
Summer	12/04/2021	31/05/2021	04/06/2021	20/07/2021	26/4/2021

Example: Covid 19 Child Protection Policy Annex: to be read in conjunction with the school's safeguarding/child protection policy.

Introduction

At this time when the landscape is changing day to day, we must all remember we still have a duty to safeguard children.

The purpose of this policy annex is to reflect the different ways in which we are working and to reinforce the procedures that remain in place to safeguard children.

Whilst acknowledging the pressure that schools and colleges are under during the lockdown period, it remains essential that they continue to be safe places for children. The '**Keeping learners safe**' guidance continues to apply to school or college settings.

- the best interests of children must always continue to come first
- if anyone in the school has a safeguarding concern about any child they should continue to act immediately
- a designated safeguarding person (DSP) should be available and easily identified
- unsuitable people must not enter the children's workforce and/or gain access to children
- children should continue to be protected when they are online
- schools should, as far as possible, take a whole setting approach to safeguarding. This will ensure that any new policies and processes in response to coronavirus are not weakening their approach to safeguarding or undermining their child protection policy.

Procedures

During the **COVID 19** outbreak the Information, Advice and Assistance Team (IAA) continue to be fully operational, the office hours remain as 9am - 5pm Monday – Friday.

The IAA Team will be able to offer advice if you have concerns for a child. They can be contacted on:

- **01495 315700**

Referrals can continue to be made to Blaenau Gwent Children's Services using a multi-agency referral form (MARF). This form can be found on the Gwent Safeguarding website: <https://www.gwentsafeguarding.org.uk/en/Children/Report/Report-a-child-at-risk.aspx>

The MARF should be sent to:

- **DutyTeam@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk**

After 5pm, on weekends and bank holidays, contact the South East Wales Emergency Duty Team (EDT) to report any safeguarding concerns:

• 0800 328 4432

If you think a child or young person is in immediate danger, contact the Police on 999.

The Legal Framework

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 specifies the **duty** placed on practitioners and partners under s.162 of the Act to report both adults and children including unborn children where they have reasonable cause to suspect the criteria regarding risk of harm is met.

A report **must** be made whenever a professional has concerns about a child under the age of 18 years.

If any person has knowledge, concerns or suspicions that a child is suffering has suffered or is likely to be at risk of harm, it is their responsibility to ensure that the concerns are reported to social services or the police who have statutory duties and powers to make enquiries and intervene when necessary

It is important that practitioners and partners do not ignore or dismiss suspicions as everybody has a responsibility to safeguard children.

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 defines a **child at risk** as a child who:

1. Is experiencing or is at risk of abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm;

The Act provides definitions of abuse and neglect as follows:

Abuse means physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial abuse (and includes abuse taking place in any setting, whether in a private dwelling, an institution or any other place), and 'financial abuse' includes theft, fraud, pressure about money or misuse of money

Neglect means a failure to meet a person's basic physical, emotional, social or psychological needs, which is likely to result in an impairment of the person's well-being (for example, an impairment of the person's health).

Harm means abuse or the impairment of (a) physical or mental health, or (b) physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development, (including that suffered from seeing or hearing another person suffer ill treatment).

Identifying and reporting Concerns

During this period of lockdown and self-isolation there have been increased risks for those living at home with someone who may display abusive behaviours. It may be more difficult to report concerns.

Limited numbers of children have been attending settings during the lockdown period. As schools re-open to all learners, all staff need to be alert to the signs of abuse and know how to respond to a person who may disclose abuse. Practitioners may identify new safeguarding concerns about individual children as they start to see them in person.

Whether safeguarding concerns are identified regarding a pupil attending the school site or through continued contact arrangements by school staff with students, the school continues to have a legal duty to report all safeguarding concerns.

Whether a child is attending the setting or accessing learning from home, school continues to be a support to pupils and parent/carers who are concerned about harm or abuse. Any pupils, parents/carers who are concerned about harm or abuse, should contact their class or form teacher or another adult in the school to share their concerns.

During the COVID restrictions, multi-agency meetings have been held using remote ways of working. Education Staff will continue to work with children's social workers and contribute to safeguarding meetings in this way.

Safeguarding and supporting children during the COVID 19 period continues to be a priority. To report concerns, follow the procedures set out in this annex.

Concerns about a staff member/volunteer who may pose a safeguarding risk to children: any concerns within the setting must be reporting to the Headteacher. If the concern relates to the Headteacher, contact the Safeguarding in Education Manager. Safeguarding concerns about a member of staff/volunteer must be reported to the IAA

The Safeguarding in Education Manager must be contacted for all concerns about a member of staff/volunteer. Sarah.Dixon@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk 07815 005241. If not available, contact the IAA

Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP)

The Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) for the setting is:

The Deputy DSP is:

Contact arrangements for the DSP/Deputy DSP will be displayed around the building and communicated to all staff/volunteers. If the DPS/deputy is off site, then they will be available via remote means, for example, by telephone or video conference, or an alternative named member of staff will be designated for contact for safeguarding matters. This information will also be communicated to staff who are working in any alternative buildings, if the school uses any off-site buildings.

Any changes to these arrangements will be communicated to all staff/volunteers.



WG

designated-safegua



WG

practitioner-handou

The Safeguarding in Education Manager for Blaenau Gwent is Sarah.Dixon@blaenau.gwent.gov.uk

Operation Encompass

Operation Encompass continues to operate during the lockdown period.

The purpose of Operation Encompass is to safeguard and support these children and young people who have witnessed and/or been present at the time of a domestic abuse incident.

The Live Fear Free helpline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for free advice and support or to talk through options:

0808 80 10 800 info@livefearfreehelpline.wales

<https://gov.wales/live-fear-free/staying-safe-during-coronavirus-emergency>

Keeping Safe Online

During the COVID restrictions, children and young people are likely to spend more time online, whether for entertainment, to stay in touch with friends and family or to support their home learning. There are clearly many benefits to staying connected, however, increased time online may also increase the risk of encountering online safety issues.

Useful links for staying safe online:

Keeping safe online guidance from Welsh Government <https://hwb.gov.wales/zones/online-safety/key-information/>

Live streaming guidance <https://hwb.gov.wales/zones/online-safety/live-streaming-safeguarding-principles-and-practice-for-education-practitioners/>

Reporting harmful content found online <https://reportharmfulcontent.com/>

Online safety playlist for parents <https://hwb.gov.wales/zones/online-safety/news/articles/21e491a7-e417-4570-92dd-12bd7ba05747>

Wales Safeguarding Procedures

This setting follows the Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2019 and also policies, protocols and guidance documents that have been endorsed by Gwent Safeguarding

Detailed information on safeguarding procedures, a glossary of terms and All Wales Practice Guides can be found in these procedures <https://safeguarding.wales/>

Gwent Safeguarding links

<https://www.gwentsafeguarding.org.uk/en/Children/Protocols-and-Procedures/Protocols-and-Procedures.aspx>.

<https://www.gwentsafeguarding.org.uk/en/Children/Professionals/Professionals.aspx>

<https://www.gwentsafeguarding.org.uk/en/Children/Parents-and-Carers/Parents-and-Carers.aspx>

<https://www.gwentsafeguarding.org.uk/en/Children/Children-and-Young-People/Children-and-Young-People.aspx>

Communication protocol for contacting families during lockdown

During the school re-purposing period, schools continued to contact families. A protocol for communication was implemented and can continue to be used during the school re-opening phase.



Communication_pr
otocol_V4_-_4.5.20.c

Welsh Government Guidance:

This guide aims to assist practitioners in accessing information and advice on identifying abuse and/or supporting disclosure and reporting concerns

<https://gov.wales/keeping-children-and-young-people-safe-non-statutory-guide-practitioners>

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 12

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 23.11.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 24.11.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **9th December 2020**

Report Subject: **Revenue Budget Monitoring -2020/2021, Forecast
Outturn to 31 March 2021 (As at 30 September 2020)**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Daniels – Leader / Executive Member Corporate
Services**

Report Submitted by: **Rhian Hayden – Chief Officer Resources**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	05/11/2020	24.11.20			23/11/20	9/12/20		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Members with the forecast financial outturn position across all portfolios for the financial year 2020/2021 (as forecast at 30 September 2020).

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 This report provides details on the following:
- Forecast financial position to the end of March 2021 across all portfolios
 - Forecast outturn for Fees & Charges
 - Progress on the achievement of the Bridging the Gap Projects for 2020/2021.
- 2.12 This report will inform the quarterly financial reporting framework to Members.

3. Options for Recommendation

3.1 Option 1 (Recommended Option)

Members to consider and provide appropriate challenge to the financial outcomes in the report

3.2 Option 2

Members do not accept the report.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 This report supports the Council Corporate Plan proposed outcome statement 2020/2022 “An ambitious and innovative council delivering the quality services we know matter to our communities”.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 **Impact on Budget**

5.1.1 The overall forecast outturn as at September 2020, is an adverse variance of £3.402m. This is before the application of Welsh Government Hardship funding, reducing the forecast adverse variance to £0.248m. This is an improved position compared to the forecast as at June 2020, which indicated an adverse variance of £1.2m (after the application of Hardship and furlough funding).

5.1.2 The forecast overall financial position across all portfolios at 30 September 2020 (and before the inclusion of Covid-19 related expenditure) is shown in the table below:

Portfolio/ Committee	2020/2021 Revised Revenue Budget	2020/2021 Forecast Outturn @ 30 Sept 2020	Favourable/ (Adverse) To 31 March 2021	Append ref:
	£m	£m	£m	
Underspending Portfolios				
Corporate Services & Financial Management & Strategy	16.726	16.639	0.087	2a
Education & Leisure	62.132	61.840	0.292	2c
Social Services	45.352	45.236	0.116	2b
Sub Total (1)	124.21	123.715	0.495	

Overspending Portfolios				
Economy	1.215	1.436	(0.221)	2d
Environment	25.532	25.934	(0.402)	2e
Planning	1.118	1.132	(0.014)	2f
Licensing	0.070	0.097	(0.027)	2f
Sub Total (2)	27.935	28.599	(0.664)	
Total	<u>152.145</u>	<u>152.314</u>	<u>(0.169)</u>	
Covid-19 Costs				
Social Services		1.474	(1.474)	
Education		0.059	(0.059)	
Environment		1.701	(1.701)	
Sub Total – Covid19		<u>3.234</u>	<u>(3.234)</u>	
WG Hardship funding			<u>2.454</u>	
WG SS Hardship funding			<u>0.701</u>	
Revised Total			<u>(0.248)</u>	

5.1.3 The forecast includes actual and estimated funding from the Hardship fund for April to September 2020 of £3.155m. In addition, the Council has been successful in claiming furlough funding from the national scheme for the period and £183,000 of this funding has been built into the current forecast (part of the furlough funding relates to school based staff, which are not included within the portfolio figures above). The forecast shows a positive movement of approximately £1m from the quarter 1 forecast. Movements greater than £100,000 relates to:

- Corporate Services - £163,000
- Economy - £104,000
- Environment - £687,000
- Infrastructure - £113,000

- 5.1.4 Welsh Government has considered claims from local authorities for loss of income for quarter 1 relating to tranche 1 (civil parking enforcement, grounds maintenance, school catering, waste disposal and cultural services) and tranche 2 (Social Services, room hire/ground rents, rechargeable fees) and the Council has received a total sum of £1,104,000 of which:
- £744,000 relates directly to portfolio budgets
 - £88,000 for schools who arrange their own catering arrangements and
 - £272,000 for the Leisure Trust.

Subsequently, £744,000 of lost income has been re-instated in the portfolio forecasts above. Claims for loss of income for quarter 2 are being collated, in line with a set of principles issues by Welsh Government. Consequently, the assumption in the portfolio forecasts is that loss of income will be funded to 31st March 2021.

- 5.1.5 Taking Hardship funding , Furlough income and the initial claims for lost income into account, the net impact on the Council's revenue budget is a forecast adverse variance of £0.248m.
- 5.1.6 The increased caseload in the Council Tax Reduction Scheme is currently forecasting an adverse variance of £0.5m. Welsh Government are committed to revisiting the situation across Wales by the end of the financial year.

5.1.7 **PORTFOLIO ANALYSIS**

- 5.1.8 It has been assumed that "normal" budget activity would resume for the second half of the financial year. Future forecasts can be updated to take account of any revisions to the current situation, or example the local lockdown in Blaenau Gwent and the national "firebreak" lockdown across Wales. A summary of main adverse variances is shown as Appendix 1. Portfolio summaries are also included below.
- 5.1.9 The report also indicates the number of vacant posts as at 30th September 2020 (together with the monthly salary plus oncost value) in each portfolio, *where the vacant post has not been used to offset cost pressures elsewhere* and excluding grant funded posts (see Appendix 6). The Appendix indicates that there are currently 4 vacant posts at a total monthly salary value of £14,000 in this category. This equates to a potential saving of £84,000 to the end of the financial year (should the posts not be filled). The Appendix also includes information relating to vacant posts that are being held vacant to offset cost pressures for varying periods of time, at a total monthly salary value of £36,000.
- 5.1.10 Action plans to address cost pressures are attached at Appendix 4.
- 5.1.11 **Corporate Services – £87,365 favourable variance (qtr1 £75,570 adverse variance)**

The movement in the quarter 1 adverse variance of £76,000 to a favourable £87,000 variance relates to:

- WG loss of income received for CTRS £87,000

- Increase in the Corporate Services Departmental Budget favourable variance £53,000

There are three main adverse variances within the Portfolio:

5.1.12 **CTRS - £541,007**

As previously reported, this is due to an increase in the number of claimants resulting from the economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. It has been assumed that the increased level of claimants will continue for the remainder of the financial year. The WLGA has collated the CTRS cost pressure across Wales and information has been submitted to WG officials, with a view to it being considered by Ministers in the “Star Chamber”. Income of £87,000 has now been received from WG in respect of quarter 1.

5.1.13 **ICT Service - £160,000**

This adverse variance is mainly as a consequence of income being built into the budget which was intended to be funded by reserves, with the view that future savings, due to merging of software systems, would produce savings and therefore reduce the need of reserve funding. These savings have not yet been achieved, as the Software Contracts are still Blaenau Gwent’s responsibility.

Attempts are being made to try to mitigate this adverse variance, with all IT contracts now being reviewed and re-negotiated through the Procurement team. In addition, following the deployment of Office 365, opportunities to scale back the number of systems operating across the council, are being explored, to reduce costs. However, this continues to be a cost pressure for the council.

5.1.14 **Registrars - £40,798**

The forecast adverse variance is due to a reduction in income from fees & charges. £3,958 has been received from WG in respect of loss of income for quarter 1, however this only equates to 50% of our initial claim, as it is assumed that income will improve throughout the year. Welsh Government will review this situation towards the end of the financial year as it is anticipated that this adverse variance will improve as services are re-introduced

5.1.15 These adverse variances have been offset by two main favourable variances:

5.1.16 **Cross cutting Budget £496,000**

Commercial & Contract Management (£496,410) – This budget has been set up to fund contract price increases during 2020/2021, however no requests have been received to date.

5.1.17 **Departmental Budgets £202,508**

The forecast favourable variance mainly relates to employee related savings due to vacant posts mostly as a result of long term secondments and maternity leave that cannot be filled at the moment due to the current circumstances, also staff on temporary reduced hours and one off grant funding being secured.

5.1.18 The Transformation Fund of £492,000 has been assumed to be fully committed at this stage, to progress and support the Bridging the Gap programme. However, the only transformation project that have come forward for funding is for the business case development for Festival Park.

5.1.19 **Social Services – £116,000 favourable variance (qtr1 £64,000 favourable variance)**

5.1.20 The forecast is made up of the following main variances: -

- Children's Services
There is an overall adverse variance of £58,000 (down from £124,000 in qtr1) which is mainly due to the continuing cost pressure in legal fees resulting from court proceedings in relation to Children Looked After.

5.1.21 The adverse variance has been partially offset by the following areas:

- Adult Services
The favourable variance of £125,000 is mainly due to the application of ICF Grant funding for a number of established posts, and the significant loss of income within Provider Services has been offset by Furlough payments and a reduction in staffing cover costs, there has been an assumption that Day Services will not resume service until the end of the calendar year.
- Support Services and Management Costs
The favourable variance of £50,000 is due to accumulated underspends in staffing costs, travelling expenses and Supplies and Services within the departmental budget and the Workforce Development Plan budget.

5.1.22 **Education and Leisure– £293,000 favourable variance (qtr 1 £370,000 favourable variance)**

5.1.23 As the Leisure Services budget now falls under the remit of the Corporate Director of Education, the relevant budgets are grouped together in this section. There are five main areas of favourable variances :-

- School Budget Supporting SEN £106,000 favourable – relating mainly to a higher than estimated number of out of county SEN pupils attending BGCBC schools.
- Assuring Access £27,000 favourable – relating mainly to the 25% agreed reduction on Home to School Transport contracts. In addition, an estimated increase in Home to School Transport for pupils attending Pen y Cwm School has been forecast.
- LEA Budget Supporting SEN £77,000 favourable – relating to the secondment income for the Principal School Psychologist.

- Home to College Transport £32,000 favourable - relating a saving from the non-payment of travel passes for the summer term 2020.
- Strategic Management £35,000 favourable – relating to pension contributions to the local government pension scheme for school based staff.

5.1.24 **Economy – £221,000 adverse variance (qtr 1 £325,000 adverse variance)**

The forecast is made up of the following main variances:

- Industrial Units £182,000 adverse variance –down from £226,000 in quarter 1, as a result of a loss of income claim. At present the adverse variance relates to a contingency for loss of rental income for 6 months from tenants who are deemed high risk in terms of rent payment. It is intended to submit further claims for loss of income in quarters 3 and 4.
- Estates Non Rechargeable £11,000 adverse variance – The impact on COVID-19 on the collection of ground rents, albeit an improvement on the quarter 1 forecast of a £55,000 adverse variance. At this stage it is unclear if this income will be lost to the Council or the collection is delayed.

5.1.25 **Environment Portfolio – £402,000 adverse variance (qtr1 £1,202,000 adverse variance)**

5.1.26 The movement in the quarter 1 adverse variance of £1.2m to an adverse £0.4m variance relates to:

- There is a revised assumption that schools will fund the SLA for catering and cleaning services - £460,000 movement in the overall adverse variance.
- An improved Departmental Budget position - £120,000 movement in the overall adverse variance (primarily due to a loss of income claim)
- An improved waste collection/disposal position - £285,000 movement in the overall adverse variance (primarily due to WG Hardship funding, charging revenue costs to a capital grant and the resumption of side waste enforcement leading to a forecast reduction in residual waste disposal)

The main reason for the current adverse variance is due to:

Waste collection and disposal which is forecasting an adverse variance of-£0.331m, mainly due to

- Additional cost of 2 Waste Wardens which cannot be met within existing resources.
- An increase in residual waste tonnages during the lockdown period, which has only been partly offset by the WG Hardship Fund.

- There is a decrease in recyclate income of £90,000 compared to financial year 2019/2020. This is due to fluctuations in the market prices and a general downturn in activity. Only the decrease in income from the plastics, cardboard and textiles market has been directly affected by Covid-19 and hardship funding has been built in to partly offset this decrease.
- The delay to the opening of the HWRC as a result of Covid-19, has impacted on the forecast increase in the volume and sale of recyclate material.
- An increase in green waste recycling costs - £40,000 mainly as a result of the contractor closing for business which resulted in a contingency arrangement put in place at short notice, which has been costly. There is now a new contract in place for a longer term solution. The increased tonnage collected during the first lock down period has been partly been offset by the WG Hardship Fund.

5.1.27 **Cross cutting issues**

5.1.28 There are some areas of expenditure which will see reductions across a number of portfolios:-

- Car allowances – an increase in home working and the transfer of meetings online has led to a significant reduction in claims. For example, there has been a reduction in expenditure of approximately £144,000 comparing April to September 2020 to the previous financial year.
- Energy costs – the closure of some Council buildings and schools has led to a reduction in expenditure. For example, there has been a reduction in expenditure of approximately £230,000 comparing April to September 2020 to the previous financial year.

5.1.29 **Fees & Charges**

5.1.30 The 2020/2021 portfolio estimates include income budgets in relation to fees & charges (excluding Council Tax) of £14.8m across all portfolios. Attached at Appendix 3 is an analysis of income received against budget for the financial year for individual portfolios, and current forecast indicates an adverse variance against this target of £1.33m, primarily relating to lost income in the sale of recyclate, charges for Community Care and rental income for Industrial Units.

5.1.31 Whilst the analysis of fees and charges is useful, it should not be considered in isolation, as elements of any shortfall within Portfolios can be inextricably linked to underspends in expenditure within the same budget heading. Where this is the case, budget holders should action budget virements to ensure that the income targets reflect more accurately expected income. Likewise, any over achievement in income which offset overspends in expenditure within the same budget, should be treated in the same way.

5.1.32 **Bridging the Gap Programme**

5.1.33 The target for the financial achievement of the Strategic Business Reviews in 2020/2021 is £1.465m. Many of the proposals relate to income generation / maximisation and therefore these areas have been factored into the fees and charges information contained within Appendix 3. An overall summary of progress within each proposal is attached as Appendix 5 which also provides an update on progress for each Bridging the Gap proposal.

5.1.34 Appendix 5 forecasts that £1.218m (83%) of savings will be achieved in this financial year. This forecast will be updated for the quarter 3 forecast and is therefore subject to change.

Sensitivity Analysis

5.1.35 Given that Public Health Wales (PHW) predictions of a further spike in Covid-19 relates cases in the autumn of 2020 are coming to fruition, it is prudent to consider the financial impact on the Council's finances, through sensitivity analysis.

5.1.36 Areas where there could be significant budgetary impact include:

- increased numbers of claimants claiming Council Tax Reduction payments over and above current forecast levels.
- Reduced or lost Council tax income (impacting on the Council Tax collection rate)
- Continuing Loss of income from fees & charges
- Non Achievement of the Bridging the Gap Programme
- Additional costs incurred across a range of services (e.g. PPE, maintaining social distancing, external social care costs)

5.1.37 On the basis that the forecast Covid-19 cost pressure for the April to September 2020 period in this report is £3.2m (as per the summary portfolio table above), the potential worst case scenario is as follows:

- October 2020 to December 2020 – additional cost pressure of £1.6m
- October 2020 to February 2021 – additional cost pressure of £2.65m
- October 2020 to March 2021 – additional cost pressure of £3.2m

5.1.38 A mid case scenario would suggest that the forecast Covid-19 cost pressure for the April to September 2020 period in this report is 50% of the worst case scenario ie £1.6m. The potential financial implications of this scenario are as follows:

- October 2020 to December 2020 – additional cost pressure of £0.8m
- October 2020 to February 2021 – additional cost pressure of £1.33m
- October 2020 to March 2021 – additional cost pressure of £1.6m

- 5.1.39 At this stage, the additional cost pressures are based on a pro rata calculation, based on known Covid-19 costs incurred. The sensitivity analysis can be updated if and when the situation develops.
- 5.1.40 Welsh Government has recently announced a £260m funding package for local government to assist with continuing Covid-19 related issues for the remainder of the financial year, which will assist with these forecast cost pressures.

5.2 **Risk including Mitigating Actions**

- 5.2.1 Grants form a significant element of the Council's income and support the delivery of priority services to the people of Blaenau Gwent. There is a risk that a reduction or cessation of grant funding will result in service levels reducing or services no longer being delivered.
- 5.2.2 A grants register have been developed and is being maintained and will be considered as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 5.2.3 There is a risk that Action Plans will not address the cost pressures identified
- 5.2.4 Action Plans have been developed, identifying actions to mitigate the forecast cost pressure. The Action Plans will be monitored as part of the Budget Monitoring and Reporting Framework and the impact reported to the Joint Budget Scrutiny Committee, Executive Committee and the Cost Pressure Sub Group.
- 5.2.5 Savings to date will have been factored into the current forecast. However, some will continue beyond the lockdown period and could contribute towards forecast cost pressures.
- 5.26 There is a risk that Covid-19 will continue into the medium/long term, impacting on Council services and budgets. This risk can be mitigated by the continuation of processes that the Council has introduced since March 2020 eg prioritising services, redeployment of staff, home working.
- 5.2.7 There is a risk that Welsh Government will not provide Hardship funding/loss of income funding for all cost pressures identified. This risk can be mitigated by a continuing dialogue and lobbying with Welsh Government, through the WLGA and the continuing development of action plans by budget holders.
- 5.2.8 There is a risk of increase costs for food, fuel and other essential goods and services following the ongoing situation regarding the U.K. Exiting the E.U..
- 5.2.9 The UK Exiting the EU has been added as an organisational risk to the corporate risk register, whilst a separate, more detailed high level action plan has been developed and is being monitored by the Core Planning Group.
- 5.3 Legal
N/A

5.4 Human Resources
N/A

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

6.1.1 A summary page for each portfolio is contained in Appendices 2a to 2g.

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

6.2.1 The report details the financial implications for the Council in providing services to the communities of Blaenau Gwent.

6.2.2 If overspends continue into the medium term, resources will be diminished and this may impact on the Council's ability to provide services to the public.

6.3 **Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)**

6.3.1 CLT have considered the forecast financial position for 2020/2021 (as 30 September 2020).

6.4 **Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)**

6.4.1 For new and emerging cost pressures identified during the financial year, budget holders have produced Action Plans which should address the cost pressure during the year. These Action Plans will form part of the quarterly budget reports and will be submitted to the Cost Pressure Sub Group for scrutiny, challenge and monitoring.

6.4.2 Cost Pressures are also considered as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan.

6.5 **Preventative focus**

6.5.1 Budget holders will continue to develop and monitor Action Plans which should mitigate the forecast adverse variance during the financial year. It may be necessary to implement further actions including maintaining vacant posts and limiting non- essential spend during the remainder of the financial year, where it is possible to do so, to prevent any unplanned draw from reserves at the year end.

6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**

6.6.1 Accountancy works closely with budget holders during the financial year in producing the financial forecast, identifying cost pressures and in developing Action Plans.

6.7 *Integration (across service areas)*
N/A

6.8 **EqIA(screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)**

6.8.1 All Bridging the Gap Projects that were approved as part of the budget setting process had gone through the EqIA process.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

State how the work will be monitored e.g. through scrutiny or directorate performance management arrangements

7.1 Financial reporting to Joint Scrutiny and the Executive is carried out on a quarterly basis. Where services are reporting significant cost pressures, there will be a requirement for Budget Holders to develop and implement Action Plans these will be reported to the Cost Pressure Sub Group, on a quarterly basis.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Summary of Main Forecast Adverse Variances 2020/21

Appendix 2 – Portfolios

Appendix 3 – Fees and Charges

Appendix 4 – Action Plan

Appendix 5 – Bridging the Gap Strategic Business Reviews

Appendix 6 – Vacant Posts

SUMMARY OF MAIN FORECAST ADVERSE VARIANCES 2020/2021

		<u>Forecast Adverse Variance at June 2020</u>	<u>Forecast Adverse Variance at September 2020</u>	<u>Action Plan Ref:</u>
		<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>	
	<u>Adverse variances in Excess of £15,000</u>			
1.	<u>Corporate Services</u>			
	ICT Service		(160,000)	4a
	Registration of Births, Marriages and Deaths	(64,742)	(40,798)	4a
	Council Tax Collection	(64,151)	90,846	4a
	Council Tax Reduction Scheme	(627,383)	(541,007)	4a
2.	<u>Social Services</u>			
	<i>Childrens Services:</i>			
	Legal Costs	(399,699)	(499,699)	4b
3.	<u>Economy</u>			
	Estates Management Non Rechargeable	(54,831)	(10,769)	4c
	General Offices	(18,129)	(254)	4c
	Nursery Units	(226,063)	(181,869)	4c
4.	<u>Environment</u>			
	Technical Services	(96,000)	0	4d
	Waste Services	(548,076)	(331,583)	4d
	Grounds Maintenance	(83,003)	(17,000)	4d
	Corporate Landlord	(68,850)	(57,536)	4d
	Building Cleaning	(244,608)	0	4d
	Catering	(215,804)	0	4d
	Environmental Health	(66,642)	(89,044)	4d
	Cwmcrachen Caravan Site	(25,079)	(23,473)	4d
5.	<u>Planning + Licensing</u>			
	Planning Committee – Dealing with Applications	(31,293)	(31,293)	4e
	Licensing Committee	(25,904)	(26,419)	4e

This page is intentionally left blank

CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

Item	Revised Estimate 2020/2021	Total Forecast Expenditure to March 2021	Variance Favourable / (Adverse)	Variance Favourable / (Adverse) as at Jun 20
	£	£	£	£
SUMMARY				
<u>DEPARTMENTAL AND OTHER RECHARGEABLE SERVICES</u>				
Corporate Services Department	(65,990)	(269,039)	203,049	150,209
Resources Department	(22,110)	(21,569)	(541)	(9,806)
Sub Total	(88,100)	(290,608)	202,508	140,403
<u>COMMERCIAL SERVICES</u>				
Archives	151,640	142,789	8,851	8,851
Festival Park	92,820	98,188	(5,368)	(5,368)
Housing Benefit	(117,130)	(120,892)	3,762	3,705
ICT Service	467,240	627,240	(160,000)	0
Cross Cutting	(50,000)	(50,000)	0	0
Sub Total	544,570	697,325	(152,755)	7,188
<u>LEGAL & CORPORATE COMPLIANCE SERVICES</u>				
Registration of Electors	16,670	13,588	3,082	3,082
Registration of Births, Marriages and Deaths	33,630	74,428	(40,798)	(64,742)
Sub Total	50,300	88,016	(37,716)	(61,660)
<u>GOVERNANCE & PARTNERSHIP SERVICES</u>				
Corporate Management	107,370	112,009	(4,639)	(4,639)
Democratic Representation and Management	1,239,940	1,242,169	(2,229)	(10,398)
CCTV Cameras	84,000	67,437	16,563	29,745
Civil Contingencies	100,820	100,102	718	(12,580)
Sub Total	1,532,130	1,521,717	10,413	2,128
<u>RESOURCES SERVICES</u>				
Corporate Management	338,810	331,335	7,475	19,195
Non Distributed Costs	846,240	843,658	2,582	2,582
Apprenticeship Levy	320,000	314,622	5,378	5,559
Council Tax Collection	(1,333,860)	(1,424,706)	90,846	(64,151)
Council Tax Reduction Scheme	9,257,740	9,798,747	(541,007)	(627,383)
N.N.D.R. Collection	(107,040)	(110,257)	3,217	4,157
Grants and Subscriptions	57,270	57,270	0	0
Cross Cutting Budget	988,410	492,000	496,410	496,410
Sub Total	10,367,570	10,302,668	64,902	(163,631)
<u>CORPORATE CHARGES</u>				
Corporate Recharges	4,319,750	4,319,737	13	0
Senior Management Restructure	0	0	0	0
Sub Total	4,319,750	4,319,737	13	0
Covid-19 Related Expenditure	0		0	(147,712)
CORPORATE SERVICES TOTAL EXPENDITURE	16,726,220	16,638,855	87,365	(223,284)

SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO

Item	Revised Estimate 2020/2021	Total Forecast Expenditure to March 2021	Variance Favourable / (Adverse)	Variance Favourable / (Adverse) as at Jun 20
	£	£	£	£
SUMMARY				
<u>SOCIAL SERVICES</u>				
Children's Services - Commissioning and Social Work	3,562,584	3,492,893	69,691	74,735
Looked After Children	6,920,102	7,156,837	(236,735)	(275,209)
Family Support Services	188,603	183,220	5,383	2,637
Youth Justice	232,922	228,118	4,804	9,702
Other Children's and Family Services	2,343,590	2,244,827	98,763	64,603
Older People Aged 65 or Over	5,710,020	5,617,393	92,627	123,786
Adults Aged Under 65 with a Physical Disability or Sensory Impairment	41,800	43,571	(1,771)	(1,771)
Adults Aged Under 65 with Learning Disabilities	3,687,899	3,621,258	66,641	74,385
Adults Aged Under 65 with Mental Health Needs	596,710	619,016	(22,306)	(12,540)
Other Adult Services	357,910	355,878	2,032	(2,260)
Community Care	15,723,813	15,736,331	(12,518)	(14,452)
Support Service and Management Costs	1,023,280	973,405	49,875	19,670
Corporate Recharges	4,962,770	4,962,772	(2)	(10)
Social Services COVID-19 Costs	0	1,473,709	(1,473,709)	(762,640)
Sub Total	45,352,003	46,709,228	(1,357,225)	(699,364)
Social Services Emergency Flood Costs	0	0	0	0
Covid-19 Related Expenditure	0	0	0	0
Total Expenditure	45,352,003	46,709,228	(1,357,225)	(699,364)

EDUCATION PORTFOLIO

Item	Revised Estimate 2020/2021	Total Forecast Expenditure to March 2021	Variance Favourable / (Adverse)	Variance Favourable / (Adverse) as at Jun 20
	£	£	£	£
SUMMARY				
SCHOOLS BUDGET				
Individual Schools Budget	45,069,380	45,069,380	0	0
Education Improvement Grant	257,800	269,530	(11,730)	(9,174)
Other Costs	662,320	662,843	(523)	(567)
Supporting Special Education Needs	1,707,570	1,601,760	105,810	111,788
<i>Schools Budget Total Expenditure</i>	<u>47,697,070</u>	<u>47,603,513</u>	<u>93,557</u>	<u>102,047</u>
LEA BUDGET				
Strategic Management	2,282,620	2,247,456	35,164	8,817
Assuring Access to Schools	2,133,370	2,106,122	27,248	129,540
Facilitating School Improvement	419,760	399,647	20,113	12,006
Supporting Special Education Needs	337,940	260,679	77,261	63,101
<i>LEA Budget Total Expenditure</i>	<u>5,173,690</u>	<u>5,013,904</u>	<u>159,786</u>	<u>213,464</u>
OTHER EDUCATION SERVICES				
Further Education and Training	133,290	101,450	31,840	27,807
Youth Service	380,873	376,099	4,774	11,743
Other Expenditure	141,037	135,550	5,487	(3,453)
Education Departmental Budget	0	10,877	(10,877)	9,895
<i>Other Education Services Total Expenditure</i>	<u>655,200</u>	<u>623,976</u>	<u>31,224</u>	<u>45,992</u>
CORPORATE CHARGES				
Corporate Support Recharges	4,225,700	4,225,700	0	0
<i>Corporate Charges Total Expenditure</i>	<u>4,225,700</u>	<u>4,225,700</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Covid-19 Related Expenditure	0		0	(21,818)
Total Expenditure	<u>57,751,660</u>	<u>57,467,093</u>	<u>284,567</u>	<u>339,685</u>
LEISURE TRUSTS				
LEISURE TRUSTS				
Leisure Trusts	3,215,660	3,232,688	(17,028)	(17,028)
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>3,215,660</u>	<u>3,232,688</u>	<u>(17,028)</u>	<u>(17,028)</u>
RETAINED SERVICES				
Corporate Recharges	1,164,900	1,140,321	24,579	24,838
General Reserve Funding Re: Staff Support	0	0	0	0
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>1,164,900</u>	<u>1,140,321</u>	<u>24,579</u>	<u>24,838</u>
LEISURE TRUSTS TOTAL EXPENDITURE	<u>4,380,560</u>	<u>4,373,009</u>	<u>7,551</u>	<u>7,810</u>

ECONOMY PORTFOLIO

Item	Revised Estimate 2020/2021	Total Forecast Expenditure to March 2021	Variance Favourable / (Adverse)	Variance Favourable / (Adverse) as at Jun 20
	£	£	£	£
SUMMARY				
<u>DEPARTMENTAL SERVICES</u>				
Economic Strategy and Development - Departmental Budget	(1,240)	13,724	(14,964)	(14,000)
Estates Management - Rechargeable	0	8,751	(8,751)	524
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>(1,240)</u>	<u>22,475</u>	<u>(23,715)</u>	<u>(13,476)</u>
<u>ECONOMY SERVICES</u>				
Affordable Housing	0	0	0	0
Aspire	0	0	0	0
Community Benefits Investment	0	0	0	0
CSCS	(10,000)	2,913	(12,913)	(12,909)
Destination Management	16,150	16,150	0	0
DRIVE	0	0	0	0
Financial Support to Business	4,140	4,140	0	0
General Offices	(75,762)	(75,508)	(254)	(18,129)
Industrial Land	6,946	(2,450)	9,396	0
Inspire	0	0	0	0
Nursery Units/Misc. Industrial Premises	(827,315)	(645,446)	(181,869)	(226,063)
Pentagon	0	0	0	0
Regeneration Projects	4,900	6,075	(1,175)	0
Resilient Project	0	0	0	0
Estates Management Non Rechargeable	(92,998)	(82,229)	(10,769)	(54,831)
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>(973,939)</u>	<u>(776,355)</u>	<u>(197,584)</u>	<u>(311,932)</u>
Corporate Recharges	2,189,880	2,189,880	0	0
Funding from General Reserves	0	0	0	0
Total Expenditure	<u><u>1,214,701</u></u>	<u><u>1,436,000</u></u>	<u><u>(221,299)</u></u>	<u><u>(325,408)</u></u>

ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

Item	Revised Estimate 2020/2021	Total Forecast Expenditure to March 2021	Variance Favourable / (Adverse)	Variance Favourable / (Adverse) as at Jun 20
	£	£	£	£
SUMMARY				
<u>COMMUNITY SERVICES</u>				
<u>DEPARTMENTAL SERVICES</u>				
Environment Department - Corporate Division	0	(9,463)	9,463	26,363
Environmental Services Division	0	30,984	(30,984)	(73,128)
Technical Services - Engineering & Property Management	(6,386)	(6,386)	0	(96,000)
Sub Total	(6,386)	15,135	(21,521)	(142,765)
<u>WASTE SERVICES</u>				
Waste Services Team	0	0	0	0
Sub Total	0	0	0	0
<u>WASTE COLLECTION</u>				
Household and Trade Waste Collection	612,320	642,290	(29,970)	0
Recycling Collection	2,012,370	2,081,716	(69,346)	(93,484)
Bulky Waste Collection	(4,224)	(9,520)	5,296	(23,603)
Sub Total	2,620,466	2,714,486	(94,020)	(117,087)
<u>WASTE TRANSFER</u>				
Civic Amenity Sites	247,970	335,992	(88,022)	(29,386)
HWRC Roseheyworth	260,480	78,143	182,337	104,195
Transfer Station	569,370	603,878	(34,508)	(56,236)
Sub Total	1,077,820	1,018,013	59,807	18,573
<u>WASTE DISPOSAL</u>				
Disposal Of Waste	999,730	1,063,365	(63,635)	(126,971)
Recycling Disposal	18,294	218,386	(200,092)	(221,966)
Trade Waste Collection, Transfer & Disposal	(30,974)	2,669	(33,643)	(100,625)
Sub Total	987,050	1,284,420	(297,370)	(449,562)
<u>PUBLIC SERVICES</u>				
County Borough Cleansing	1,086,700	1,057,822	28,878	38,080
Cemeteries / Crematorium	(280,381)	(307,785)	27,404	125,856
Community Meals	0		0	0
Grounds Maintenance	942,857	959,857	(17,000)	(83,003)
Countryside Recreation Sites	34,690	32,608	2,082	2,082
General Entertainment	2,530	2,530	0	0
Sub Total	1,786,396	1,745,032	41,364	83,015
<u>FACILITIES MANAGEMENT</u>				
Corporate Landlord	1,235,205	1,292,741	(57,536)	(68,850)
Corporate Property	11,300	11,298	2	0
Building Cleaning	70,240	70,240	0	(244,608)
Catering Account	137,462	137,462	0	(215,804)
Appetite For Life	42,854	42,854	0	0
School Breakfast Club	384,010	371,825	12,185	12,185
Sub Total	1,881,071	1,926,420	(45,349)	(517,077)

ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

Item	Revised Estimate 2020/2021	Total Forecast Expenditure to March 2021	Variance Favourable / (Adverse)	Variance Favourable / (Adverse) as at Jun 20
	£	£	£	£
<u>HIGHWAYS & ROADS SERVICES</u>				
Highways - Street Care Team	0	1,754	(1,754)	(1,399)
Non Operational Land	1,460	0	1,460	1,460
Licensing (Highway Permits)	(34,018)	(34,018)	0	(8,168)
Shopping Arcade, Abertillery	2,780	2,105	675	675
Road and Street Works Acts	(33,496)	(39,285)	5,789	0
Multi-Storey Car Parks	272,740	272,740	0	0
On Street Parking	1,100	1,100	0	0
Surface Car Parks	31,790	31,790	0	0
Public Transport Co-Ordination	910	910	0	0
Bridges	77,590	90,973	(13,383)	0
Structural Maintenance (Principal and Other Roads)	169,410	171,300	(1,890)	0
Environmental Maintenance (Principal and Other Roads)	19,440	19,440	0	0
Safety Maintenance (Principal and Other Roads)	71,596	71,453	143	0
Routine Repairs (Principal and Other Roads)	839,918	827,606	12,312	0
Street Lighting	1,193,090	1,193,090	0	0
Winter Maintenance	390,340	390,340	0	0
<i>Sub Total</i>	3,004,650	3,001,298	3,352	(7,432)
<u>TRANSPORT SERVICES</u>				
Traffic Orders	(16,024)	(16,024)	0	2,025
Highways Adoptions	(9,560)	(9,560)	0	0
Traffic / Accident Research	15,690	15,690	0	5,258
Traffic Management	6,760	6,760	0	1,276
Civil Parking Enforcement	0	0	0	5,396
Road Safety Education	18,340	18,340	0	0
Crossing Patrols	149,220	146,617	2,603	5,280
Concessionary fares and Support to Operators	281,060	281,060	0	0
Local Transport Plans	2,620	2,620	0	0
Home to School Transport	0	0	0	0
Transport and Heavy Plant	58,850	58,850	0	0
<i>Sub Total</i>	506,956	504,353	2,603	19,235
<u>CULTURAL & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES</u>				
General Administration and Markets	(23,870)	(23,870)	0	(14,348)
Countryside Programme and Management	1,990	1,990	0	0
Landscaping and Afforestation	20,470	20,470	0	0
Reservoirs, Tips, Quarries and Mines	10,130	10,130	0	0
Flood Defence And Land Drainage	55,380	55,380	0	0
ENRaW	0	0	0	0
City Deal	62,700	62,700	0	0
<i>Sub Total</i>	126,800	126,800	0	(14,348)
COMMUNITY SERVICES TOTAL EXPENDITURE	11,984,823	12,335,957	(351,134)	(1,127,448)

ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

Item	Revised Estimate 2020/2021	Total Forecast Expenditure to March 2021	Variance Favourable / (Adverse)	Variance Favourable / (Adverse) as at Jun 20
	£	£	£	£
<u>PUBLIC PROTECTION</u>				
<u>DEPARTMENTAL SERVICES</u>				
Environmental Health	8,000	97,044	(89,044)	(66,642)
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>8,000</u>	<u>97,044</u>	<u>(89,044)</u>	<u>(66,642)</u>
<u>CARAVAN SITES</u>				
Cwmcrachen Caravan Site	(54,735)	(31,262)	(23,473)	(25,079)
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>(54,735)</u>	<u>(31,262)</u>	<u>(23,473)</u>	<u>(25,079)</u>
<u>ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH</u>				
Food Safety	6,311	8,359	(2,048)	(3,783)
Control of Pollution	9,717	13,180	(3,463)	4,376
Dog Wardens	1,512	2,630	(1,118)	(1,304)
Animal Health and Welfare	23,358	20,000	3,358	3,360
Pest Control	62,000	62,509	(509)	(8,000)
Littering and Dog Control Orders	0	2,744	(2,744)	(2,744)
Health and Safety at Work (Commercial Prem.)	1,514	1,255	259	(81)
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>104,412</u>	<u>110,678</u>	<u>(6,266)</u>	<u>(8,176)</u>
<u>HOUSING SERVICES</u>				
Homelessness	244,683	164,832	79,851	63,434
20 Church Street	12,311	14,129	(1,818)	(1,206)
General Properties	(8,164)	(7,416)	(748)	(594)
Housing Access	64,167	46,290	17,877	17,944
Works in Default	17	4,187	(4,170)	(4,167)
Disabled Facilities Grants	1,040	863	177	177
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>314,054</u>	<u>222,885</u>	<u>91,169</u>	<u>75,588</u>
<u>TRADING STANDARDS</u>				
Trading Standards	(18,000)	(26,311)	8,310	6,646
Inspection and Enforcement	4,388	3,230	1,158	1,160
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>(13,612)</u>	<u>(23,080)</u>	<u>9,468</u>	<u>7,806</u>
PUBLIC PROTECTION TOTAL EXPENDITURE	<u><u>358,119</u></u>	<u><u>376,265</u></u>	<u><u>(18,146)</u></u>	<u><u>(16,503)</u></u>

ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

Item	Revised Estimate 2020/2021	Total Forecast Expenditure to March 2021	Variance Favourable / (Adverse)	Variance Favourable / (Adverse) as at Jun 20
	£	£	£	£
<u>CORPORATE CHARGES</u>				
Fire Service	3,405,680	3,405,680	0	0
Coroner's Court	120,830	120,830	0	0
Corporate Recharges	9,662,500	9,662,631	(131)	0
Procurement Saving	0		0	0
Prudential Borrowing	0		0	0
Flood Costs	0	32,845	(32,845)	(5,515)
Income Generation	0	0	0	(52,750)
CORPORATE CHARGES TOTAL EXPENDITURE	13,189,010	13,221,986	(32,976)	(58,265)
 Covid-19 Related Expenditure	 0	 1,701,174	 (1,701,174)	 (1,040,693)
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	25,531,952	27,635,382	(2,103,430)	(2,242,909)

PLANNING COMMITTEE AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

Item	Revised Estimate 2020/2021	Total Forecast Expenditure to March 2021	Variance Favourable / (Adverse)	Variance Favourable / (Adverse) as at Jun 20
	£	£	£	£
PLANNING COMMITTEE SUMMARY				
<u>BUILDING CONTROL</u>				
<u>DEPARTMENTAL SERVICES</u>				
Building Control	0	0	0	0
<u>BUILDING CONTROL SERVICES</u>				
Building Regulations	3,140	3,140	0	0
Dangerous Structures	22,200	18,018	4,182	4,149
<i>Building Control Total Expenditure</i>	<u>25,340</u>	<u>21,158</u>	<u>4,182</u>	<u>4,149</u>
<u>DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT</u>				
<u>DEPARTMENTAL SERVICES</u>				
Development Management	0	(12,641)	12,641	12,641
<u>DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT SERVICES</u>				
Dealing with Applications	(202,740)	(171,447)	(31,293)	(31,293)
Planning Appeals	3,190	3,193	(3)	0
Enforcement	(30)	3	(33)	(30)
<i>Development Management Total Expenditure</i>	<u>(199,580)</u>	<u>(180,892)</u>	<u>(18,688)</u>	<u>(18,682)</u>
<u>DEVELOPMENT PLANS</u>				
<u>DEPARTMENTAL SERVICES</u>				
Development Plans	0	(59)	59	0
<u>DEVELOPMENT PLANS SERVICES</u>				
Development Plans	34,080	34,080	0	0
<i>Development Plans Total Expenditure</i>	<u>34,080</u>	<u>34,021</u>	<u>59</u>	<u>0</u>
Corporate Recharges	1,257,740	1,257,740	0	0
Funding from General Reserves	0	0	0	0
Covid-19 Related Expenditure	0	0	0	0
Planning Committee Total Expenditure	<u><u>1,117,580</u></u>	<u><u>1,132,027</u></u>	<u><u>(14,447)</u></u>	<u><u>(14,533)</u></u>
LICENSING COMMITTEE SUMMARY				
Licensing	33,360	59,779	(26,419)	(25,904)
Internal Recharges	37,010	37,010	0	0
Funding from General Reserves	0	0	0	0
Covid-19 Related Expenditure	0	0	0	0
Licensing Committee Total Expenditure	<u><u>70,370</u></u>	<u><u>96,789</u></u>	<u><u>(26,419)</u></u>	<u><u>(25,904)</u></u>

This page is intentionally left blank

Fees and Charges Forecast 2020/2021 (As at September 2020)

Portfolio	Service	Description of Income	Income Source	Revised Estimate 2020/2021	Forecast	Variance Favourable / (Adverse)	Variance Favourable / (Adverse) as at June 2020
				£	£	£	£
Fees & Charges							
Corporate Services	Communications	Advertising	Fees & Charges	19,910	1,400	(18,510)	(19,010)
Corporate Services	Business Support	External Printing and photocopying charges.	Fees & Charges	8,000	2,036	(5,964)	(4,238)
Corporate Services	Legal Fees	Legal Charges	Fees & Charges	14,330	3,067	(11,263)	(12,440)
Corporate Services	Corporate Support	Land Charges	Fixed - Set Locally	32,150	23,456	(8,694)	(5,631)
Economy	General Offices	Rental Income	Fees & Charges	64,969	55,977	(8,992)	(14,499)
Economy	Departmental	Reimbursement of staff costs and receipts for external works	SLA	66,494	33,468	(33,026)	19,073
Environment	Household and Trade Waste Collection		Fees & Charges	0	0	0	0
Environment	Recycling Collection	Recycling Collection & Disposal Income - Commercial Customers	Fees & Charges	0	0	0	0
Environment	Trade Waste	Trade Waste Collection & Disposal Income - Commercial Customers	Fees & Charges	140,593	132,392	(8,201)	(130,624)
Environment	Bulky Waste Collection	Bulky Waste Collection	Fees & Charges	71,687	75,522	3,835	(23,281)
Environment	Recycling Disposal	Sale of Recyclate Materials	Fees & Charges	629,721	418,377	(211,344)	(272,605)
Environment	County Borough Cleansing	C&CR - External Cleansing Works	Fees & Charges	210	0	(210)	(210)
Environment	Cemeteries / Crematorium	Burial Fees	Fees & Charges	495,080	457,772	(37,308)	101,690
Environment	Cemeteries / Crematorium	General Properties	Fees & Charges	2,630	3,000	370	420
Social Services	Meals On Wheels	Sale of Meals	Fees & Charges	175,280	175,974	694	(29,244)
Environment	Grounds Maintenance	Income from Letting of Playing Fields, Ground Rent & Way Leaves	Fees & Charges	59,901	66,372	6,471	22,762
Environment	General Properties	Rental Income	Fees & Charges	8,015	7,416	(599)	(599)
Environment	Cwmcrachen Caravan Site	Rental	Fees & Charges	113,947	109,984	(3,963)	(10,808)
Environment	Dog Wardens	Byelaw Enforcement Fees	Fees & Charges	5,665	895	(4,770)	(5,171)
Environment	Corporate Landlord	Civic Centre - Rental of Land	Miscellaneous	797	693	(104)	(104)
Environment	School Catering Service	Sale of Meals		814,091	829,434	15,343	330
Financial Management and Strategy	Accountancy Division	Administration charges for administering Appointeeships	Fees & Charges	26,030	14,583	(11,447)	(11,405)
Infrastructure	Technical Services - Engineering & Property Management	Reimbursement of staff costs and receipts for external works	Fees & Charges	410,724	476,479	65,755	36,589
Infrastructure	FEP - Increase in Income	Fees	Fees & Charges	0	0	0	(52,750)
Infrastructure	Licensing (Highway Permits)	Skips & Scaffolding Permits	Fees & Charges	34,173	34,173	0	(8,167)
Infrastructure	General Administration and Markets	Rental income	Fees & Charges	23,870	23,870	0	(14,348)
Infrastructure	Traffic Orders	Income from contractors, Welsh Water etc. for road works	Fees & Charges	24,324	24,324	0	0
Infrastructure	Road and Street Works Acts	Inspection fees, section 74's, FPN, coring, Dropped kerbs etc.	Fees & Charges	69,046	95,867	26,821	0
Infrastructure	Highways Adoptions	Highway Searches	Fees & Charges	9,563	9,563	0	0
Infrastructure	Multi-storey Carparks	Charge to Coleg Gwent	Fees & Charges	30,000	30,000	0	0
Infrastructure	Civil Parking Enforcement	FPN's	Fees & Charges	105,000	96,000	(9,000)	(8,000)
Infrastructure	Public Transport Co-Ordination	Charge to bus companies for use of Brynmawr Bus Station	Fees & Charges	234	234	0	0
Licensing	Hackney Carriages	Licence Fees	Fees & Charges	78,030	48,995	(29,035)	(30,649)
Licensing	Private Hire Vehicles	Licence Fees	Fees & Charges	1,830	183	(1,647)	(1,591)
Licensing	Scrap Metal	Sale of Scrap Metal	Fees & Charges	600	424	(176)	(161)
Planning	Enforcement	Enforcement Fees	Fees & Charges	610	0	(610)	(610)
Planning	Development Plans	Heritage Officer Income	Fees & Charges	0	0	0	0
Social Services	Other Children's and Family Services	Training Fees (Early Years tied in with expenditure which is set	Fees & Charges	0	0	0	0
Social Services	Older People aged 65 or over	Fees & Charges in respect of Care (Cwrt Mytton, Home Care, Extra Care & Joint Day Care Unit)	Fees & Charges	588,720	534,608	(54,112)	(58,501)
Social Services	Adults aged under 65 with Learning Disabilities	Fees & Charges in respect of Care (Augusta, Supported Living Bungalows & Community Options)	Fees & Charges	337,580	141,528	(196,052)	(165,005)
Social Services	Adults aged under 65 with Mental Health Needs	Fees & Charges in respect of Care (Vision House & Ysbyty'r Tri Chwm)	Fees & Charges	24,920	1,674	(23,246)	(20,307)
Social Services	Support Service and Management Costs	Fees & Charges in respect of Piper Alarms (IAA)	Fees & Charges	0	0	0	0
		Sub - Total		4,488,724	3,929,740	(558,984)	(719,094)

Fees and Charges Forecast 2020/2021 (As at September 2020)

Portfolio	Service	Description of Income	Income Source	Revised Estimate 2020/2021	Forecast	Variance Favourable / (Adverse)	Variance Favourable / (Adverse) as at June 2020
				£	£	£	£
Fees & Charges - Set Nationally							
Corporate Services	Registration of Births, Marriages and Deaths	Registration of Births, Marriages and Deaths	Fixed - Set Nationally	94,770	49,328	(45,442)	(69,770)
Environment	Food Safety	Hygiene ratings & Health Certificates	Fixed - Set Nationally	2,040	5,320	3,280	3,280
Environment	Control of Pollution	Environmental Permits	Fixed - Set Nationally	16,563	9,855	(6,708)	1,080
Environment	Health and Safety at Work (Commercial Prem.)	Petroleum + Tattoo Licences	Fixed - Set Nationally	0	586	586	250
Environment	Trading Standards	Explosives Licences	Fixed - Set Nationally	776	735	(41)	(41)
Licensing	Licence Fees	Various (Gambling, Premises/ Clubs & Street Trading)	Fixed - Set Nationally	57,900	56,837	(1,063)	1,239
Planning	Dealing with Applications	Planning Application Fees	Fees & Charges	213,360	176,588	(36,772)	(102,495)
Planning	Building Regulations	Building Regulation Fees	Fixed - Set Nationally	95,620	95,620	0	0
Social Services	Older People aged 65 or over	CHC Income (Home Care)	Fixed - Set Nationally	0	70,403	70,403	70,403
Social Services	Adults aged under 65 with Learning Disabilities	CHC Income (Augusta House; Supported Living Bungalows; Community Options)	Fixed - Set Nationally	50,000	29,982	(20,018)	40,952
Social Services	Community Care	Fees & Charges in respect of Care	Fixed - Set Nationally	3,412,830	3,204,205	(208,625)	(270,905)
Social Services	Older People aged 65 or over	Sale of Property (Cwrt Mytton)	Fixed - Set Nationally	0	16,886	16,886	0
Social Services	Community Care	Sale of Property	Fixed - Set Nationally	292,340	292,340	0	0
Social Services	Community Care	CHC Income	Fixed - Set Nationally	391,000	12,344	(378,656)	0
Social Services	Support Service and Management Costs	CHC Income (Adult Service Managers)	Fixed - Set Nationally	0	0	0	0
		Sub - Total		4,627,199	4,021,029	(606,170)	(326,007)
Fees & Charges - In Line with Local Agreements							
Economy	Industrial Land	Ground rent and commercial bookings	Fixed - Set Locally	2,824	2,824	0	0
Economy	Nursery Units/Misc. Industrial Premises	Rental income for industrial units	Fixed - Set Locally	841,195	659,653	(181,542)	(225,763)
Economy	Estates - Non Rechargeable	Ground Rent	Fixed - Set Locally	143,358	117,734	(25,624)	(66,433)
Economy	Financial Support to Business	Ground rent and commercial bookings	Fixed - Set Locally	2,650	2,650	0	0
Economy	CSCS	Charges for Construction Skills Certificates	Fixed - Set Locally	10,000	3,272	(6,728)	(6,728)
Environment	Corporate Landlord	Little Stars Nursery - Rent (Recovery of costs)	Miscellaneous	8,496	12,464	3,968	4,443
Education	Inter Authority Recoupment	Charges to other Local Authorities for SEN placements within Blaenau Gwent Schools	Fixed - Set Locally	631,370	756,069	124,699	204,452
		Sub - Total		1,639,893	1,554,666	(85,227)	(90,029)
		Total - Fees & Charges		10,755,816	9,505,435	(1,250,381)	(1,135,129)
SLA							
Aneurin Leisure Trust	SLA Income	Provision of Support Services	SLA	243,600	243,600	0	0
Environment	Grounds Maintenance	SLA	SLA	189,220	168,847	(20,373)	(144,762)
Environment	Building Maintenance	SLA	SLA				
Financial Management and Strategy	Accountancy Division	Support Services SLA with Schools	SLA	178,270	178,270	0	0
Corporate Services	Organisational Development, Payroll & Health & Safety	Support Services SLA with Schools	SLA	307,210	307,210	0	0
Corporate Services	Legal Fees & GDPR	Support Services SLA with Schools	SLA	40,350	40,350	0	0
Corporate Services	Communications	Support Services SLA with Schools	SLA	3,130	3,130	0	0
Corporate Services	Performance (SIMS Support)	Support Services SLA with Schools	SLA	74,260	74,260	0	0
Corporate Services	Business Support (Courier)	Support Services SLA with Schools	SLA	5,550	5,550	0	0
Financial Management and Strategy	Creditors Division	Support Services SLA with Schools	SLA	6,230	6,230	0	0
Corporate Services	ICT	Support Services SLA with Schools	SLA	0	0	0	0
Environment	School Catering	SLA with Schools (excludes Corporate Landlord)	SLA	1,089,772	1,089,772	0	(90,000)
Environment	Cleaning Services	SLA with Schools	SLA	1,069,989	1,069,989	0	(270,000)
Infrastructure	CPM - Schools Biodiversity SLA	SLA with Schools	SLA	14,000	14,000	0	0
Infrastructure	Winter Maintenance	SLA with LA's for salt Storage	SLA	13,000	13,000	0	0
		Sub - Total		3,234,581	3,214,208	(20,373)	(504,762)

Fees and Charges Forecast 2020/2021 (As at September 2020)

Portfolio	Service	Description of Income	Income Source	Revised Estimate 2020/2021	Forecast	Variance Favourable / (Adverse)	Variance Favourable / (Adverse) as at June 2020
				£	£	£	£
Court Fees/Fixed Penalty Notices/Fines							
Corporate Services	Corporate Services and Strategy	Legal income and land charges. Advertising.	Court Fees/FPN/Fines/Legal	10,000	12,873	2,873	(1,686)
Education	Welfare Service	Fixed Penalty Notices	Court Fees/FPN/Fines/Legal	2,110	2,110	0	0
Environment	Littering and Dog Control Orders	Income in relation to FPNs	Court Fees/FPN/Fines/Legal	128,765	5,560	(123,205)	(92,755)
Corporate Services	Payroll Division	Attachment Orders	Court Fees/FPN/Fines/Legal	1,020	610	(410)	(478)
Financial Management and Strategy	Council Tax Collection	Court Costs	Court Fees/FPN/Fines/Legal	162,680	151,286	(11,394)	(11,394)
Financial Management and Strategy	NNDR	Court Costs	Court Fees/FPN/Fines/Legal	1,800	1,800	0	158
Corporate Services	Housing Benefits Account	Admin Penalties	Court Fees/FPN/Fines/Legal	25,000	25,000	0	0
		Sub - Total		331,375	199,239	(132,136)	(106,155)
Consortium Arrangements							
Economy	General Offices	Annual Service & Rental Charge to Torfaen CBC in relation to Archives	Consortium Arrangements	76,438	85,021	8,583	8,584
Environment	Disposal Of Waste	Contribution from SVWS	Consortium Arrangements	110,000	110,000	0	0
Environment	Cemeteries / Crematorium	Crematorium Income - Reallocation of surplus at year end	Consortium Arrangements	131,925	167,114	35,189	1,766
Environment	20 Church Street	Housing Advice Centre Contribution	Consortium Arrangements	11,975	20,400	8,425	8,425
Environment	Housing Access	Income from Housing Associations in relation to Administration of the Common Housing Register	Consortium Arrangements	95,564	108,086	12,522	12,458
Environment	Environmental Health	Public Protection Collaboration with Torfaen CC	Consortium Arrangements	0	0	0	0
		Sub - Total		425,902	490,621	64,719	31,233
Miscellaneous							
Education	Supporting Special Educational Needs	Internal Income - Recovery of pupil lead funding from schools.	Internal Income	50,000	50,000	0	0
Corporate Services	Corporate Procurement Division	Rebates - Energy & Randstad	Miscellaneous	95,700	92,410	(3,290)	6,300
Corporate Services	Corporate Procurement Division	Purchase Card Income	Miscellaneous	5,140	13,299	8,159	(140)
Infrastructure	L&A - Invasive Weeds	Contribution from Caerphilly for Treatment of Knotweed	Miscellaneous	10,000	10,000	0	0
		Sub - Total		160,840	165,709	4,869	6,160
		TOTAL		14,908,514	13,575,212	(1,333,302)	(1,708,653)

This page is intentionally left blank

Action Plan

Corporate Services 2020/21 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 30 September 2020)

Appendix 4a

Service Area	2020/2021 Variance at June 2020 Forecast £	2020/2021 Variance at Sept 2020 Forecast £	Action Required & Timescale	Financial Impact £	Responsible Officer
IT Service		(160,000)	<p><u>Reason for Adverse variance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the original IT Collaboration Business Plan, £100,000 income was built into the budget to be funded from reserves, with the view that future savings, due to merging of software systems, would produce savings and therefore reduce the need of reserve funding. • These savings have not yet been achieved, as the Software Contracts are still Blaenau Gwent's responsibility. • The increasing cost of the SRS Management Fee, since its start, has also increased this cost pressure of £4,000 and £29,000 which has been shown on the PSBA income line. • The Information Security service provided by Gwent Police has also increased over the years by £10,000. • Also, Gwent Archives now have a direct SLA with the SRS £17,000. <p><u>Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All IT contracts are now reviewed and re-negotiated through the Procurement team, to ensure that the best terms and conditions are achieved. • Following the deployment of Office 365, opportunities to scale back the number of systems operating across the council, are being explored, to reduce costs. 	Unknown	Anne-Louise Clark

Action Plan

Corporate Services 2020/21 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 30 September 2020)

Appendix 4a

Service Area	2020/2021 Variance at June 2020 Forecast £	2020/2021 Variance at Sept 2020 Forecast £	Action Required & Timescale	Financial Impact £	Responsible Officer
			<p>Updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holding £84,000 refund from SRS, however, this may be required for the Data Centre move. • Will be considering options to reduce software expenditure, due to Office 365 upgrade. • Working with SRS to review and suspend contracts, I.e. telephony costs. • Cannot mitigate the management fee increase over and above set estimates. • Cannot mitigate Information Security officer. • Cannot mitigate PSBA income line. • Seeking refund for Gwent Archives, due to SLA not being direct with the SRS. 		
<p>Registration of Births, Marriages and Deaths</p>	<p>(64,742)</p>	<p>(40,798)</p>	<p>Reason for Adverse variance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced income, due to Covid-19 pandemic (e.g. restrictions on wedding ceremonies) <p>Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of income formed part of the quarter 1 claim to WG for financial support. In addition, The Registrar Service is working to clear the backlog of registration services which could have a positive impact on the forecast level of income by the year end. 	<p>Unknown</p>	<p>Andrea Jones</p>

Action Plan

Corporate Services 2020/21 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 30 September 2020)

Appendix 4a

Service Area	2020/2021 Variance at June 2020 Forecast £	2020/2021 Variance at Sept 2020 Forecast £	Action Required & Timescale	Financial Impact £	Responsible Officer
			<p><u>Updates</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarter 2 has seen a slight improvement in income following the easing of the lockdown. It has been assumed that this level of income will continue for the rest of the financial year however, it could be dependent upon further lockdowns being enforced. Funding from WG regarding loss of income due to Covid-19 has been received. This equates to 50% of our initial claim as it is assumed that income will improve throughout the year. This will be reviewed towards the end of the financial year. 	3,960	
Council Tax Reduction Scheme	(627,383)	(541,007)	<p><u>Reason for Adverse variance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is due to an increase in the number of claimants following the Covid-19 pandemic. It has been assumed that the increased level of claimants will continue for the remainder of the financial year. New claims processed in Quarter 1 of 2020, compared to the same period in 2019, have increased by 911 (an increase of 158%). <p><u>Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The WLGA, on behalf of all LA's, has collated the CTRS cost pressure across Wales and information has been 	Unknown	Rhian Hayden

Action Plan

Corporate Services 2020/21 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 30 September 2020)

Appendix 4a

Service Area	2020/2021 Variance at June 2020 Forecast £	2020/2021 Variance at Sept 2020 Forecast £	Action Required & Timescale	Financial Impact £	Responsible Officer
			<p>submitted to WG officials, with a view to it being considered by Ministers in the “Star Chamber”. It is hoped that WG will consider providing additional funding to address this pressure.</p> <p>Updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New claims processed in Quarter 2 of 2020, compared to the same period in 2019, are consistent indicating that the cost pressure will not worsen. This however could be dependent upon further lockdowns being enforced. • £87,000 income has now been received from WG in respect of Quarter 1. 	87,000	

Action Plan

Social Services

2020/21 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 30 September 2020)

Appendix 4b

Service Area	2020/2021 Variance at June 2020 Forecast £	2020/2021 Variance at Sept 2020 Forecast £	Action Required & Timescale	Financial Impact £	Responsible Officer
Looked After Children	(399,699)	(499,699)	<p>Legal Services</p> <p><u>Reason for Adverse variance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an ongoing pressure in this area due to the number of looked after children, and the problems with retention and recruitment of staff has resulted in more services being outsourced to an external provider. It is anticipated that the Legal budget will be significantly overspent again this year. <p><u>Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A long term solution will need to be identified in conjunction with Legal Services to mitigate this cost pressure for future years and a collaborative arrangement for legal services is being considered with a neighbouring council. • This cost pressure is currently being offset by favourable variances within other social services budgets. 		Tanya Evans

Action Plan

Economy

2020/21 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 30 September 2020)

Appendix 4c

Service Area	2020/2021 Variance at June 2020 Forecast £	2020/2021 Variance at Sept 2020 Forecast £	Action Required & Timescale	Financial Impact £	Responsible Officer
General Offices	(18,132)	(254)	<p><u>Reason for Adverse variance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covid 19, which resulted in the GO being closed to the general public, has had a detrimental effect on conference and meeting room facilities (including refreshments and equipment hire). <p><u>Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A claim for loss of income to Welsh Government has been submitted • Re-open the facility to business users and tenants. • Consider diversifying from meeting rooms to office rentals. • Review BGCBC staff office and consider making available as offices to let to businesses. • Future proof the building and adopt new technology for Microsoft Team Meetings, as the video conferencing will have a huge effect on our industry, so we need to embrace it. • Introduce a registered business address for a fee. • Engage with academia (Coleg Gwent), to consider lecture theatre i.e. cinema. 		

Action Plan

Economy

2020/21 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 30 September 2020)

Appendix 4c

Service Area	2020/2021 Variance at June 2020 Forecast £	2020/2021 Variance at Sept 2020 Forecast £	Action Required & Timescale	Financial Impact £	Responsible Officer
			<p><u>Update:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of income funding has been received from Welsh Government which has contributed towards the improved financial position. 	8,500	
Nursery Units	(226,063)	(181,869)	<p><u>Reason for Adverse variance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a delay to the refurbishment/investment to improve attractiveness to incoming and existing tenants as a result of Covid-19 • 1 month rental holiday in April given to all businesses within the Units • Covid 19, detrimental effect to the worldwide/local economy. Business start-ups, expansions (including business relocations) on hold. Business community in hibernation mode. • Business Tenant Support Scheme introduced to support SME's within the portfolio i.e. April rent free period and rental holidays. <p><u>Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Rates and Business Innovation Team at BGCBC, worked extremely hard to support business tenants with Covid 19 grants schemes. 		

Action Plan

Economy

2020/21 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 30 September 2020)

Appendix 4c

Service Area	2020/2021 Variance at June 2020 Forecast £	2020/2021 Variance at Sept 2020 Forecast £	Action Required & Timescale	Financial Impact £	Responsible Officer
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refurbishment scheme underway at Roseheyworth Business Park to focus on constrained business, which will result in further revenue potential. • An exercise to re-value the rentals and potential yield investments. • Secure marketing budget, to Increase marketing awareness to attract new customers i.e. rightmove.co.uk • Re-gear existing leases and offer financial incentives for new tenants. • Exploring options to secure external funding for further refurbishment schemes (WG) i.e. Phase 2 – Roseheyworth Business Park. • Investment plan to review and secure funding for wider refurbishment scheme across the portfolio. <p><u>Update:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of income funding has been received from Welsh Government which has contributed towards the improved financial position. 	57,890	

Action Plan

Economy

2020/21 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 30 September 2020)

Appendix 4c

Service Area	2020/2021 Variance at June 2020 Forecast £	2020/2021 Variance at Sept 2020 Forecast £	Action Required & Timescale	Financial Impact £	Responsible Officer
Estate Management Non Rechargeable	(54,831)	(10,769)	<p><u>Reason for Adverse variance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of non-operational -assets under Bridging the Gap delayed due to staff redeployment on Covid-19 workstreams and suspension of recruitment within the Council <p><u>Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment commenced • Reduction of expenditure could help but large items of maintenance could limit possibilities <p><u>Update:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of income funding has been received from Welsh Government which has contributed towards the improved financial position. 	25,540	

Action Plan

Environment

2020/21 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 30 September 2020)

Appendix 4d

Service Area	2020/2021 Variance at June 2020 Forecast £	2020/2021 Variance at Sept 2020 Forecast £	Action Required & Timescale	Financial Impact £	Responsible Officer
Technical Services	(96,000)	0	<p><u>Reason for Adverse variance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anticipated loss of income as a result of COVID-19. <p><u>Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of income to potentially be met by way of Covid-19 grant funding from WG in 20/21. <p><u>Updates</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income received from Hardship fund has improved the financial position from quarter 1 	93,920	C Rogers / M Price
Waste Services	(548,076)	(331,583)	<p><u>Reason for Adverse variance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional cost of 2 Wardens with no budget • An increase in residual waste tonnages during the lockdown period, offset partly by the WG Hardship Fund. • There is a decrease in recycle income of £90k compared to 19/20. This is due to fluctuations in the market prices and a general downturn. Only the decrease in income from the plastics, cardboard and textiles market has been directly affected by Covid, and hardship funding has been built in to offset this. • Also, an additional savings target was built in of £90k based on Consultants analysis, assuming this would be achieved as a result of the opening of the New HWRC. 		C Rogers / M Stent

Action Plan

Environment

2020/21 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 30 September 2020)

Appendix 4d

Service Area	2020/2021 Variance at June 2020 Forecast £	2020/2021 Variance at Sept 2020 Forecast £	Action Required & Timescale	Financial Impact £	Responsible Officer
			<p>However, this has not been achieved partly due to the delay in opening.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increase in green waste recycling costs - £40,000 mainly as a result of the contractor closing for business which resulted in BG having to implement a contingency arrangement at short notice which has been costly. There is now a new contract in place. The increased tonnage collected during first lock down has been partly been offset by the hardship fund. • New Commercial Waste Service was suspended due to covid-19. The loss of income for the period April 2020 to June 2020 has been offset by the WG Hardship Fund. The budget is being reviewed. <p><u>Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased costs to be potentially met by way of Covid 19 grant funding from WG in 20/21. • Commencing side waste enforcement from July 2020, which will reduce residual waste charges. Currently due to easement of side waste, the cost to the authority is approx. £18,000 per month. This figure will reduce as restrictions on black bags commence borough-wide. 		

Action Plan

Environment

2020/21 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 30 September 2020)

Appendix 4d

Service Area	2020/2021 Variance at June 2020 Forecast £	2020/2021 Variance at Sept 2020 Forecast £	Action Required & Timescale	Financial Impact £	Responsible Officer
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital bids have been accepted by Welsh Government for receptacles. This will contribute £80,000 towards the revenue budget. • The delay in the opening of the new HWRC has contributed positively to the revenue budget. <p><u>Update:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income received from Hardship fund has improved the financial position from quarter 1 relating to loss of income (£88,00) and increased disposal costs (£48,810) for April to August 2020. 	136,810	
Grounds Maintenance	(83,003)	(17,000)	<p><u>Reason for Adverse variance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This includes an overspend on Premises expenditure, which could be in relation to CATS. This budget is currently being reviewed. <p><u>Update:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income received from Hardship fund has improved the financial position from quarter 1 • Full year SLA costs charged to the schools. 	39,000	C Rogers/ D Watkins

Action Plan

Environment

2020/21 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 30 September 2020)

Appendix 4d

Service Area	2020/2021 Variance at June 2020 Forecast £	2020/2021 Variance at Sept 2020 Forecast £	Action Required & Timescale	Financial Impact £	Responsible Officer
Corporate Landlord	(68,850)	(57,536)	<p><u>Reason for Adverse variance</u></p> <p>Forecast overspend due to Social Services Buildings £41,000 and Non Operational and CATs buildings £16,000.</p> <p>There is £40,600 of rates expenditure due to Non Operational buildings, which includes £20,000 for the Business Resource Centre, which has now been disposed of. Need to release Non-Operational buildings, as these still have on-going residual costs to the authority.</p> <p><u>Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimise and monitor expenditure on all non-essential maintenance buildings. 		C Rogers / M Price
Building Cleaning	(244,608)	0	<p><u>Reason for Adverse variance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential reduction in schools SLA due to school's closure as a result of Covid 19 <p><u>Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of income to be potentially met by way of Covid 19 grant funding from WG in 20/21. 		C Rogers / M Price

Action Plan

Environment

2020/21 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 30 September 2020)

Appendix 4d

Service Area	2020/2021 Variance at June 2020 Forecast £	2020/2021 Variance at Sept 2020 Forecast £	Action Required & Timescale	Financial Impact £	Responsible Officer
			<u>Updates</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full year SLA costs charged to Schools have mitigated the cost pressure. 		
Catering Account	(215,804)	0	<u>Reason for Adverse variance</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential reduction in schools SLA and loss of school meals income due to school closure as a result of Covid 19, over and above the loss of income claim to Welsh Government for the period April to June 2020 <u>Actions</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further loss of income claims to be potentially met by way of Covid 19 grant funding from WG in 20/21. <u>Updates</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income received from Hardship fund in relation to paid meals. 	270,000	C Rogers / M Price
Environmental Health	(66,642)	(£89,044)	<u>Reason for Adverse variance</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget pressure arising from the end of the Public Protection Collaboration. Some savings delayed due to staff sickness/extended notice period into the new financial year 		D Thompson

Action Plan

Environment

2020/21 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 30 September 2020)

Appendix 4d

Service Area	2020/2021 Variance at June 2020 Forecast £	2020/2021 Variance at Sept 2020 Forecast £	Action Required & Timescale	Financial Impact £	Responsible Officer
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other staff savings postponed due to Covid 19 pandemic and reassessment of service needs. <p><u>Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMR 2 report and reassessment of service needs delayed due to Covid 19 pandemic. The Service is likely to need to submit an application for a cost pressure for 2021/22 <p><u>Updates</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No further update due to the ongoing pandemic. 		
Cwmcrachen Caravan Site	(25,079)	(£23,473)	<p><u>Reason for Adverse variance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electricity costs are the main reasons for the variance. The plan of action from 19/20 has continued (electricity meter changes and resident recharge increases) and this is led to a decrease in forecast net costs. Work is continuing. <p><u>Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further work is planned to attempt to reduce losses. <p><u>Updates</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing 		D Thompson

Action Plan

Environment

2020/21 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 30 September 2020)

Appendix 4d

Action Plan

Planning Committee and Licensing Committee 2020/21 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 30 September 2020)

Appendix 4e

Service Area	2020/2021 Variance at June 2020 Forecast £	2020/2021 Variance at Sept 2020 Forecast £	Action Required & Timescale	Financial Impact £	Responsible Officer
Licensing	(25,904)	(26,419)	<p><u>Reason for Adverse variance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delayed income, due to Covid 19 pandemic – (e.g. Pub and Club renewals) • Reduced income, due to Taxi fee proposed increases not actioned in 2019/20 and for 2020/21 due to pandemic, but inflationary increases have been applied to the budget in both years. • Potential further loss of income if local businesses are affected by the economic impacts of the pandemic <p><u>Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managers will monitor the budget and consider options to reduce costs. The Service is likely to need to submit an application for a cost pressure for 2021/22. <p><u>Updates</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to the ongoing pandemic, a revised fee setting policy approach is being considered (that will support local business but result in a continued shortfall) 		D Thompson

This page is intentionally left blank

Saving Proposal	Approved Estimated Achievement £ 1,465,000	Forecast to be Achieved £	Favourable / (Adverse) Variance £
Overall Savings target			
1 Third Party Expenditure a Contract Management - Removing of Inflation applied to the Draft Estimates b Early Settlement Terms / Increased use of the Procurement Card	550,000 500,000 50,000	500,000 50,000	0 0
2 Fees & Charges a Stretched Income Targets b Increase in Fees & Charges of 5.5% from April 2020	200,000 105,000 95,000	47,000 74,000	(58,000) (21,000)
3 Property & Asset Review Corporate Landlord - Reduction in the Rates & Maintenance Budgets following the CAT transfer / Selling/demolition: a Worcester St - £13,630 Brynmawr District Office - £24,730 Greenacre - £1,600	130,000 73,000	73,000	0
Corporate Landlord - Reduction in the Rates & Maintenance Budgets re: Buildings to be sold: b Bryngwyn Primary & Queen St Primary - £18,000	18,000	4,500	(13,500)
d Increase income re: Land and other charges e Net reduction in Alt management fee e Energy Costs - Reduction in budget due to efficiency savings identified following implementation of RE:FIT	3,760 28,000 7,240	0 0 7,240	(3,760) (28,000) 0
4 Growth Strategy a Council Tax - Increase in collection following the removal of the Empty Property Discount b Council Tax Income	220,000 170,000 50,000	220,000	0

Saving Proposal	Approved Estimated Achievement	Forecast to be Achieved	Favourable / (Adverse) Variance
5 Industrial Portfolio Review - Review of service charges and insurance to pass onto Tenants - Increase income through Investment of capital funding to upgrade units	100,000	0	(100,000)
6 Commercial Waste Service review - implementation 1/4/2020	23,000	0	(23,000)
7 Low Carbon Removal of the Carbon Reduction Commitment Budget	138,000	138,000	0
8 Work Place Transformation Cost reduction Measures - ICT Budget - Rationalising systems - Managing Suppliers - Review of printing, scanners, postage etc - Review of telephony	50,000	50,000	0
9 Income Recovery Review of Income Recovery activities	54,000	54,000	0
TOTAL APPROVED SAVINGS	1,465,000	1,217,740	- 247,260

non-grant funded vacant post salary plus oncost, for one month, where vacancy is not used to offset cost pressures in other budgets

	number of posts	salary plus oncost per month £
corp serv	2	7,520
soc serv	1	4,560
educ	0	0
env		
highways	0	0
econ	1	2,258
planning		
licensing	0	0
	<u>4</u>	<u>14,337</u>

APPENDIX 6

non-grant funded vacant post salary plus oncost, for one month, where vacancy is used to offset cost pressures in other budgets

	number of posts	salary plus oncost per month £
	5	22,617
	0	0
	1	11,537
	0	0
	1	2,258
	0	0
	<u>7</u>	<u>36,411</u>

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 13

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 23.11.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 24.11.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **9th December 2020**

Report Subject: **Capital Budget Monitoring, Forecast for 2020/2021
Financial Year (as at 30 September 2020)**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Daniels – Leader / Executive Member Corporate
Services**

Report Submitted by: **Rhian Hayden – Chief Officer Resources**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	10/11/2020	24.11.20			23/11/2020	09.12.20		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide members with an overview of each Portfolio's actual and forecast capital expenditure against funding approvals for the 2020/2021 financial year, as at 30th September 2020.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 This report provides details on the following:

- Forecast financial position to 31st March 2021 across all portfolios
- Details of any significant adverse and/or favourable variances

- 2.2 This report forms part of the quarterly financial reporting framework to Members.

3. Options for Recommendation

3.1 Option 1 (Recommended Option)

Members of the Committee to accept the report; and

- Provide appropriate challenge to the financial outcomes in the report.
- Continue to support appropriate financial control procedures agreed by Council.
- To note the budgetary control and monitoring procedures in place within the Capital Team, to safeguard Authority funding.

3.2 Option 2

Do not accept the report.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 This report supports the Forward Looking Corporate Plan 2020/22 as it ensures effective forward financial planning arrangements are in place to support the Council’s financial resilience. This is a key element to achieving “An ambitious and innovative council delivering the quality services we know matter to our communities”

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

5.1.1 The overall financial position as forecast at 30th September 2020 indicates an adverse variance of £24,000 against a total in year capital budget of £23.2m.

The overall position across all Portfolios is shown below: -

Total Approvals Q2 (Sept 2020)	Future funding	In year funding	Actual Expenditure to 30/09/2020 (Month 6)	Forecast Expenditure 2020/2021	Forecast Variance underspent / (overspent)
£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
62,805	39,581	23,224	7,359	23,248	(24)

5.1.2 Despite the Covid-19 Pandemic actual expenditure to September 2020 of £7.3m is £836,000 higher, compared to Quarter two in financial year 2019/2020. It is expected that Capital Expenditure will largely be unaffected by the Lockdowns and is estimated to reach £23.6m by 31st March 2021.

5.1.3 The forecast over-spend of £24,000 in relation to Flood Recovery Works is now expected to be mitigated following positive news that Welsh Government will be providing financial support and has subsequently advised the Council to commence any urgent works. However, whilst formal confirmation of this award is awaited it is prudent that we continue to report the overspend in quarter two.

5.1.4 Following the commitment from Welsh Government it is anticipated that the Council’s own resources will not be required for Aberbeeg Road. However, whilst formal confirmation of this award is awaited the capital programme reflects the previous decisions of Council.

5.2 Risk including Mitigating Actions

- 5.2.1 Expenditure against external funding approvals needs to be maximised in order to avoid loss of funding. If significant delays in capital expenditure are anticipated or contract costs rise due to the impact of Covid-19, liaison with funding bodies will be required at the earliest opportunity in order to secure approval for funding re-profile.
- 5.2.2 If funding re-profile cannot be agreed and capital schemes are not kept within budget, then capital reserves may be committed beyond affordable levels, with the consequence that projects that have not yet commenced may be deferred or not undertaken, so impacting upon future Capital Programmes.
- 5.2.3 If capital schemes do not achieve the required level of expenditure within the correct financial year and further peaks of the Covid-19 pandemic results in projects facing significant delay, funding may be lost to the Authority and be detrimental to the Authority's chances of securing future funding.
- 5.2.4 The aforementioned risks are mitigated as far as possible through close working relationship with Budget Holders, Technical Services and external funding bodies such as Welsh Government. This ensures that where possible, funding is maximised or funding amendments are secured should the need arise
- 5.2.5 Where overall funding approvals are likely to be exceeded and additional compensatory funding sources cannot be identified, budget holders will initially report the consequences to the Corporate Leadership Team, including proposals to defer/delete other approved schemes.
- 5.2.6 There is a potential risk of increase in Constructions costs & services following the ongoing situation regarding the UK's Exit from the European Union.
- 5.2.7 The UK's Exit from the EU has been added as an organisational risk to the corporate risk register, whilst a separate, more detailed, high level action plan has been developed and is being monitored by the Core Planning Group.

5.3 Legal N/A

5.4 Human Resources N/A

6. Supporting Evidence

6.1 *Performance Information and Data*

- 6.1.2 The capital programme is attached at Appendix 1.2 and 1.2.
- 6.1.3 Appendix 2 provides information of funding changes since the first quarter report

6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***

The report details the financial implications for the Council in providing capital investment for the communities of Blaenau Gwent.

All forecast overspends and underspends are managed in order that secured funding approvals are not lost and to mitigate any potential adverse impact upon future Capital investment in Blaenau Gwent.

6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***

The Capital Programme is developed to support the Council's strategic priorities and is considered and agreed by full Council. Corporate Overview Scrutiny and Executive Committees consider the budget monitoring reports on a quarterly basis and provide challenge as appropriate.

6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

It is essential that all forecast overspends and underspends are managed in order that secured funding approvals are not lost and to mitigate any potential adverse impact upon the future capital programme.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

The Capital Services Team will continue their close working relationship with budget holders and external funding bodies to ensure that funding is maximised or funding amendments are secured in future financial years.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

The Capital Services Team works closely with budget holders in producing the financial forecast and with external funding bodies to ensure that where possible funding is maximised or funding amendments are secured should the need arise.

6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***

N/A

6.8 ***EqIA (screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)***

N/A

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 Financial reporting to the Joint Budget Scrutiny Committee and the Executive Committee is carried out on a quarterly basis. Where projects are reporting significant cost pressures, there is a requirement for Budget Holders to ensure that where possible funding is maximised or funding amendments are secured should the need arise.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1.1
- Appendix 1.2
- Appendix 2

This page is intentionally left blank

Management Reports

Reporting Year: and Period: 2021/6

Capital Programme Funding Estimates Summary

<i>Portfolio</i>	<i>Total Funding</i>	<i>In Year Budget</i>	<i>Future Funding</i>	<i>Expenditure To: September 2020</i>	<i>Remaining in Year Budget</i>	<i>Forecast Expenditure</i>	<i>Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav</i>
Corporate Services Portfolio	398,111	119,469	278,642	116,068	3,401	119,469	0
Social Services Portfolio	5,281,669	1,285,399	3,996,270	312,396	973,003	1,285,399	0
Economy Portfolio	17,592,720	13,537,227	4,055,493	3,799,393	9,737,834	13,537,227	0
Education and Active Living	28,225,369	2,409,931	25,815,438	594,772	1,815,159	2,409,931	0
Environment Portfolio	6,922,941	2,856,898	4,066,043	1,671,049	1,185,849	2,856,898	0
Infrastructure Portfolio	3,412,957	2,484,100	928,857	858,424	1,649,672	2,508,096	(23,996)
All Portfolios	971,334	531,152	440,182	7,152	524,000	531,152	0
Total Capital Funding	62,805,101	23,224,176	39,580,925	7,359,254	15,888,918	23,248,172	(23,996)

This page is intentionally left blank

Capital Programme - 2020/21 Funding Estimates
Capital Report 2020/21

Management Reports	Capital Programme Funding Estimates
<i>Reporting Year: and Period: 2021/6</i>	

Code	Scheme	Total Funding	In Year Budget	Future Funding	Expenditure to: September 2020	Remaining in Year Budget	Forecast Expenditure	Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav
Corporate Services Portfolio								
Corporate Services								
101385	Workplace Transformation	135,457	66,068	69,389	66,068	0	66,068	0
327100	Ebbw Vale Test Track	50,000	50,000	0	50,000	0	50,000	0
327101	Emergency Electrical & IT Works Civic Ce	209,253	0	209,253	0	0	0	0
328090	CCTV Upgrade	3,401	3,401	0	0	3,401	3,401	0
Corporate Services		398,111	119,469	278,642	116,068	3,401	119,469	0
Corporate Services Portfolio		398,111	119,469	278,642	116,068	3,401	119,469	0

Capital Programme - 2020/21 Funding Estimates
Capital Report 2020/21

Management Reports

Reporting Year: and Period: 2021/6

Capital Programme Funding Estimates

Code	Scheme	Total Funding	In Year Budget	Future Funding	Expenditure to: September 2020	Remaining in Year Budget	Forecast Expenditure	Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav
Social Services Portfolio								
Childrens Services								
323152	Beaufort Road - Extension Training Flat	130,475	130,475	0	481	129,994	130,475	0
323153	Beaufort Road - Outdoor spaces and Exiti	38,675	38,675	0	0	38,675	38,675	0
324719	Flying Start - Cwm 2	10,000	10,000	0	0	10,000	10,000	0
324721	Flying Start - Ebbw Vale North	150,000	150,000	0	0	150,000	150,000	0
324724	Flying Start - Sirhowy Primary	10,000	10,000	0	0	10,000	10,000	0
324735	Flying Start Brynithel FS Centre	20,000	20,000	0	0	20,000	20,000	0
324736	Flying Start Additional Works	90,000	90,000	0	12,591	77,409	90,000	0
324770	Childcare Offer - Sixbells Scheme	1,492,862	0	1,492,862	0	0	0	0
324771	Childcare Offer - Badminton Scheme	1,500,000	50,000	1,450,000	0	50,000	50,000	0
324772	Childcare Offer - Blaina ICC Scheme	437,243	50,000	387,243	0	50,000	50,000	0
324773	Childcare Offer - Swfryd Scheme	500,000	50,000	450,000	1,228	48,772	50,000	0
Childrens Services		4,379,255	599,150	3,780,105	14,300	584,850	599,150	0
Adult Services								
323003	Health & Safety	63,192	6,460	56,732	6,460	0	6,460	0
323005	Tackling Food Poverty - WLGA	23,147	0	23,147	0	0	0	0
323120	Disabled equipment	279,750	279,750	0	279,750	0	279,750	0
323144	ICF Main Capital Programme	99,233	7,394	91,839	7,394	1	7,394	0
323147	Intermediate Care Fund	3,292	160	3,132	160	0	160	0
323148	ICF - Digital & Mobile Assistive Technol	19,000	0	19,000	0	0	0	0
323149	Better Care Capital Project	26,648	4,333	22,315	4,333	0	4,333	0

Capital Programme - 2020/21 Funding Estimates
Capital Report 2020/21

Management Reports		Capital Programme Funding Estimates						
<i>Reporting Year: and Period: 2021/6</i>								

<i>Code</i>	<i>Scheme</i>	<i>Total Funding</i>	<i>In Year Budget</i>	<i>Future Funding</i>	<i>Expenditure to: September 2020</i>	<i>Remaining in Year Budget</i>	<i>Forecast Expenditure</i>	<i>Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav</i>
323151	Augusta House - Enablement Pods	388,152	388,152	0	0	388,152	388,152	0
	Adult Services	902,414	686,249	216,165	298,096	388,153	686,249	0
	Social Services Portfolio	5,281,669	1,285,399	3,996,270	312,396	973,003	1,285,399	0

Capital Programme - 2020/21 Funding Estimates
Capital Report 2020/21

Management Reports

Reporting Year: and Period: 2021/6

Capital Programme Funding Estimates

Code	Scheme	Total Funding	In Year Budget	Future Funding	Expenditure to: September 2020	Remaining in Year Budget	Forecast Expenditure	Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav
Economy Portfolio								
Tredegar Regeneration								
326163	Tredegar HLF	893,051	893,051	0	138,758	754,293	893,051	0
	Tredegar Regeneration	893,051	893,051	0	138,758	754,293	893,051	0
Ebbw Vale Town Centre								
326191	TRI - Urban Centre Commercial Property I	407,496	407,496	0	60,495	347,001	407,496	0
326192	TRI- Urban Centre Residential Property E	123,957	123,957	0	0	123,957	123,957	0
	Ebbw Vale Town Centre	531,453	531,453	0	60,495	470,958	531,453	0
Valleys Regional Park								
326205	VRP - Discovery Gateway	89,461	89,461	0	16,119	73,342	89,461	0
326206	Local Places for Nature Capital Funding	61,401	61,401	0	0	61,401	61,401	0
	Valleys Regional Park	150,862	150,862	0	16,119	134,743	150,862	0
The Works Site								
325097	Big Arch	627,638	19,023	608,615	19,023	0	19,023	0
325103	Learning Works	75,000	75,000	0	35,531	39,469	75,000	0
325220	Site Investigation Works	19,000	0	19,000	0	0	0	0
325225	Ebbw Valley Railway - Northern Extension	2,441	0	2,441	0	0	0	0
	The Works Site	724,079	94,023	630,056	54,554	39,469	94,023	0
Other Regeneration								

Capital Programme - 2020/21 Funding Estimates
Capital Report 2020/21

Management Reports

Reporting Year: and Period: 2021/6

Capital Programme Funding Estimates

<i>Code</i>	<i>Scheme</i>	<i>Total Funding</i>	<i>In Year Budget</i>	<i>Future Funding</i>	<i>Expenditure to: September 2020</i>	<i>Remaining in Year Budget</i>	<i>Forecast Expenditure</i>	<i>Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav</i>
326006	Tech Valley s Initiative	475,000	0	475,000	0	0	0	0
326180	Lime Avenue Business Park	6,199,476	6,199,476	0	2,869,993	3,329,483	6,199,476	0
326181	Lime Avenue Employment park	2,501,013	4,113	2,496,900	4,113	1	4,113	0
326182	Box Works	703,992	703,992	0	241,644	462,348	703,992	0
326183	Regain 2	3,918,513	3,918,513	0	25,303	3,893,210	3,918,513	0
326184	Brexit Schemes	369,465	0	369,465	0	0	0	0
326193	TRI - Town Centre COVID-19 recovery ad:	600,000	600,000	0	67	599,933	600,000	0
326225	Heat Networks Project	17,385	0	17,385	0	0	0	0
326226	Electric Vehicle Chargepoints	276,897	276,897	0	261,366	15,531	276,897	0
326252	Constrained Units - Roseheyworth	164,847	164,847	0	126,980	37,867	164,847	0
326265	Victoria Business Park - Development	66,687	0	66,687	0	0	0	0
	Other Regeneration	15,293,275	11,867,838	3,425,437	3,529,466	8,338,372	11,867,838	0
	Economy Portfolio	17,592,720	13,537,227	4,055,493	3,799,393	9,737,834	13,537,227	0

Page 271

Capital Programme - 2020/21 Funding Estimates
Capital Report 2020/21

Management Reports

Reporting Year: and Period: 2021/6

Capital Programme Funding Estimates

Code	Scheme	Total Funding	In Year Budget	Future Funding	Expenditure to: September 2020	Remaining in Year Budget	Forecast Expenditure	Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav
Education and Active Living								
Education Services								
324125	Education Minor Works	71,000	71,000	0	2,485	68,515	71,000	0
324138	Education Capital Maintenance	120,000	120,000	0	3,700	116,300	120,000	0
324142	Georgetown Windows & Boiler Replacement	8,671	1,681	6,990	1,681	0	1,681	0
324143	Rhos-y-fedwyn - Refurbishment	5,378	1,434	3,944	1,434	0	1,434	0
324144	St Marys - Refurbishment	130,000	130,000	0	0	130,000	130,000	0
324145	Tredegar Comp - Food & Technology	280,000	280,000	0	148,631	131,369	280,000	0
324146	Deighton - Kitchen	639	639	0	639	0	639	0
324147	Tredegar Comp Upgrade Services and Accommodation	79,524	79,524	0	76,551	2,973	79,524	0
324148	Coed y Garn Roof & Remedial Works	50,000	50,000	0	5,400	44,600	50,000	0
324149	Brynbach Primary Disabled Adaptations	70,000	70,000	0	7,370	62,630	70,000	0
324150	Ebbw Fawr - Developing 3/4 classrooms, t	100,000	100,000	0	2,900	97,100	100,000	0
324201	Class Size - Willottown	69,557	69,557	0	0	69,557	69,557	0
324203	Period Poverty	6,045	0	6,045	0	0	0	0
324206	Georgetown S106	3,667	3,667	0	3,667	0	3,667	0
324519	Digital 2030 Capital Grant - Post 16	4,620	0	4,620	0	0	0	0
324530	ALN	122,298	0	122,298	0	0	0	0
324532	Ebbw Fawr ASD	3,890	0	3,890	0	0	0	0
324560	Schools IT Infrastructure	140,282	140,282	0	39,798	100,484	140,282	0
324580	Brynmawr 3G Pitch	793,378	793,378	0	350	793,028	793,378	0
324590	Tredegar Comp 3G Pitch	153,410	17,311	136,099	17,311	0	17,311	0
324743	21st Century Schools Six Bells Project	416,940	196,639	220,301	145,349	51,290	196,639	0

Page 272

Capital Programme - 2020/21 Funding Estimates
Capital Report 2020/21

Management Reports

Reporting Year: and Period: 2021/6

Capital Programme Funding Estimates

<i>Code</i>	<i>Scheme</i>	<i>Total Funding</i>	<i>In Year Budget</i>	<i>Future Funding</i>	<i>Expenditure to: September 2020</i>	<i>Remaining in Year Budget</i>	<i>Forecast Expenditure</i>	<i>Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav</i>
324750	Band B - Welsh Medium New Build	5,993,612	0	5,993,612	0	0	0	0
324751	Band B - New Primary Ebbw Fawr Valley	9,295,589	75,669	9,219,920	75,669	0	75,669	0
324752	Band B - Secondary Remodelling Brynma	3,198,936	0	3,198,936	0	0	0	0
324753	Band B - Secondary Remodelling Abertille	3,199,893	0	3,199,893	0	0	0	0
324754	Band B - Secondary Remodelling Tredega	3,198,335	0	3,198,335	0	0	0	0
324755	Band B - Welsh Medium Remodelling Bro	588,116	100,000	488,116	0	100,000	100,000	0
Education Services		28,103,780	2,300,781	25,802,999	532,934	1,767,847	2,300,781	0
Active Living Services								
329089	Abertillery LC Demolition	4,600	4,600	0	4,600	0	4,600	0
329092	ALC - Changing Room Refurbishment	59,700	59,700	0	57,238	2,462	59,700	0
329097	Play Equipment	44,850	44,850	0	0	44,850	44,850	0
332368	Play Area Schemes - Boroughwide	12,439	0	12,439	0	0	0	0
Active Living Services		121,589	109,150	12,439	61,838	47,312	109,150	0
Education and Active Living		28,225,369	2,409,931	25,815,438	594,772	1,815,159	2,409,931	0

Capital Programme - 2020/21 Funding Estimates
Capital Report 2020/21

Management Reports

Reporting Year: and Period: 2021/6

Capital Programme Funding Estimates

Code	Scheme	Total Funding	In Year Budget	Future Funding	Expenditure to: September 2020	Remaining in Year Budget	Forecast Expenditure	Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav
Environment Portfolio								
Environmental Services								
327018	RCAF Long Term Organics Procurement	26,512	0	26,512	0	0	0	0
327039	Kerbside Collections	2,115	0	2,115	0	0	0	0
327042	Collaborative Change Programme 18-19	176,872	0	176,872	0	0	0	0
327043	Household Waste Recycling Centre	1,754,482	950,873	803,609	950,873	0	950,873	0
327044	AHP Waste Collections	176,000	176,000	0	0	176,000	176,000	0
327045	BRC Decommissioning Project	145,511	0	145,511	0	0	0	0
327046	Repair Cafe	4,541	4,541	0	3,475	1,066	4,541	0
327047	Council Buildings Recycling Infrastructu	16,705	16,705	0	0	16,705	16,705	0
327061	CATS	80,000	80,000	0	0	80,000	80,000	0
327065	Re:Fit	2,922,084	517,549	2,404,535	517,549	0	517,549	0
327067	Market Hall - Asbestos Removal	11,321	3,071	8,250	3,071	0	3,071	0
327068	Cemeteries Investment Programme	200,028	0	200,028	0	0	0	0
327070	WRAP Cymru Capital Funding	85,100	85,100	0	0	85,100	85,100	0
	Environmental Services	5,601,271	1,833,839	3,767,432	1,474,969	358,870	1,833,839	0
Housing Environmental Health								
328221	Remediation of Contaminated Land/Dereli	154,269	0	154,269	0	0	0	0
350510	Improvement grants - new scheme	544,241	420,000	124,241	163,339	256,661	420,000	0
350550	Support for Independent Living	112,901	92,800	20,101	4,577	88,223	92,800	0
350560	Empty Property Grants	510,259	510,259	0	28,165	482,094	510,259	0

Page 274

Capital Programme - 2020/21 Funding Estimates
Capital Report 2020/21

Management Reports		Capital Programme Funding Estimates						
<i>Reporting Year: and Period: 2021/6</i>								

<i>Code</i>	<i>Scheme</i>	<i>Total Funding</i>	<i>In Year Budget</i>	<i>Future Funding</i>	<i>Expenditure to: September 2020</i>	<i>Remaining in Year Budget</i>	<i>Forecast Expenditure</i>	<i>Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav</i>
	Housing Environmental Health	1,321,670	1,023,059	298,611	196,081	826,978	1,023,059	0
	Environment Portfolio	6,922,941	2,856,898	4,066,043	1,671,049	1,185,849	2,856,898	0

Capital Programme - 2020/21 Funding Estimates
Capital Report 2020/21

Management Reports

Reporting Year: and Period: 2021/6

Capital Programme Funding Estimates

Code	Scheme	Total Funding	In Year Budget	Future Funding	Expenditure to: September 2020	Remaining in Year Budget	Forecast Expenditure	Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav
Infrastructure Portfolio								
Engineering Services								
328040	Cwm By Pass	13,970	0	13,970	0	0	0	0
328148	SRIC - Ebenezer Street	40,000	40,000	0	0	40,000	40,000	0
328310	Local Transport Fund	243,271	243,271	0	31,625	211,646	243,271	0
328312	Local Transport Fund 2020/21	150,000	150,000	0	0	150,000	150,000	0
328314	Local Transport Network Fund	75,000	75,000	0	0	75,000	75,000	0
328315	Local Transport Fund - Project Retention	22,948	0	22,948	0	0	0	0
328318	Active Travel Fund	256,316	256,316	0	241,377	14,939	256,316	0
328319	Active Travel Fund 2020/21	234,000	234,000	0	1,337	232,663	234,000	0
328322	Local Sustainable Transport Covid Respor	144,000	144,000	0	0	144,000	144,000	0
328340	LTF Metro Plus	250,000	250,000	0	0	250,000	250,000	0
328350	Access Improvement Grant	34,691	34,691	0	0	34,691	34,691	0
Engineering Services		1,464,196	1,427,278	36,918	274,339	1,152,939	1,427,278	0
Highways Network Management								
328063	Bridge Strengthening Works	1,857	0	1,857	0	0	0	0
328095	Ebbw Vale Railway study Phase 3	973	973	0	973	0	973	0
328269	Highways PB Imp. Works.	20,946	0	20,946	0	0	0	0
328270	Highways Improvement Works	1,186,835	383,099	803,736	147,929	235,170	383,099	0
328334	LGBI - Trinant Hall	65,400	0	65,400	0	0	0	0
328404	Flood Damage - Emergency Repairs	0	0	0	23,996	0	23,996	(23,996)
328405	Aberbeeg Road Repairs	405,000	405,000	0	278,386	126,614	405,000	0

Page 276

Capital Programme - 2020/21 Funding Estimates
Capital Report 2020/21

Management Reports		Capital Programme Funding Estimates						
<i>Reporting Year: and Period: 2021/6</i>								

<i>Code</i>	<i>Scheme</i>	<i>Total Funding</i>	<i>In Year Budget</i>	<i>Future Funding</i>	<i>Expenditure to: September 2020</i>	<i>Remaining in Year Budget</i>	<i>Forecast Expenditure</i>	<i>Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav</i>
328406	Small Scale Works Grant	267,750	267,750	0	132,801	134,949	267,750	0
	Highways Network Management	1,948,761	1,056,822	891,939	584,085	496,733	1,080,818	(23,996)
	Infrastructure Portfolio	3,412,957	2,484,100	928,857	858,424	1,649,672	2,508,096	(23,996)

Capital Programme - 2020/21 Funding Estimates
Capital Report 2020/21

Management Reports

Reporting Year: and Period: 2021/6

Capital Programme Funding Estimates

<i>Code</i>	<i>Scheme</i>	<i>Total Funding</i>	<i>In Year Budget</i>	<i>Future Funding</i>	<i>Expenditure to: September 2020</i>	<i>Remaining in Year Budget</i>	<i>Forecast Expenditure</i>	<i>Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav</i>
All Portfolios								
All Portfolios								
300300	City Deal	233,500	0	233,500	0	0	0	0
303990	OS Capital Admin/Design & Supervision	524,000	524,000	0	0	524,000	524,000	0
321112	Disabled Access - Special Programme	16,871	7,152	9,719	7,152	0	7,152	0
324672	The Company Shop - Tred	196,963	0	196,963	0	0	0	0
All Portfolios		971,334	531,152	440,182	7,152	524,000	531,152	0
All Portfolios		971,334	531,152	440,182	7,152	524,000	531,152	0

Capital Programme - 2020/21 Funding Estimates
Capital Report 2020/21

Management Reports		Capital Programme Funding Estimates						
<i>Reporting Year: and Period: 2021/6</i>								

<i>Code</i>	<i>Scheme</i>	<i>Total Funding</i>	<i>In Year Budget</i>	<i>Future Funding</i>	<i>Expenditure to: September 2020</i>	<i>Remaining in Year Budget</i>	<i>Forecast Expenditure</i>	<i>Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav</i>
Total Capital Funding		62,805,101	23,224,176	39,580,925	7,359,254	15,888,918	23,248,172	(23,996)

End of Report

This page is intentionally left blank

New Approvals and/or material Funding Changes in Quarter Two

Portfolio	Cost Centre	Scheme	Amount (£)	Funding Body	Type	Additional Information
Economy						
326206		Local Places for Nature Capital Funding 2020-21	61,401	Welsh Government	European Funding	Approval for Environmental Growth & Greening the Public Estate
326193		TRI - Town Centre COVID-19 recovery adaptations	600,000	Welsh Government	Targeted Regeneration Initiative	Funding to local businesses to deliver measures which adapt to the comprehensive social distancing changes required in town, city and district centres because of the COVID-19 pandemic and which support the recovery of town centres.
325103		Learning Works	75,000			Essential Works to Ebbw Vale Leisure Centre Changing Rooms
Education, Active Living and Learning						
324138		Education Capital Maintenance	-596,000	Welsh Government	2019/20 Education Maintenance Grant	Virement to individual Education Property projects as per below
324144		St Marys - Refurbishment	70,000			Allocation of Funding to individual projects from the 2019/20 Education maintenance & Corporate Landlord Capital funding allocation.
324145		Tredegar Comp - Food & Technology	180,000			
324147		Tredegar Comp Upgrade Services and Access Road	79,524			
324148		Coed y Garn Roof & Remedial Works	50,000			
324149		Brynbach Primary Disabled Adaptations	70,000			
324150		Ebbw Fawr - Developing 3/4 classrooms, toilet facilities	100,000			
324151		Tredegar Comp Upgrade Electrical Supply	50,000			
324152		Brynmawr Canopy	50,000			
324125		Education Minor Works	71,000			
Environment						
350510		Improvement grants - new scheme	-158,930	Blaenau Gwent	Capital Programme	Match Funding for Welsh Government Grant
350510		Improvement grants - new scheme	-42,638	Income		Match Funding for Welsh Government Grant
350560		Empty Property Grants	295,000	Welsh Government	Valleys Taskforce Empty Homes Grant Scheme	New Approval
350560		Empty Property Grants	158,930	Blaenau Gwent	Capital Programme	Match Funding for Welsh Government Grant
350560		Empty Property Grants	42,638	Income		Match Funding for Welsh Government Grant
Infrastructure						
328340		LTF Metro Plus	250,000	Welsh Government	Local Transport Fund	New Approval for Abertillery Interchange & Brynmawr Transport Interchange

All Portfolios

It should be noted that the funding changes detailed above will not balance to total funding changes between Q1 to Q2

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 14

For Executive and Council Only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 23.11.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 24.11.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**
Date of meeting: **9th December 2020**
Report Subject: **Use of General and Earmarked Reserves
2020/2021**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Nigel Daniels, Leader / Executive Member
Corporate Services**
Report Submitted by: **Rhian Hayden, Chief Officer Resources**

Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	04/11/20	24.11.20			23/11/20	09/12/20		

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 To report to the members of the Executive Committee the forecast reserves position for 2020/2021 as at Quarter 2 (30 September 2020).
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 There are a number of statutory requirements concerning Local Authority Reserves, including:
 - The Local Government Act 1972;
 - The Local Government Finance Act 1988;
 - The Local Government Finance Act 1992;
 - The Local Government Act 2003; and
 - The Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014.
 - 2.2 The CIPFA Local Authority Accounting Panel (LAAP) issued Bulletin 99: Local Authority Reserves and Balances in July 2014. This provides non-statutory guidance on relevant issues including:
 - Proper accounting treatment; and
 - Principles to assess the adequacy of reserves.
 - 2.3 To ensure compliance with CIPFA Local Authority Accounting Panel Bulletin 99 and identified best practice, the Council revised its protocol for managing reserves, with effect from April 2015.
 - 2.4 One aspect of the revised protocol concerns the enhancement of Elected Member engagement and scrutiny, and to this end quarterly reports detailing the actual and forecast use of general and earmarked reserves, including changes in requirement/amounts and risk assessments, are prepared and presented to Executive and Joint Budget Scrutiny Committee during the financial year.
 - 2.5 In order to adopt a long-term approach to the need to provide services to the citizens of Blaenau Gwent, the protocol was amended and agreed by Council in March 2016 to include a target level for general reserves. This was set as 4% of the last reported actual net revenue expenditure (as included in the Revenue Outturn return).

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 That the Executive Committee considers the forecast use of general and earmarked reserves for 2020/2021 and:

- consider the impact of the £0.248m adverse variance for 2020/2021 would have on the budgeted contribution to the General Reserve; and
- note the forecast decrease of the General Reserve in 2020/2021 to £6.387m, being 4.72% of net revenue expenditure (above the 4% target level).
- continue to challenge budget overspends and implement appropriate service Action Plans, where required.

Maintenance of general reserves at an adequate level is crucial to the Council being able to meet future liabilities arising from risks for which specific provision has not been made.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 **National Well-being Goals**

The management of earmarked and general reserves (in recognition of the need to plan for known or predicted future obligations, unexpected events or emergencies), allows the Authority to deliver services in pursuance of its obligations under the national well-being goals.

4.2 **Corporate Priorities**

This report supports the Council Priority, “Ambitious and Innovative Council”, as it is part of the financial planning and reporting arrangements which support the Council’s financial resilience.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 **Financial Impact**

5.1.1 Section 6 provides an overall summary of the forecast financial position in relation to the balances in general and earmarked reserves at 31 March 2021.

5.1.2 Table 1 at 6.1.3 (below) shows the forecast position for the general reserve at year-end 2020/2021 to be a decrease of £0.048m, to £6.387m. This balance would represent 4.72% of net revenue expenditure, £0.973m above the 4% target level of £5.414m, indicating further progress towards strengthening the financial resilience of the Council and providing a buffer to deal with unexpected future issues.

5.1.3 The forecast decrease in general reserves is a result of:

- currently forecast net portfolio overspends of £0.248m offset by;
- an agreed budget contribution in 2020/21 of £0.200m to support medium term financial planning and strengthen the Council's financial resilience

5.1.4 Table 2 at 6.1.7 (below) shows the forecast level of earmarked reserves at 31 March 2021 to be £8.661m, an in year increase of £0.956m. Further details of earmarked reserve movements are included in Appendix 1.

5.2 Risk

5.2.1 The Council must ensure an appropriate level and use of reserves to support its financial sustainability and to meet future liabilities arising from risks for which a specific provision has not been made.

5.2.2 The 2020/2021 budget includes a planned increase in earmarked reserves of £1.4m. Additional increases to the general reserve of £0.2m per annum are planned for the life of the current Medium Term Financial Strategy. However, the cost pressures and reductions in income associated with the continuing response to Covid 19 may adversely impact on the Council's in-year budget and ability to maintain and increase the level of reserves.

5.2.3 Failure to comply with the requirements set out in CIPFA LAAP Bulletin 99: *Local Authority Reserves and Balances*, which include the implementation of a clear protocol for the establishment, use, control and review of reserves, could result in adverse comments by regulators.

5.2.4 A protocol for the management of reserves was adopted in April 2015 to mitigate the risk of non-compliance with CIPFA LAAP Bulletin 99 and identified best practice.

5.2.5 In the short-term, the level and adequacy of reserves are regularly reviewed and monitored through regular outturn/ forecast reporting. In the medium term, reserves are assessed as part of the budget-setting process and the Medium Term Financial Strategy, which includes provision for an increase in reserves of £0.2m per annum over the life of the Strategy.

5.2.6 In comparison to all other Welsh Authorities, at 31 March 2020 Blaenau Gwent still had one of the lowest levels of general and earmarked reserves expressed as a percentage of Net Revenue Expenditure. Comparative information indicates that this position has improved to the end of 2019/2020, as follows:

	2019/2020
Blaenau Gwent Usable Reserves	£14.056m
Blaenau Gwent Usable Reserves as a percentage of Net Revenue Expenditure	9.45%
Ranking in Comparison with all Wales Local Authorities	18
All-Wales Average	£26.390m
All-Wales Average	17.74%

5.2.7 In order to meet the Welsh average, general and earmarked reserves would need to increase significantly to approximately £26.4m.

5.2.8 There is a risk that failure to increase reserves further will attract adverse criticism from regulators. This risk can be mitigated by increasing the General Reserve.

5.3 Legal

5.3.1 The Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires authorities in England and Wales to have regard to the level of reserves needed for meeting estimated future expenditure when calculating the budget requirement.

5.3.2 Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 places a duty on chief finance officers' to report on the robustness of estimates and adequacy of reserves when the authority is considering its budget requirement.

5.3.3 Section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 requires the chief finance officer to report to all the authority's councillors if there is or is likely to be unlawful expenditure or an unbalanced budget. This would include situations where reserves have become seriously depleted and it is forecast that the authority will not have the resources to meet its expenditure in a particular financial year.

5.4 Personnel

There are no direct personnel/staffing implications arising out of this report.

6. Supporting Evidence

6.1 Performance Information and Data

6.1.1 The level of the Council's general reserve disclosed in the draft statutory accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2020 was £6.435m equating to 4.75% of net revenue expenditure (as reported in the 2019/2020 Revenue Outturn forms). The current 4% target level of general reserves is £5.414m.

6.1.2 The revenue budget forecast year-end position for 2020/2021 (as at end of Quarter 2) indicates a deficit of £0.248m.

6.1.3 Therefore, the potential impact on the forecast outturn position for the general reserve at 31 March 2021 would be as follows:

Table 1: General Reserve	£000
Balance at 31 March 2020	6,435
Budgeted Contribution to General Reserve	200
Contribution from the Reserve: Net Portfolio Overspends	(248)
Forecast Balance at 31 March 2021	6,387

6.1.4 Appendix 1 gives details of the total earmarked reserves held at the start of the 2020/2021 financial year (£7.705m) with actual reserve movements to the end of quarter 2 (30 September 2020) and forecast movements to 31 March 2021.

6.1.5 The level of earmarked reserves has been determined in accordance with the agreed reserves protocol. The level of earmarked reserves available to the Authority is forecast to increase by £0.956m in 2020/2021.

6.1.6 The current summary forecast outturn position for earmarked reserves at 31 March 2021 is as follows:

Table 2: Earmarked Reserves	£000
Balance at 31 March 2020	7,705
Budgeted Contribution to Earmarked Reserves	1,444
Actual Expenditure to Q2	(51)
Forecast Expenditure to Q4	(437)
Provisional Balance at 31 March 2021	8,661

6.1.7 For those reserves that have been utilised to fund actual expenditure to 30 September 2020 (£0.51m), details of the expenditure funded have been provided in Appendix 2.

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

6.2.1 The management of earmarked and general reserves (in recognition of the need to plan for known or predicted future obligations, unexpected events or emergencies), helps demonstrate stewardship of the Authority's resources and its ability to provide services to the local community.

6.3 **Involvement** (*consultation, engagement, participation*)
Not applicable.

6.4 **Thinking for the Long term** (*forward planning*)

6.4.1 Stewardship of the Authority's resources allows for the provision of services to the local community in the short and long term.

6.5 **Preventative focus**
Not applicable.

6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**
Not applicable.

6.7 **Integration (across service areas)**
Not applicable.

6.8 **EqIA**

6.8.1 An EQIA is not required as this report provides an estimated outturn position in relation to the Authority's reserve balances for the financial year, on an objective basis in accordance with relevant accounting standards, codes, concepts, principles, guidance and legislation.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 In the short-term, the level and adequacy of reserves are regularly reviewed and monitored through regular outturn/forecast reports.

7.2 There are legal requirements in respect of the reporting of reserves when setting the annual budget and the statutory outturn position is considered by the Authority's external auditors in their audit of the annual Statement of Accounts.

7.3 In the medium term, reserves are assessed as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Qtr 2 Reserves

Appendix 2 – Qtr 2 Reserves

Appendix 1: Earmarked Reserves Movements 2020-2021

<u>Name of Reserve</u>	<u>Balance Brought Fwd</u> <u>1 April 2020</u>	<u>Reserve Adjustments</u>		<u>Total Reserve</u> <u>Adjustments</u>	<u>Actual</u> <u>Expenditure</u>	<u>Forecast</u> <u>Expenditure</u>	<u>Balance Carried</u> <u>Fwd</u> <u>31 March 2021</u>
		<u>Increases</u>	<u>Decreases</u>				
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Deminimis Capital Works	77,093.46	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	77,093.46
Facilities	121,963.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(121,963.00)	0.00
Energy Centre	58,948.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	58,948.00
Industrial Units	50,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(50,000.00)	0.00
IT Infrastructure	129,861.79	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	129,861.79
WRAP Regional Vehicles	122,865.85	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(24,000.00)	98,865.85
Budget Contingency Fund	64,351.89	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	64,351.89
Building Control Fees	86,377.04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	86,377.04
Business Support Hybrid Model	53,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(53,000.00)	0.00
Cardiff Capital Region City Deal	294,730.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	294,730.00
Corporate Landlord ALT	18,153.89	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(18,153.89)	0.00
Deposits and Bonds	3,200.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,200.00
Downsizing, Redundancy & Transitional Costs	200,088.71	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	200,088.71
Protection Costs	36,228.83	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	36,228.83
Financial Planning/ Resilience	0.00	1,444,000.00	0.00	1,444,000.00	0.00	0.00	1,444,000.00
General/ Voluntary Sector Grants	27,680.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	27,680.00
Insurance Liabilities	224,811.18	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(162,180.00)	62,631.18
Individual Schools Budget (ISB)	1,878,995.23	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,878,995.23
Land & Property Charges	26,781.54	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	26,781.54
Local Development Plan	127,547.42	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	127,547.42
Local Development Plan	149,288.54	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	149,288.54
LMS Balances	1,197,364.05	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,197,364.05
Members Local Grants	40,347.41	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	40,347.41
Payroll Project Management	23,529.97	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	23,529.97
Specialist Commercial Advice (Leisure Trust Review)	19,188.72	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	19,188.72
Stock Conditions Survey	12,137.34	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	12,137.34
Strategic Business Reviews	193,061.27	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	193,061.27
Superannuation	500,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	500,000.00
Taxation	133,913.08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	133,913.08
Technology Park Feasibility Study	200,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	200,000.00
Transport Oncost	33,127.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	33,127.00
Waste Services	120,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	120,000.00
Winter Maintenance	200,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	200,000.00
Aneurin Bevan Health Board - Education	40,962.52	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	40,962.52

Appendix 1: Earmarked Reserves Movements 2020-2021

<u>Name of Reserve</u>	<u>Balance Brought Fwd 1 April 2020</u>	<u>Reserve Adjustments</u>		<u>Total Reserve Adjustments</u>	<u>Actual Expenditure</u>	<u>Forecast Expenditure</u>	<u>Balance Carried Fwd 31 March 2021</u>
		<u>Increases</u>	<u>Decreases</u>				
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Corporate Procurement	4,437.62	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,437.62
CRASB	11,058.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	11,058.00
Education - Gypsy Travellers	40,804.42	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	40,804.42
IER	72,152.28	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	72,152.28
Leadership Hallmark	24,837.66	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(4,930.00)	19,907.66
Period Poverty	12,796.05	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	12,796.05
Planning WAG Grant Planning Committee	2,103.66	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,103.66
Prevent	10,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	10,000.00
Regen General Contributions Unapplied (Town Centre Management)	47,588.25	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	47,588.25
Rights of Way Diversions	20,255.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	20,255.00
Section 106 Agreements	171,041.31	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	171,041.31
SEW Adoption Collaboration	506,621.11	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	506,621.11
SMIFFs	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Sports Council	29,700.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(29,700.00)	0.00	0.00
SIA/PLOF Grant	2,806.08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(2,806.08)	0.00
Syrian Resettlement Programme	122,980.73	0.00	0.00	0.00	(21,443.91)	0.00	101,536.82
Workforce Development Collaboration	92,477.25	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	92,477.25
Youth Service	67,902.34	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	67,902.34
Total:	7,705,159.49	1,444,000.00	0.00	1,444,000.00	(51,143.91)	(437,032.97)	8,660,982.61

Appendix 2: Expenditure Funded by Earmarked Reserves, 2020-2021

<u>Name of Reserve</u>	<u>Actual Expenditure to Q2</u>	<u>Purpose of Expenditure</u>
	£	
Sports Council	29,700.00	Refurbishment of changing rooms at Abertillery Sports Centre
Syrian Resettlement Programme	21,443.91	Costs relate to the resettlement of families
Total to Qtr 2:	51,143.91	

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 15

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 23.11.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 24.11.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **9th December 2020**

Report Subject: **The Annual Report of The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales 2019/2020**

Portfolio Holder: **The Leader/ Executive Member Corporate Services**

Report Submitted by: **Andrea Jones
Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
28/10/20	05/11/20	24.11.20	17/11/20			09/12/20		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The report is to inform Members and Officers of the Council's performance with regard to complaints to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales prepares an annual report which provides the number of service and code of conduct complaints for each Council in Wales, and compares the Council's performance with that of the average council in Wales.
- 2.2 In 2019, the National Assembly for Wales (now Senedd Cymru Welsh Parliament) passed the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2019. The Ombudsman in Wales is now the first office in the UK to have full and operational powers to drive systemic improvement of public services through investigations on our 'own initiative' and the Complaints Standards role.
- 2.3 During 2019/20 the Ombudsman has engaged with Local Authorities on the new Complaints Standards powers and for the first time in 2019/20 Local Authorities submitted data about complaints to the Complaints Standards Authority (CSA)
- 2.4 The CSA will provide training to staff who deal with complaints. This training was originally planned for March 2020 but was cancelled due to Covid and it is hoped training will re-commence shortly.
- 2.5 The number of complaints to the Ombudsman for Blaenau Gwent during 2019/2020 was 17 which resulted in 1 intervention.
- 2.6 The overall number of complaints received by the Ombudsman relating to local authorities across Wales has decreased by 2.4% during 2019/20.

2.7 The number of Code of Conduct Complaints made to the Ombudsman in relation to this Council is 1.

2.8 The number of Code of Conduct Complaints made to the Ombudsman in relation to Town/Community Council is 6.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 **Option 1**

Executive are informed of the Council's performance with regard to complaints made to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, and that the report has been referred to the Audit Committee for assurance that the process for the monitoring of complaints is robust and the performance information provided reflects these practices.

3.2 **Option 2**

To seek further clarification on any areas within the report and or to highlight and any areas of interest or concern that need to be considered in future monitoring and reporting of complaints.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 There is a legislative requirement to provide information on the number of complaints the Council received in order for the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales to prepare an annual report.

4.2 The monitoring of complaints and complements is a key performance indicator within the Council's Corporate Plan, under the Well-being Theme, 'Efficient Council'.

4.3 From the Well-being Plan the monitoring of complaints links into 'A resilient Wales' as it provides an opportunity for citizens to take an active and empowered role. The Council is required to present the Annual Report to members.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

The Ombudsman in certain circumstances may award compensation to the complainant. In such circumstances, the compensation will be paid by the relevant department/service area.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

Complaints are investigated in accordance with the Councils Corporate Complaints Policy.

5.3 ***Legal***

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

5.4 **Human Resources**

There are no human resource implications associated with this report.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

See appendix 1:

Section A: Complaints received and investigated with the local authority average adjusted by population

Section B: Complaints received by subject

Section C: Comparison of complaint outcome with average outcome for Local authorities, adjusted for population distribution

Section D: Provides the numbers and percentages of cases received by the Ombudsman in which an intervention has occurred. This includes all upheld complaints, early resolutions and voluntary settlements.

Section E: Provides a breakdown of all Code of Conduct complaint outcomes against Councillors during 2018/19.

Section F: Provides a breakdown of all Code of Conduct complaint Outcomes against town or community councils

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

This report is positive information to share with the public and is evidence that the Council's Corporate Complaints Policy is working effectively to resolve complaints at an early stage, and few complainants are seeking independent redress.

6.3 **Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)**

By providing a complaints process, the Council is enabling active participation of the public and partners to identify areas of concern that need to be addressed.

6.4 **Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)**

The Public Service Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2019 has now been introduced giving the Ombudsman new powers aimed at:

- Improving access to their office
- Allowing the Ombudsman to undertake own initiative investigations when required in the public interest
- Ensuring that complaints data from across Wales may be used to drive improvement in public services for citizens in Wales

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

The complaints process enables the Council to rectify processes that have been highlighted within a complaint. This in turn supports the Council to prevent similar complaints being provided.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

As part of the report prepared by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales comparisons are made across all Council's across Wales.

6.7 ***Integration(across service areas)***

The Complaints process is undertaken across all sections of the Council in order to provide a full picture across the Council.

6.8 ***EqlA(screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)***

An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required for the performance monitoring of complaints, however, if a complaint requires consideration of the Equalities Act an EqlA would be undertaken for the specific complaint.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The annual reports are presented to the Corporate Leadership Team and Audit Committee on an annual basis.

Complaints monitoring is undertaken across the Council and, as mentioned above, a review of this process is to be undertaken in due course.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1

Factsheet

A. Complaints Received

Local Authority	Complaints Received	Complaints received per 1000 residents
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	17	0.24
Bridgend County Borough Council	34	0.23
Caerphilly County Borough Council	49	0.27
Cardiff Council*	122	0.33
Carmarthenshire County Council	42	0.22
Ceredigion County Council	31	0.42
Conwy County Borough Council	29	0.25
Denbighshire County Council	32	0.34
Flintshire County Council	61	0.39
Gwynedd Council	37	0.30
Isle of Anglesey County Council	26	0.37
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	13	0.22
Monmouthshire County Council	16	0.17
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council	22	0.15
Newport City Council	39	0.25
Pembrokeshire County Council	25	0.20
Powys County Council	72	0.54
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	39	0.16
Swansea Council	92	0.37
Torfaen County Borough Council	5	0.05
Vale of Glamorgan Council	30	0.23
Wrexham County Borough Council	33	0.24
Wales	866	0.28

* inc 1 Rent Smart Wales

B. Complaints Received by Subject

Blaenau Gwent	Complaints Received	Complaints Percentage Share
Adult Social Services	1	5.88%
Children's Social Services	2	11.76%
Community Facilities, Recreation and Leisure	1	5.88%
Complaint Handling	2	11.76%
Education	2	11.76%
Environment and Environmental Health	3	17.65%
Housing	1	5.88%
Planning and Building Control	2	11.76%
Various Other	3	17.65%

C. Complaint Outcomes

(* denotes intervention)

Complaints Closed	Premature/ Out of Time/Right to Appeal	Out of Jurisdiction	Other cases closed after initial consideration	Early Resolution/voluntary settlement*	Discontinued	Other Reports- Not Upheld	Other Reports Upheld - in whole or in part*	Public Interest Report *	Grand Total
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	9	2	5	1	0	0	0	0	17
Percentage Share	52.94%	11.76%	29.41%	5.88%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	

D. Number of cases with PSOW intervention

	No. of interventions	No. of closures	% of interventions
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	1	17	6%
Bridgend County Borough Council	1	34	3%
Caerphilly County Borough Council	6	50	12%
Cardiff Council	21	120	18%
Cardiff Council - Rent Smart Wales	-	1	0%
Cardarthen County Council	6	46	13%
Ceredigion County Council	4	30	13%
Conwy County Borough Council	6	34	18%
Denbighshire County Council	2	32	6%
Flintshire County Council	8	57	14%
Gwynedd Council	4	39	10%
Isle of Anglesey County Council	3	28	11%
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	2	15	13%
Monmouthshire County Council	2	15	13%
Neath Port Talbot Council	4	25	16%
Newport City Council	4	38	11%
Pembrokeshire County Council	7	29	24%
Powys County Council	14	71	20%
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	5	40	13%
Swansea Council	4	93	4%
Torfaen County Borough Council	1	5	20%
Vale of Glamorgan Council	4	27	15%
Wrexham County Borough Council	4	33	12%
Grand Total	113	879	13%

E. Code of Conduct Complaints Closed

County/County Borough Councils	Closed after initial consideration	Discontinued	No evidence of breach	No action necessary	Refer to Standards Committee	Refer to Adjudication Panel	Withdrawn	Total
Blaenau Gwent	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1

F. Town/Community Council Code of Complaints

Town/Community Council	Closed after initial consideration	Discontinued	No evidence of breach	No action necessary	Refer to Standards Committee	Refer to Adjudication Panel	Withdrawn	Total
Abertillery & Llanhilleth CC	6	-	1	-	-	-	-	7

Agenda Item 16

Sign off for Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 23.11.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 24.11.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **9th December 2020**

Report Subject: **Flood Risk Management Plan (2016- 2022)**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr. Joanna Wilkins, Executive Member
Environment**

Report Submitted by: **Clive Rogers, Head of Community Services
W. Jervis, Senior Engineer**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
16.09.20	01.10.20	24.11.20			19.10.20	09.12.20		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Members on progress made in delivery of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Councils Flood Management Plan 2016-2022.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The report provides the background to the Plan and summarises progress made on objectives and measures since its adoption, and approval by Welsh Government in 2016.
- 2.2 The Plan highlights the hazards and risk of flooding and sets out how the Authority will work with other parties and local communities to manage the risks.
- 2.3 The Plan sets out how over the six-year period, we will manage flooding so that the communities most at risk and the environment benefit the most.
- 2.4 The objectives outlined in the Borough's Flood Management Plan come under the headings: Social & Cultural, Economic, and Environmental
- 2.5 The above objectives have been further classed into 3 categories:
- a. Prevention (11 Measures)
 - b. Protection (15 Measures)
 - c. Preparedness (8 Measures)

To achieve the objectives under the headings and categories, the Plan identifies measures designed to reduce flooding.

- 2.6 Including the use of non-structural measures such as avoiding inappropriate development, and covering all aspects of flood risk management, including raising awareness of flooding and providing a better understanding of local flooding issues.

3. Options for Recommendation

3.1 The Community Services Scrutiny Committee supported Option 1 at its meeting on 19th October 2020.

3.2 Options Appraisal

- **Option 1:** Preferred option; That Members accept the Report and progress made over the previous 12 months.
- **Option 2:** That Members do not accept the Report and recommend alternative actions going forward.

4. Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan

- 4.1
- The attached Appendix 2 is a table of the measures identified in the Plan. The table identifies the progress made since the Plan was adopted in December 2015, and also progress made since the last annual review in 2019.
 - The measures evidenced in Appendix 2 demonstrates how the desired objectives of the Blaenau Gwent Well Being Goals, as well as the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act have been achieved.

The findings of Appendix 2 can be summarised as follows:

4.2 Prevention (BG01-04)

- Undertook a number of CCTV surveys of our culvert inlets to inspect their condition and to understand the reasons for the flood risk at:
 - i. Ladies Row, Picton Row and Georgetown Hill, Tredegar
 - ii. Glanffrwd Terrace, Rear of Holland Street, EV
 - iii. Cwmcelyn, Blaina
 - iv. Railway Street, Meadow Street and the sports field, Llanhilleth

This will enable us to effectively consider the risks of future developments, or decide if action can be taken to minimize risk of flooding.

- Commissioned 10 catchment surveys to enable us to evaluate expected flows at critical and significant inlets throughout the borough.
- Externally funded assistance from associated engineers within the department and we also appointed an apprentice engineer to assist with delivery and development of our Flood Risk Management Plan.
- Monitored all three rivers in Blaenau Gwent on a monthly basis. Data was recorded by volunteers and fed back to responsible parties to be acted upon.
- Works and activities were held throughout the year with partners including Groundwork Wales, Natural Resources Wales and Keep Wales Tidy to resolve any issues identified on the rivers and increase the quality of the habitat, with works carried out by staff and volunteers.

- Several school's workshops were held at Bryn Bach Park, linked with plastic pollution and flooding.

4.3 Technical Services was successful in applying for 100% funded Welsh Government Revenue Grants to undertake the following works and objectives.

Culvert Inlet Catchment Studies	£10,000
Funding the appointment of an apprentice engineer and also others within the department to assist with delivery and development of our Flood Risk Management Plan	£14,496
Various drainage works from revenue grant for Ad Hoc Maintenance works such as maintenance of drainage ditches, culverts and the like.	£32,870
Total value of works	£57,366

4.4 The following work was 85% Welsh Government funded. The remaining 15% was funded by other Welsh Government grants which were provided to enable councils to progress with their Flood risk management plan.

Scheme	Total expenditure	Value of Grant
Bridgend Culvert Repairs, Ebbw Vale	£27,538	£21,250
Ebbw Vale House Culvert Repairs, Ebbw Vale	£13,394	£8,500
Total value of works	£40,932	£29,750

4.5 Due to the severe storms encountered at the end of the year and early 2020 we were unable to complete a scheme anticipated to cost £40,000 with a grant value of £34,000. However, Welsh Government has allowed us to carry this money over to the 2020-2021 budget.

4.6 BGCBC also undertook the following actions as part of our statutory duties.

- 2,675 culvert inspections for year 2019-20.
- 365 Con 29 Land Search requests relating to drainage.
- 108 Planning applications relating to drainage
- 220 Service requests for assistance relating to drainage.

4.7 **Protection (BG 05-08)**

- Further tree planting at Bryn Bach Park to help store water and slow down surface run-off. Approx. 500 trees were planted, which were provided by Ovo Energy after applying for a free promotion they were offering.
- Weed clearance at Bryn Bach Lake, which consisted mostly of volunteers with minimal Council Officer time.
- Woodland planting to attenuate water and help prevent run-off at Bryn Bach Park.
- The removal of a large amount of rubbish in rivers at Llanhilleth, Dukestown, Tredegar, Bourneville, Blaina and Cambridge Gardens in Ebbw Vale.

4.8 **Preparedness (BG09-13)**

The Authority continues to develop a response to flooding incidents and Multi-Agency Tactical Emergency Management and Strategic Emergency Management training is undertaken on an annual basis.

There is also a Gwent Local Resilience Forum Recovery Plan in place.

4.9 **Challenges and obstacles faced throughout the year 2019 – 20:**

This year has been quite an unprecedented year with climate change bringing storms Brendan, Ciara, Dennis and Jorge. Changes in the way we work due to Covid 19, and unavailability of staff for long periods all contributing to what has been a very difficult period.

5 **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 **Option 1:** That Members accept the Report and progress made over the previous 12 months.

5.2 **Implications:**

- i. Actions are not evenly distributed across the borough, as they are prioritised by risk.
- ii. Funding may not be available to continue the delivery of the plan, therefore actions identified in the plan may not be delivered.

5.3 **Option 2.** That Members do not accept the Report and recommend alternative actions going forward.

5.4 **Implications:**

- i. Additional funding may be required to undertake the work.
- ii. Funding may not be available for alternative actions.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Adoption of the 2016-2022 Flood Risk Management Plan primarily contributes to meeting the following priorities:**

Corporate Plan Priority:

- Strong and Environmentally Smart Communities
- To improve the access to and quality of open spaces for the benefit of our communities, businesses and visitors.

6.2 **Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan:**

Adoption of the Flood Risk Management Plan 2016 – 2022 will help provide the following objectives:

- The best start in life for everyone
- Safe and friendly communities
- To look after and protect the environment
- To forge new pathways to prosperity
- To encourage and enable people to make healthy lifestyle choices in the places that they live, learn, work and play.

By continuing to work towards the objectives set out in our Flood Risk Management plan BGCBC will maximise its contributions to the Well-being goals.

6.3 **The Future Generations Act**

The Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Flood plan achieves the goals of The Future Generations Act by improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the well-being goals.

” It sets out five ways of working needed for Public Bodies to achieve the seven well-being goals.

6.4 **Long-term**

The importance of balancing short-term needs with the needs to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs

6.5 **Integration**

Considering how the public body’s well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.

6.6 **Involvement**

The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves

6.7 **Collaboration**

Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives.

6.8 **Prevention**

How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objective.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The identified objectives and achievements towards the plan are continually assessed by officers responsible for its delivery.

7.2 The achievements towards the plan will continue to be reported annually through scrutiny as it has done since its inception.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Flood and Water Management Act 2010
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/contents>

BGCBC Flood Risk Management Plan

https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/fileadmin/documents/Resident/Planning/Floods_FRMP_complete.pdf

- Flood Risk Management Strategy
https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/fileadmin/documents/Resident/Planning/Flood_Risk_Strategy.pdf

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>A prosperous Wales 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 plan recognises the role of Green Infrastructure in helping to reduce the level of flood risk and the severity. Considering the issue of climate change and flood risk within or schools NRM programme will engender our Future Generations with a clear understanding of climate change issues and Flood Risk</p>	<p>The delivery of Green Infrastructure are a relatively low cost, sustainable option, but they are limited by the resource availability. Our NRM programme optimises progress</p>
<p>A resilient Wales 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 Flood Risk Management Plan's measures will reduce the risk of flooding and by utilising Green Infrastructure to good effect will add value in terms of enhancing our biodiverse natural environment, and increase resilience to change.</p>	<p>Engaging with our communities and encouraging active participation in the understanding and management of our Natural GreenSpaces will maximise benefits.</p>
<p>A healthier Wales 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>By reducing flood risk we are reducing stress and worry for people in these areas and thus maximising their mental well-being. Encouraging active participation in the management and use of our Green spaces has proven health and wellbeing benefits.</p>	<p>Our communities can be encouraged through initiatives such as Go Green 4 Health , Patient Referrals by GP's and general volunteering opportunities in order to maximise health benefits.</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>A more equal Wales 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>Active community engagement in Green Infrastructure initiatives will provide opportunities for all citizens to participate regardless of background. Project delivery through Probation Services, Go Green 4 Health etc focus on engaging with hard to reach groups of people.</p>	<p>Promotion and engagement of events to increase levels of engagement. Networking to encourage participation levels.</p>
<p>A Wales of cohesive communities Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.</p>	<p>Through working with communities to enable them to respond to flood risk and encouraging events and activities that focus on local green spaces help to help to develop develop cohesive communities.</p>	<p>Supporting local Groups to take an active role in the local environment will maximise the benefits</p>
<p>A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language 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>Establishing local groups to take an active role in their local environmental quality will help to underpin local pride and cultural appreciation</p>	<p>Supporting local Groups to take an active role in the local environment will maximise the benefits</p>
<p>A globally responsible Wales 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>By raising awareness and building resilience to flood risk we are making a positive contribution to global well-being.</p>	<p>Supporting local Groups to take an active role in the local environment will maximise the benefits</p>

This page is intentionally left blank

Specific Measure		Measure Type	Link to FRMP Objective	Link to RBMP & Severn FRMP	Time Scale	Progress 2016-2018	Progress 2019-2020
MEASURE BG01: We will avoid inappropriate development in flood risk areas							
BG01.1	Adopt the Local Development Plan and implement Policy SP7 which directs new development away from high flood risk areas	Prevention M21	S1, S2, S3	Work with others to avoid inappropriate development	2016-2021	The Local Development Plan has been adopted and Strategic Policy SP7 is used to direct development away from flood risk areas.	Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 is now in place and BGCBC are a SuDS Approval Body (SAB). This means that planning consents have now become completely separate from consents relating to Drainage. However, Policy SP7 ensures that no highly vulnerable development is allowed in high flood risk areas
BG01.2	Raise awareness in Planning Committees when developments potentially impact on flood risk areas.	Prevention M21	S1, S2, S3, Ec2	Work with others to avoid inappropriate development	2016-2021	Development which potentially impact on flood risk areas are identified within planning committee reports	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has been set up as a SuDS Approval Body (SAB). This means that planning consents have now become completely separate from consents relating to Drainage. However, Planning Committee is made aware when applications have implications on flood risk areas.

Specific Measure		Measure Type	Link to FRMP Objective	Link to RBMP & Severn FRMP	Time Scale	Progress 2016-2018	Progress 2019-2020
BG02.1	Adopt the Local Development Plan and implement Policy SP7 which includes a requirement to incorporate measures in design and construction to reduce the effects of flooding. This will ensure buildings are designed to reduce the effects of flooding	Prevention M23	S2, Ec1, Ec1, Ec2	Promote flood resilience and flood proofing	2016-2021	The Local Development Plan has been adopted and Strategic Policy SP7 is used to ensure buildings are designed to reduce the effects of flooding	This measure is governed by Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. Whereby Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has been set up as a SuDS Approval Body (SAB). This means that planning consents have now become completely separate from consents relating to Drainage. However, where less vulnerable development is permitted in flood risk areas, where necessary, buildings are designed to reduce the effects of flooding.
BG02.2	Promote appropriately designed developments in relation to site levels, creation of high ground and setting floor levels	Prevention M23	S1, S2, Ec2	Promote flood resilience and flood proofing	2016-2021	Advice from NRW on appropriate ground levels and floor level is taken into account in the planning application process.	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has been set up as a SuDS Approval Body (SAB). This means that planning consents have now become completely separate from consents relating to Drainage. However, advice from NRW on appropriate ground levels and floor level is taken into account in

Specific Measure		Measure Type	Link to FRMP Objective	Link to RBMP & Severn FRMP	Time Scale	Progress 2016-2018	Progress 2019-2020
							the planning application process.
BG02.3	Increase approaches in road schemes to utilise materials which provide more resilience to flooding incidents where they are likely to occur.	Prevention M23	S4, Ec2, En2	Promote flood resilience and flood proofing	2016-2021	The drainage Officer provides advice on appropriate design for Highway schemes, building in green infrastructure solutions as appropriate.	This measure has been largely overtaken by Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. Whereby Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has been set up as a SuDS Approval Body (SAB). This means that planning consents have now become completely separate from consents relating to Drainage. This measure is ongoing
BG03.1	Develop reporting system to register details of events at the time of flooding incidents.	Prevention M24	Ec2	Learn from flood events	2016-2021	funding acquired from Welsh Government allowed us to purchase flood management software which will improve the accuracy of recording flooding incidents Software and training was provided in March 2017 and details of flood events were recorded on the software	The loss of a staff member last year reduced input into the database to a minimum. A new trainee officer has now been appointed and arrangements for further training have been discussed with the software supplier. For which 100% funding has been arranged. It is anticipated that after a short period of training work to update

Specific Measure		Measure Type	Link to FRMP Objective	Link to RBMP & Severn FRMP	Time Scale	Progress 2016-2018	Progress 2019-2020
							the database will be continued.
BG03.2	Develop and maintain a register of flood assets.	Prevention M24	Ec2	Learn from flood events	2016-2021	funding acquired from Welsh Government allowed us to purchase flood management software which improved the accuracy of recording our Assets. Software and training was provided in March 2017 and details of flood events were recorded on the software	<p>The loss of a staff member last year has reduced inputting into the database to a minimum.</p> <p>A new trainee officer has now been appointed and arrangements for further training have been discussed with the software supplier. For which 100% funding has been arranged.</p> <p>It is anticipated that after a short period of training work to update the database will be continued. .</p>
BG03.3	Develop a maintenance recording system and ensure these are informed by the register of flooding incidents.	Prevention M24	Ec2	Flood Forecasting warning & incident management	2016-2021	Welsh Government funding enabled the purchase of funding acquired from Welsh Government allowed us to purchase flood management software designed to improve the efficiency of maintenance schedule Software and training was provided in March 2017 and details of flood events were	<p>Since the loss of the officer progress on this aspect has been slow.</p> <p>Inputting of data has ceased due to lack of capacity .</p> <p>A new trainee officer has now been appointed and arrangements for further training has been discussed with the software</p>

Specific Measure		Measure Type	Link to FRMP Objective	Link to RBMP & Severn FRMP	Time Scale	Progress 2016-2018	Progress 2019-2020
						recorded on the software	supplier. For which 100% funding has been arranged. It is anticipated that after a short period of training work to update the database will be continued
BG03.4	Carry out a risk assessment of all critical culverts and flood assets, as identified through the register of flooding incidents, maintenance records or flood assets, and prepare an action plan to address any unacceptable risks as a result of the review.	Prevention M24	Ec2	Modelling & Hydrology	2016-2021	Progress has been made with T98 condition assessments of all critical and significant culvert resulting in repairs and replacements of a number of inlets. Funding has also enabled us to undertake CCTV surveys on a number of culverts, resulting in work to address unacceptable risk	Following a T98 assessment of our critical inlets the previous year a number of inlets have now been improved, and updated on our system. This year we have commissioned work to undertake a number of catchment studies which will inform us if the existing culverts are able to cope with the extra demand of the new developments and the resulting additional impermeable surfaces which increase flow at culvert inlets. We have also undertaken additional CCTV inspections throughout the borough.

Specific Measure		Measure Type	Link to FRMP Objective	Link to RBMP & Severn FRMP	Time Scale	Progress 2016-2018	Progress 2019-2020
BG04.1	Ensuring flood events are recorded in line with the form identified in PRFA	Prevention M24	Ec2	Flood Forecasting warning & incident management	2016-2021	A system originally put in place for the recording of flood incidents onto spreadsheets . Software and training has since been provided and details of flood events were recorded on the software. This measure is ongoing.	<p>Since the loss of the officer progress on this aspect has been reverted to the spreadsheet until it can be input into the software database.</p> <p>A new trainee officer has now been appointed and arrangements for further training has been discussed with the software supplier. For which 100% funding has been arranged.</p> <p>It is anticipated that after a short period of training work to update the database will be continued</p>
BG04.2	Implementing a geographical database of flood events to inform future mapping of flood risk areas	Prevention M24	Ec2	Flood Forecasting warning & incident management	2016-2021	Flood risk management software has enabled us to commence input of flooding locations and improve the efficiency and accuracy of mapping flood risk areas.	<p>Since the loss of the officer progress on this aspect has been reverted to the spreadsheet until it can be input into the software database.</p> <p>A new trainee officer has now been appointed and arrangements for further training have been discussed with the software</p>

Specific Measure		Measure Type	Link to FRMP Objective	Link to RBMP & Severn FRMP	Time Scale	Progress 2016-2018	Progress 2019-2020
							<p>supplier. For which 100% funding has been arranged.</p> <p>It is anticipated that after a short period of training work to update the database will be continued</p> <p>This measure is ongoing</p>
BG05.1	Delivery of the Blaenau Gwent Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP), specifically HAP1, Wet woodlands, HAP4, Wetlands and HAP 5 Rivers and Streams.	Protection M31	S1, Ec1, En2	Ensure appropriate floodplain compensation	2016-2021	<p>Working with community groups, schools and external charities including pond restoration and creation.</p> <p>Volunteers participated in the vegetation clearance</p> <p>In 2018 invertebrate monitoring and training has been given to new volunteers.</p> <p>Several areas covering all three rivers in Blaenau Gwent are now monitored on a monthly basis.</p> <p>Trigger levels are set so any concerns with water quality are</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

Specific Measure		Measure Type	Link to FRMP Objective	Link to RBMP & Severn FRMP	Time Scale	Progress 2016-2018	Progress 2019-2020
						<p>raised immediately.</p> <p>Monthly visits to the rivers also ensure that issues noted while on site are reported.</p> <p>An invasive weed treatment programme was continued that identified and treated Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed found on the Rivers Sirhowy, Ebbw Fawr and Ebbw Fach that flow from Blaenau Gwent into Caerphilly.</p> <p>Himalayan Balsam was also treated in a number of locations</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
BG05.2	Consider/Review the designation and management of Local Nature Reserves (LNR) where they assist in flood prevention.	Protection M31	S1, Ec1, En2	Ensure appropriate floodplain compensation	2016-2021	Biodiversity Action Plans have been updated to accommodate Action in the Flood risk management strategy, incorporating planting schemes and habitat management which help to alleviate flooding. BGCBC are contributing to the	Ongoing

Specific Measure		Measure Type	Link to FRMP Objective	Link to RBMP & Severn FRMP	Time Scale	Progress 2016-2018	Progress 2019-2020
						water management on local nature reserves in line with the ecological management plan in collaboration with internal teams and community groups.	
BG05.3	Consider planning requirements for wetland habitat creation as part of the Development Management Process.	Protection M31	En2	Ensure appropriate floodplain compensation	2016-2021	Opportunities for wetland habitat creation are being considered within the development management process. The options are always discussed with developers when appropriate.	The implementation of Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 has ensured that the requirements for wetland habitat creation as part of the Development Management Process are considered separately as a matter of course.
BG05.4	Consider the designation and management of existing wetland areas where they assist in	Protection M31	Ec2, En2	Ensure appropriate floodplain compensation	2016-2021	A number of pond restorations schemes have been identified to build resilience to climate change and help combat the risk of flooding including; Peacehaven, Tredegar Business	Similar works are ongoing

Specific Measure		Measure Type	Link to FRMP Objective	Link to RBMP & Severn FRMP	Time Scale	Progress 2016-2018	Progress 2019-2020
	flood prevention.					<p>Park, Beaufort ponds Six Bells and Trevor Rowson.</p> <p>River clearance involving the removal of large quantities of debris was undertaken at sites throughout Blaenau Gwent.</p>	
BG05.5	BGCBC will encourage developers to incorporate wetland and other natural attenuation schemes in new development through guidance, Policies and pre-application discussions with Planning Control case officers.	Protection M31	S2, Ec2, En2	Ensure appropriate floodplain compensation	2016-2021	<p>2016-17 We have developed draft supplementary planning guidance for biodiversity which considers how to incorporate wetland and other natural attenuation schemes in new developments.</p> <p>2017-18 The above is still relevant but we have seen a fall in enquiries for major housing and other schemes which is when these requirements would become relevant.</p>	Following the implementation of schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 the issues are automatically considered as part of the SAB application process.

Specific Measure	Measure Type	Link to FRMP Objective	Link to RBMP & Severn FRMP	Time Scale	Progress 2016-2018	Progress 2019-2020	
MEASURE BG06: We will increase approaches that utilise the natural environment, like adopting soft engineering in place of traditional solutions, managing of the land to reduce storm runoff, creating more wetlands to store water							
BG06.1	Identify contributions to delivery of the Woodlands for Wales Strategy (Welsh Gov) e.g. Shelter belt planting opportunities.	Protection M31	Ec2, En2	Sustainable woodland and forestry management	2016-2021	<p>A number of woodland planting schemes have been delivered on school sites</p> <p>1500 trees planted as part of the Sirhowy Valley planting scheme around Peacehaven.</p> <p>Sirhowy Community Woodland Group new woodland Planting – 500 native trees planted.</p> <p>2 Ha of infected Larch clear-felled at Bryn Bach Park and replaced with 5000 native this will build in resilience to climate change, and involved the use of volunteers from 4 local schools and the local community.</p> <p>155meters of hedgerow planting took place</p>	Further tree planting took place during Dec 2019 at Bryn Bach Park to help store water and slow down surface run-off. Approx. 500 trees were planted, which were provided by Ovo Energy after applying for a free promotion they were offering.

Specific Measure		Measure Type	Link to FRMP Objective	Link to RBMP & Severn FRMP	Time Scale	Progress 2016-2018	Progress 2019-2020
BG06.2	Review the existing management of ordinary water courses in regard to controlling invasive weeds.	Protection M31	Ec2, En2	RBMP: Manage invasive non- native species	2016- 2021	26 Km of water courses monitored for the presence of Japanese Knotweed with 65 individual sites being treated (Autumn 2016). The sites have been revised and treated where required in September 2017. In 2018-19 an ongoing invasive weed treatment programme was continued which treated Japanese Knotweed, Giant Hogweed, and Himalayan Balsam	Waiting for response off the team
BG06.3	Review the existing management plans for Local Nature Reserves which assist in storing and filtering water.	Protection M31	Ec2, En2	RBMP: Improve flows and water levels	2016- 2021	Working with our community groups the LNR management plans form the basis of actions on site. Water courses, ponds and lakes are considered to maximise their potential for storing and filtering water	This measure is ongoing in collaboration with the borough ecologist.
BG06.4	When designing streetscape works consideration will be given to incorporating	Protection M31	S4, Ec2, En2	RBMP: Reduce impacts of other physical	2016- 2021	Consideration is given to the inclusion of tree planting and permeable areas in all	Following the implementation of schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 the incorporation of a greater area of

Specific Measure		Measure Type	Link to FRMP Objective	Link to RBMP & Severn FRMP	Time Scale	Progress 2016-2018	Progress 2019-2020
	a greater area of tree planting and permeable areas.			modifications		development applications. during 2017- 18, 131 planning applications responded to and opportunities to include additional tree planting included where possible.	tree planting and permeable areas are automatically considered as part of the SAB application process.
BG06.5	Identify opportunities for planting to stabilise river banks.	Protection M31	Ec2, En2	RBMP: Reduce impacts of other physical modifications	2016-2021	We worked with NRW, Groundwork Wales and volunteers at Marine Colliery on bank stabilisation project, using native woodland species (500 native trees planted). Aberbeeg cycle bridge has included bank stabilisation via green engineering and native woodland planting on the embankment. (500 native trees)	No further projects delivered in 2019 -20

Specific Measure		Measure Type	Link to FRMP Objective	Link to RBMP & Severn FRMP	Time Scale	Progress 2016-2018	Progress 2019-2020
MEASURE BG07: deploying the sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) approach for surface water management for both new and existing developments							
BG07.1	Adopt the Local Development Plan and implement Policy DM1 which requires proposals to reduce surface water run off through minimising an increase in impermeable surfaces and using Sustainable Drainage systems, where appropriate.	Protection M34	Ec1, Ec2	Support implementation of SUDs	2016-2021	The LDP is a key Council Policy in terms of Development Control. Policy DM1 is considered in all development applications (378 applications considered for 2016)	Following the implementation of schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 the reduction of surface water run off by the introduction of more permeable areas are automatically considered as part of the SAB application process.
BG07.2	Encourage developers through pre-application discussions to use sustainable drainage systems pending the introduction of the new SuDS regime	Protection M34	En2	Support implementation of SUDs	2016-2021	The use of SUDs is being considered through the development control process. However we are finding developers are not buying in 100% to the principle until it becomes a mandatory requirement.	Following the implementation of schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 the incorporation SuDS are automatically considered as part of the SAB application process.

Specific Measure		Measure Type	Link to FRMP Objective	Link to RBMP & Severn FRMP	Time Scale	Progress 2016-2018	Progress 2019-2020
BG07.3	Specify greater use of SuDS systems for new developments as conditions of planning consent.	Protection M34	S1, S2, En2	Support implementation of SUDs	2016-2021	Developers are encouraged to adopt the SuDS management train. However, as it is not yet a statutory requirement we have not attached conditions requiring SUDs but we do attach informative notes to permissions advocating its use	Following the implementation of schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 the incorporation SuDS are automatically specified as part of the SAB conditions.
MEASUREBG08: Identifying and protecting areas suitable for inundation and water storage to prevent flooding elsewhere							
BG08.1	Identify areas suitable for inundation and water storage.	Protection M31	Ec1, En2	Identify opportunities for floodplain restoration	2016-2021	No progress has been made in this area at present due to lack of capacity.	Due to the topography of Blaenau Gwent there are limited inundation areas for consideration

Specific Measure		Measure Type	Link to FRMP Objective	Link to RBMP & Severn FRMP	Time Scale	Progress 2016-2018	Progress 2019-2020
MEASUREBG09: Enable those at risk of flooding to play a proactive role in shaping the flood risk management service they receive							
BG09.1	Develop community resilience schemes for areas at risk of flooding	Preparedness M43	S1, S2, S3	Provide service to local resilience forums	2016-2021	No further work undertaken at present. National guidance on community resilience has recently been issued by the Cabinet Office. This is currently being considered on a Multi-Agency basis as to what community resilience work is currently undertaken, and what additional work can be done with current capacity (not necessarily solely flood related).	No progress reported

Specific Measure		Measure Type	Link to FRMP Objective	Link to RBMP & Severn FRMP	Time Scale	Progress 2016-2018	Progress 2019-2020
BG09.2	Ensuring wider awareness of individual risk to increase levels of preparedness and planning for flooding events	Preparedness M43	S1, S3, Ec1	Raise awareness of flood risk issues	2016-2021	Information on flood risk is now available on various websites (BGCBC, Gwent Local Resilience Forum, Natural Resources Wales). Updates to BGCBC web site are applied as necessary	Progress has been limited this year due to the lockdown and social distancing regulations related to the Covid 19 Virus Progress is also limited due to the Civil Contingencies Team only having capacity to work on COVID-19.
MEASURE BG10: Improve the response to flooding incidents by the emergency response organisations, as well as individuals and businesses							
BG10.1	Ensure lessons from flooding incidents in this and other areas are captured	Preparedness M42	Ec1, Ec2	Learn from flood events	2016-2021	As a result of the flood report forms we are investigating each event of flooding to identify the source and take measures to prevent future occurrences.	This measure is ongoing A debrief will be undertaken of the flooding February 2020, however progress on this is limited due to the Civil Contingencies Team being involved in COVID-19.

Specific Measure		Measure Type	Link to FRMP Objective	Link to RBMP & Severn FRMP	Time Scale	Progress 2016-2018	Progress 2019-2020
BG10.2	Appropriate trained staff to ensure awareness of roles, responsibilities and an effective response for those involved in flood response.	Preparedness M42	Ec1, Ec2	Work closely with NRW	2016-2021	Multi agency Tactical Emergency Management (Head of Service) and Strategic Emergency Management (Corporate Management Team) training is undertaken on an annual basis.	Relevant training has been undertaken every year, and all staff with a strategic or tactical role have been trained. Training for 2020 is postponed due to COVID-19
MEASURE BG11: Ensure effective recovery arrangements are in place and supported by all relevant parties							
BG11.1	Involvement in multi-agency recovery planning, ensuring plans are tested for suitability	Preparedness M42	Ec1, Ec2	Provide flood incident response service	2016-2021	A Gwent Local Resilience Forum Recovery plan is in place. This is updated on a 3 yearly basis, and Civil Contingencies are involved in both the development of these arrangements and plan validation.	The Recovery Plan will be tested through recovery of COVID-10

Specific Measure		Measure Type	Link to FRMP Objective	Link to RBMP & Severn FRMP	Time Scale	Progress 2016-2018	Progress 2019-2020
MEASURE BG12: Develop better flood forecasting and warning system							
BG12.1	Developing a consistent approach to recording of flood events and flood assets.	Preparedness M41	Ec2	Flood Forecasting warning & incident management	2016-2021	<p>We currently have a hard copy and electronic system for recording of flood events and of our culvert inlet inspection regime.</p> <p>As of Jan 2017 we secured funding for a new software package, in line with NRW requirements for recording data.</p> <p>2017 -18 We have installed the software for the recording of floods and we have commenced the inputting of data</p>	<p>The loss of a staff member last year reduced input into the database to a minimum.</p> <p>A new trainee officer has now been appointed and arrangements for further training have been discussed with the software supplier. For which 100% funding has been arranged.</p> <p>It is anticipated that after a short period of training work to update the database will be continued.</p> <p>Due to long term absence of the drainage engineer It has not been possible to recover any detailed information from within the local authority of properties flooded at Llanhilleth during the storms Ciara, Dennis and Jorge this year.</p>
BG12.2	Develop a communication strategy for at-risk communities where	Preparedness M43	S1, S2, Ec2	Flood Forecasting warning & incident	2016-2021	No progress has been made in this area at present due to lack of capacity.	No further progress has been made due to lack of capacity.

Specific Measure		Measure Type	Link to FRMP Objective	Link to RBMP & Severn FRMP	Time Scale	Progress 2016-2018	Progress 2019-2020
	risks that cannot be immediately reduced are communicated to the Emergency Planning Team and affected businesses or residents.			managem nt		However, There is a resilience group in Cwm set up by NRW.	
MEASURE BG13: Improve communication and support to residents, businesses and communities							
BG13.1	Set up a "Flood Risk Community Engagement Group" to help communicate flooding and flood risk to residents, businesses, community etc.	Preparedness M44	S1, S2	Raise awareness of flood risk issues	2016-2021	No progress has been made in this area at present due to lack of capacity.	No further progress has been made due to lack of capacity

Agenda Item 17

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 23.11.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 24.11.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **9th December 2020**

Report Subject: **Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan (2019-2022) 2019/20 annual report**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr. Joanna Wilkins, Executive Member Environment**

Report Submitted by: **Clive Rogers, Head of Community Services**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
16/09/20	Oct 2019	24.11.20			19.10.20	09.12.20		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on how the Council is meeting its statutory duties under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. As the members will be aware the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan was passed by Full Council in October 2019.
- 1.2 The biodiversity and ecosystem resilience duty under Section 6 of the Act requires that “a public authority must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of functions in relation to Wales, and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems, so far as consistent with the proper exercise of those functions.”¹

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 In order to comply with the Environment (Wales) Act The Council has produced a Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan (Appendix 1). This is attached for information as a reminder.
- 2.2 This report gives the overview of annual progress against the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan (2019-2022) for 2019/20.
- 2.3 To maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote the resilience of ecosystems Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council by 2022 aims to:
- Reduce overall resource use; reuse where possible and recycle everything recyclable.
 - Increase biodiversity and ecosystems understanding in the council staff and councillors through appropriate channels including Service

¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2016/3/section/6/enacted>

Area Environment Champions and the Councillor Nature Champion role.

- Embody the challenge of integrating the Active Travel, Well-being of Future Generations, Planning and Environment Acts to encourage sustainability in the ways we live, work and play.
- Promote responsible use of natural resources in Blaenau Gwent by working in partnership with others to initiate positive action and behaviour change.
- Maintain and enhance biodiversity and improve ecosystem resilience on council owned land, particularly with regard to priority species and habitats.
- Support the Blaenau Gwent & Torfaen Local Nature Partnership.

2.4 The three delivery mechanisms are Service Area Action Plans; Environment Champions network and advice from the Natural Environment team.

2.5 Progress in 2019/20 by Service Area against the delivery mechanisms and activity plan for 2020/21 is shown in Appendix 2.

2.6 There have been four quarterly Environment Champions meetings, with ten champions in the network representing all Service Areas and Councillors. Meetings were held across council offices and at Parc Bryn Bach. Active travel opportunities noted. Topics included resource use and urban wildlife.

2.7 From the review of progress, the Forward Plan (2019-22) has not been changed. Minor amendments have been made to accurately reflect the Service Area structure, recognising that Organisational Development sits within Commercial Services.

2.8 The annual report and Forward Plan do not cover statutory duties included in the Rights of Way, Planning or Active Travel Acts but is connected to these through the Welsh government's commitment to sustainable development as the best way to improve the well-being of Wales now and for future generations.

3. Options for Recommendation

3.1 The Community Services Scrutiny Committee supported Option 2 at its meeting on 19th October 2020.

3.2 Options Appraisal

- **Option 1:** Members to not approve the annual report 2019/20 or the activity plan for 2020/21.
- **Option 2: Preferred option** Members to approve the annual report and activity recommended this year to meet the Section 6 Duty.

3.3 To follow the duty public authorities should embed the consideration of biodiversity and ecosystems into their early thinking and business planning,

including any policies, plans, programmes and projects, as well as their day to day activities².

3.4 *Approval of the annual report*

Goes beyond the minimum to show a proactive approach to meeting the duty; embeds the consideration of biodiversity and ecosystems into business planning and enables an efficient mechanism for reporting and meeting the requirement to report to Welsh Government.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 **Corporate Plan Priority:**

Continued efforts to meet the aims of the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan (2019-2022) primarily contributes to meeting the following priority:

4.2 Protect and enhance our environment and infrastructure to benefit our communities

- To improve the access to and quality of open spaces for the benefit of our communities, businesses and visitors. Welsh Government funding – Enabling Natural Resources and Wellbeing (ENRAW) has provided significant levels of funding to support enhancements in this area of work helping to fund improvements at Local nature reserves – Beaufort Ponds and Woodlands, Parc Nanty Waun, Trevor Rowson, Sirhowy Woodlands, Granny’s Wood by working in partnership with local community groups.

4.3

Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan

Continued efforts to meet the aims of the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan (2019-2022) meets all of the well-being plan objectives:

- The best start in life for everyone
- Safe and friendly communities
- To look after and protect the environment
- To forge new pathways to prosperity
- To encourage and enable people to make healthy lifestyle choices in the places that they live, learn, work and play

4.4

Benefits provided by resilient ecosystems across the well-being goals are shown in appendix 7.2 of the Forward Plan (Appendix 1).

4.5

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

4.6

Continued efforts to meet the aims of the Forward Plan directly contributes to actions needed for the ‘resilient Wales’ goal:

² <https://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/consmanagement/natural-resources-management/environment-act/guidance-for-section-6/?lang=en>

4.7 “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)”

By implementing the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 the Local Authority will maximise its contributions to the Well-being Goals.

5. Implications Against Each Option

5.1 *Impact on Budget*

There has been a cost neutral impact on budgets from implementing the Forward Plan. Officer time was funded through existing revenue budgets. Additional external revenue and capital funding to deliver further biodiversity and ecosystem resilience related schemes of work were secured and delivered as follows:

Source – Project	Forward Plan Aims met	Amount	Schemes of Work
ENRaW* - Resilient Greater Gwent	Council owned land Embody the challenge of integrating legislation and five ways of working Working in partnership	£42,000	Invasive Non Native Species work Support for Go Wild! Event Urban biodiversity
ENRaW* - LNP Cymru	Support the LNP Council owned land Working in partnership	£7,500	Hedgerow creation at Cwmtillery Lakes Local Nature Reserve (LNR) Pond excavation at Cwmcelyn Pond LNR Hedgerow Management at Beaufort Hills Ponds & Woodlands LNR
ENRaW* - Gwent Green Grid	Council owned land Embody the challenge of integrating legislation and five ways of working Working in partnership	£43,629	Woodland management Access improvements
Welsh Government - Active Travel	Embody the challenge of integrating legislation and five ways of working Working in partnership	£406,000	Tarmac path in Central Valley LNR
Planning - Biodiversity S106 payments	Embody the challenge of integrating legislation and five ways of working	£0	N/A

Actions in 2020/21 will have a cost neutral impact on budgets. Officer time will be funded through existing revenue budgets. Additional external revenue and capital funding to deliver further biodiversity and ecosystem resilience related schemes of work have been secured as follows:

Source	Aims to be met	Amount	Schemes of Work
ENRaW* - Resilient Greater Gwent	Council owned land Embody the challenge of integrating legislation and five ways of working Working in partnership	<£77,000	Invasive Non Native Species work BGCBC owned Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) surveys x5 (GWT and Buglife) Urban biodiversity Action across LNRs
ENRaW* - LNP Cymru	Support the LNP Council owned land Working in partnership	£61,000	Priority habitat work: hedgerows, meadows Verge & grass management
Welsh Government - Active Travel	Embody the challenge of integrating legislation and five ways of working Working in partnership	£TBC	TBC
Planning - Biodiversity S106 payments	Embody the challenge of integrating legislation and five ways of working	£0	N/A

*ENRaW – Enabling Natural Resources and Well-being grant from Welsh Government

5.2 *Risk*

The main risk is that failure to meet the aims of the plan will result in the Authority failing to meet its statutory duty and miss out on funding opportunities for delivery of the council corporate objectives and Blaenau Gwent well-being plan.

5.3 *Legal*

The legal implications of failing to meet the Section 6 Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 are currently unknown.

5.4 *Human Resources*

The ways of working that will develop by working towards the aims of the Plan will contribute to staff health and well-being. For example, by raising awareness of the nearest Local Nature Reserves to council buildings.

6. Supporting Evidence

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

Is gathered quarterly through business plan reporting.

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

Biodiversity underpins the health and resilience of all of our ecosystems. In turn, these ecosystems support all life on Earth. This means that taking positive action for biodiversity and ecosystem resilience in Blaenau Gwent will enhance the natural resources the public utilise such as clean water, air and food production including pollination services. The natural environment is also a vital resource to enhance mental and physical health and well-being.

6.3 **Involvement** (*consultation, engagement, participation*)

Activities that meet the aims of the Plan are undertaken between the Natural Environment team and other service areas.

6.4 **Thinking for the Long term** (*forward planning*)

The Plan covers the 2019-22 period and will be revised and renewed in line with up to date policy, legislation and evidence. Meeting the duty enables support for long term management of Local Nature Reserves.

6.5 **Preventative focus**

Contributing to the maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity and ecosystem resilience will help to mitigate and adapt to climate change and provide positive opportunities to maintain and build mental and physical health and well-being.

6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**

The work on the Environment Act duty fits with the Blaenau Gwent well-being plan and ways of working could be shared with members of the Blaenau Gwent Public Service Board. Support for the Blaenau Gwent & Torfaen Local Nature Partnership will assist with a strategic approach to environmental and ecological management in both boroughs.

6.7 **Integration** (*across service areas*)

Access to a healthy natural environment has many benefits to all service areas. Integration will be driven by Environment Champions.

6.8 **Equalities Impact Assessment**

A brief Equality Impact Assessment was submitted with the Forward Plan and has not needed to be updated as the Plan has not changed.

All service area business plan objectives and actions will take into account each of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. They are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Environment Champions network will be open to all and will strive to be representative of employees across the council.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

7.1 The identified delivery mechanisms will continue to be monitored quarterly by the Governance and Natural Environment teams in the 2020/21 Financial Year.

7.2 A report will be submitted to the Community Services Scrutiny committee in the first quarter of the 2021/22 Financial Year summarising progress made, action planned for 2021/22 and any updates on the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan 2019-2022.

7.3 The Forward Plan should be revised and approved by March 2022 for the next agreed period.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- *Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan (2019-2022)*
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
- <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2016/3/contents/enacted>
- <https://gov.wales/docs/desh/publications/160321-frequently-asked-questions-en.pdf>
- <https://gov.wales/docs/desh/publications/150512-biodiversity-and-resilience-of-ecosystems-duty-en.pdf>
- <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/sites/default/files/2018-10/Nature%20and%20mental%20health%20infographic.pdf>
- <https://www.wcva.org.uk/about-us/news/2017/04/doing-your-bit-for-a-resilient-wales>

Glossary

Biodiversity - means 'biological diversity' which refers to all the variety of life on Earth (plants, animals, fungi and micro-organisms) as well as to the communities that they form and the habitats in which they live.

Ecosystem - dynamic network of plant, animal and micro-organism communities and their non-living environment interacting as a functional unit.

Ecosystem Resilience - is the ability of an ecosystem to maintain its normal patterns of nutrient cycling and biomass production after being subjected to damage caused by an ecological disturbance, for example extreme weather events caused by climate change, outbreak of disease or human exploitation.

This page is intentionally left blank

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

**Biodiversity and Ecosystem
Resilience Forward Plan
(2019-2022)**

**To meet requirements of
Section 6 Biodiversity and
Ecosystem Resilience duty of the
Environment (Wales) Act 2016**




Photos: Clockwise from left; Cwmcelyn Pond; Waun y Pound ponds, Silent Valley

Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary	3
2. Introduction to the Forward Plan	4
3. Forward Plan	5
3.1 Aims	5
3.2 Forward Plan timeline	6
3.3 Forward Plan responsibilities	6
4. Service Area Action Plans.....	7
4.1 Governance & Partnerships.....	7
4.2 Resources	7
4.3 Commercial Services.....	8
4.4 Organisational Development.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.4 Social Services	9
4.5 Regeneration & Community Services	10
4.6 Education	11
5. Reporting	12
5.1 Mid-year 2019-20 summary	12
5.2 Reporting schedule.....	12
6. References	13
7. Appendices	14
7.2 Link to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015	14
7.3 Benefits provided by resilient ecosystems.....	15
7.4 Sustainable Development Five Ways of Working.....	16
7.5 Link to the Environment (Wales) 2016 Act Ecosystem Approach	17
7.6 Link to Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales.....	18
7.7 Service Area Action Plan interview template	19

1. Executive Summary

The Council recognises that resilient ecosystems underpinned by a biodiverse landscape deliver multiple benefits for the people of Blaenau Gwent. We are committed to maintaining and enhancing biodiversity and working in partnership with others to ensure the sustainability of the subsequent benefits and their contribution to the well-being goals.



Councillor N. J. Daniels, Leader of the council

This Forward Plan has been prepared to meet the Section 6 Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience duty of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and outlines the Council's commitments to meeting requirements of the legislation. It will also contribute to delivering the Council's requirements under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Section 6 of the Environment Act places a duty on the Local Authority to **'seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity'** so far as it is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions. In so doing, the Local Authority must also seek to **'promote the resilience of ecosystems'**. The duty replaces the section 40 duty in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act 2006), in relation to Wales.

The Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Forward Plan:

- Summarises the relevant legislative requirements for biodiversity & ecosystem resilience (Section 2 and Appendices in Section 7).
- Sets out aims for Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council to meet the duty (Section 3).
- Through Service Area Action Plans, identifies objectives for Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's compliance with the Biodiversity & Ecosystem Resilience duty (Section 4).

Carrying out the requirements under the new biodiversity duty will help to:

- contribute to physical and mental health and wellbeing of people who live and work in the borough;
- offer opportunities for community engagement and volunteering
- take action to intercept and help break down air, water and soil pollution;
- take action to reduce flood peaks; and
- play an important role in tackling global climate change and take action to regulate local climate.

Further benefits provided by resilient ecosystems through the sustainable management of natural resources, and how they contribute to the Well-being Goals, are expanded on in Section 7.2.

2. Introduction to the Forward Plan

The Environment (Wales) Act was introduced in March 2016; it is a statutory duty that the Council must comply with. Part 1 of the Act sets out Wales' approach to planning and managing natural resources at a national and local level with a general purpose linked to statutory 'principles of sustainable management of natural resources'.

Section 6 of part 1 places a duty on the Local Authority to seek to:

- 'maintain and enhance biodiversity' so far as it is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions and
- 'promote the resilience of ecosystems'

To assist in implementing the new duty the Local Authority is required to publish a Forward Plan on how they intend to comply with the biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty and then report on how that plan is working. The first Forward Plan was due in March 2017. This was delayed in Blaenau Gwent due to resource constraints and awaiting formal guidance from Welsh Government.

The duty to forward plan ensures that biodiversity is considered at the decision-making level, and the new reporting duty ensures the Local Authority takes responsibility for showing how our actions have helped to enhance our natural resources and ecosystems.

This Forward Plan follows guidance prepared by Welsh Government and considers the seven Wellbeing Goals contained in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, the principles of Sustainable Development objectives of the Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales and the Ecosystem Approach Principles (Section 7.1, 7.3, 7.4 & 7.5).

Service Area opportunities and objectives (section 4) have been derived via discussion with managers from all service departments throughout 2018 and 2019. These interviews have highlighted risks and opportunities for delivery of the Environment Act duty. The interview template can be found in section 7.6. A more detailed set of questions was used within the Green Infrastructure team and is available upon request.

It will be an evolving plan that can be updated in line with further evidence from Natural Resources Wales such as Area Statements. Blaenau Gwent CBC will be required to report on the outcomes of this plan by December 2019 and then

subsequently every three years. The Forward Plan will be reviewed accordingly in light of that reporting.

3. Forward Plan

3.1 Aims

To maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote the resilience of ecosystems Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, by 2022, aims to:

1. Reduce overall resource use; reuse where possible and recycle everything recyclable.
2. Increase biodiversity and ecosystems understanding in the council staff and councillors through appropriate channels including Service Area Environment Champions and the Councillor Nature Champion role.
3. Embody the challenge of integrating the Active Travel, Wellbeing of Future Generations, Planning and Environment Acts to encourage sustainability in the ways we live, work and play.
4. Promote responsible use of natural resources in Blaenau Gwent by working in partnership with others to initiate action and behaviour change.
5. Maintain and enhance biodiversity and improve ecosystem resilience on council owned land, particularly with regard to priority species and habitats.
6. Support the Blaenau Gwent & Torfaen Local Nature Partnership.

These aims also contribute to meeting the council's corporate and well-being objectives.

3.2 Forward Plan timeline

Activity in Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council to develop and implement the Biodiversity & Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan as required by the Environment Act (Wales) 2016:

2019-20

- Business Plan linked objectives start April 2019
- Implementation of objectives
- Start Environment Champions in April 2019, quarterly meetings
- Report to Welsh Government by end of December 2019

2020-21

- Report to Scrutiny Committee in April 2020
- Implementation of objectives
- Quarterly Environment Champion meetings

2021-22

- Report to Scrutiny Committee in April 2021
- Implementation of objectives
- Quarterly Environment Champion meetings
- Develop new Forward Plan before end of March 2022

2022-23

- Report to Scrutiny Committee in April 2022
- New Forward Plan in place from April 2022

3.3 Forward Plan responsibilities

The Green Infrastructure Team is responsible for leading, reporting on and providing advice related to the implementation of the Environment Act across the council.

The Green Infrastructure Team can provide guidance on fulfilling the Council's Biodiversity Duty however implementation of each action plan will be the responsibility of the individual Service Area managers.

4 Service Area Action Plans

4.1 Governance & Partnerships

Governance & Partnerships	
Summary of functions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate performance, scrutiny and democratic services • Policy, partnerships & engagement 	
Opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holder of corporate business plan and progress monitoring • Gateway to many engagement forums • Link to well-being plan 	
	Objective 1: Support the integration of Forward Plan objectives into council Corporate Business Plans and provide quarterly reporting
	Objective 2: Provide a link to Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan and Public Service Board

4.2 Resources

Resources
Summary of functions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial services • Revenue services • Internal audit / risk management
Opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore Environmental Management System accreditation (e.g. Green Dragon or ISO 14001)
Objectives to be set

4.3 Commercial Services

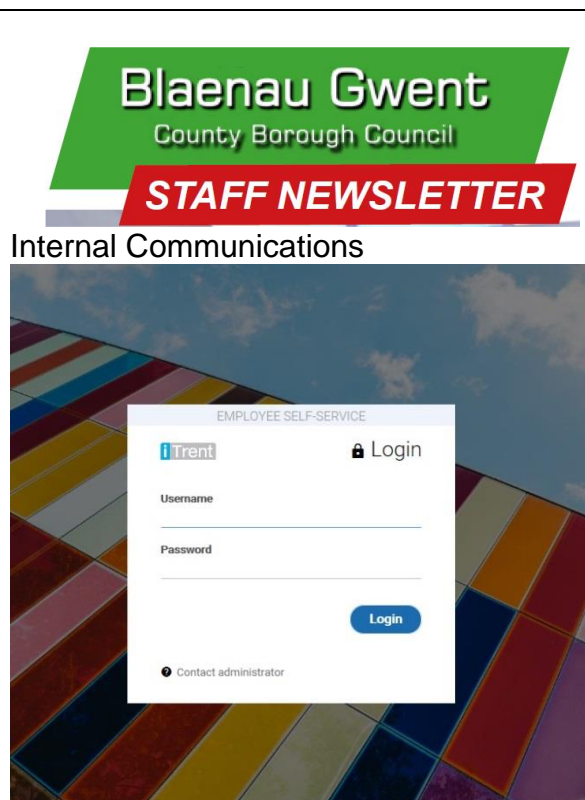
Commercial Services

Summary of functions:

- Customer service
- Communications
- Organisational Development
- Procurement

Opportunities:

- External communications with residents, businesses & tourists
- Internal communication led by Environment Champions group
- Consider local, regional and global impacts of procurement of goods
- Contribute to procurement strategy
- Contribute to Organisational Development strategy
- Encourage work culture changes for example taking meetings outside and actively travelling (cycling or walking) to work



Online HR system

Objective 1:

Take further steps towards implementation of a “paperless office” via the further development of the iTrent system and the roll-out of the self service functions

4.4 Social Services

Social Services

Summary of functions:

- Adult Social Services
- Child Social Services

Opportunities:

- Multiple opportunities exist in children's and adult's services:
- Using green spaces
- Improving and enhancing social service property gardens and grounds
- Engaging well-being of children in council care




Photo: Getty Images

Objective 1:
 Green Infrastructure team (Environment Act leads) to attend Provider Managers meeting annually


Objective 2:
 Encourage nature friendly management at our Provider Services outside spaces

Objective 3:
 Engage our citizens and staff with the environment through involvement in environmental projects within our Provider Services

4.5 Regeneration & Community Services

<h3>Regeneration & Community Services</h3>	
<p>Summary of functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frontline integrated services • Public Protection • Property Services • Infrastructure • Regeneration • Planning 	
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate land management • Involving local communities • Engaging more people in their local green spaces • Improving access and quality of local green spaces • LDP policies • Increasing efficiency of council buildings 	
	<p>Objective 1: Work towards the Local Development Plan (LDP) aims, including the production of Green Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Guidance</p>
	<p>Objective 2: Maintain and enhance biodiversity and improve ecosystem resilience on council owned land, particularly with regard to Section 7 priority species and habitats in partnership with community groups, Gwent Wildlife Trust and others.</p>
	<p>Objective 3: Ensure that the Council Embraces the Well-being of Future Generations Act across the service functions and contribute to improving educational standards in relation to biodiversity.</p>
	<p>Objective 4: Support the Local Nature Partnership (LNP) in its work as a strategic partnership of organisations and individuals directing and delivering nature conservation in both Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent boroughs, at local and wider landscape scales.</p>
<p>Supporting pollinators with pollen & nectar rich verge planting in Ebbw Vale. Photo: Liz Hancocks</p>	

4.6 Education

<h3>Education</h3>	
<p>Summary of functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion and school improvement • Transformation & performance • Youth service 	
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging schools and students via educational sessions and eco-councils • Attend Head Teachers meetings • Management for nature on school grounds • To get students involved in the council e.g. work placement projects 	
 <p>Engaging school pupils with Natural Resource Management. Photo: Aileen Vaughan</p>	<p>Objective 1: Engage schools and students via educational sessions and eco-councils and embed sustainability</p>
	<p>Objective 2: Green Infrastructure team (Environment Act leads) to attend a Head Teachers meeting annually</p>
	<p>Objective 3: Encourage nature friendly management on school grounds</p>
	<p>Objective 4: Engage young people with the environment through the youth service</p>

5 Reporting

5.1 Mid-year 2019-20 summary

	Business Plan linked Objectives	Environment Champion	Further engagement
Governance & Partnerships	Yes	Yes	Yes
Resources	No	Yes	-
Commercial Services	No	Yes	Yes
Organisational Development	Yes	Yes	Yes
Social Services	Yes	Yes	Yes
Regeneration & Community Services	Yes	Yes	Yes
Education	Yes	Yes	Yes
Councillors	Not applicable	Yes	Yes

5.2 Reporting schedule

One of the principles of the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources set out in the Environment Act is that we should be adaptable and plan, monitor, review and change our work as we gain a better understanding through improved evidence and our experiences. This way we can work together to ensure that with every iteration of the Forward Plan further steps can be taken to embed the duty to maintain and enhance biodiversity into every function of the council.

Blaenau Gwent CBC will be required to report on the outcomes of this plan by December 2019 and then subsequently every three years. The Forward Plan will be reviewed accordingly in light of that reporting.

6 References

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Corporate Plan 2018-22:

<http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/en/council/policies-plans-strategies/corporate-plan-2018-2022/>

(accessed 13/09/19)

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Well-being Objectives 2017:

http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/fileadmin/documents/Council/Policies_Strategies_Plans/Wellbeing_Objectives_-_June_2017-WF3.pdf (accessed 13/09/19)

Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan 2018-23:

<https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/well-being-plan.aspx> (accessed 13/09/19)

Environment (Wales) Act 2016:

<https://gov.wales/environment-wales-act-2016-overview> (accessed 13/09/19)

Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales 2015:

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-05/nature-recovery-action-plan-2015.pdf> (accessed 13/09/19)

State of Natural Resources Report 2016:

<https://naturalresources.wales/evidence-and-data/research-and-reports/the-state-of-natural-resources-report-assessment-of-the-sustainable-management-of-natural-resources/?lang=en> (accessed 13/09/19)

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:

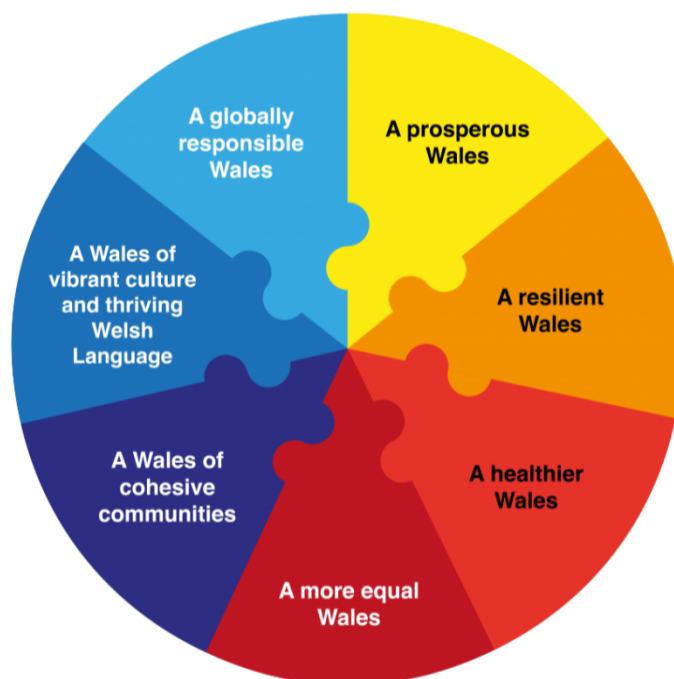
<https://gov.wales/well-being-future-generations-wales-act-2015-guidance> (accessed 13/09/19)

7 Appendices

7.2 Link to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ensures the Local Authority takes a more joined up approach to improving the environmental, as well as the economic, cultural and social well-being of Wales. The sustainable management of natural resources put in place by the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 enables Wales' natural resources (including biodiversity) to be managed in a more proactive, sustainable and joined-up way.

There are seven well-being goals that the Local Authority must work towards achieving. These are:



The 'resilient Wales' goal is the top commitment to biodiversity:

“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)”

By implementing the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 the Local Authority will maximise its contributions to the Well-being goals contained in the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

7.3 Benefits provided by resilient ecosystems

Well-being Goals	Benefits
A Prosperous Wales	Natural resources provide significant opportunities for employment and economic activity in Wales. Many of our key industries, such as agriculture, fisheries, forestry, energy and tourism are dependent on natural resources.
A Resilient Wales	Biodiversity, mountains, moorlands and heaths, semi-natural grasslands, woodlands, urban greenspaces, rivers, streams, lakes and wetlands, coastline and marine ecosystems all contribute to supporting Wales' ability to adapt to climate change. They are fundamental in supporting all of the well-being goals.
A Healthier Wales	Natural resources make a significant contribution to the physical health and mental wellbeing of people in Wales. For example, trees help to absorb pollutants and improve air quality; access to nature and greenspace has positive impacts on physical and mental health.
An Equal Wales	Equal access to ecosystems that provide cultural services would contribute to equality in Wales. At present, access is not equally distributed. For example, not everyone lives in close proximity to accessible greenspace.
A Wales of Cohesive Communities	Involving communities in the management of their local parks and woodlands has been shown to improve community cohesion and reduce antisocial behaviour.
A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language	Landscapes have played a significant role in the development of distinct cultural practices, such as local building techniques which use local materials and locally specific art and literature.
A Globally Responsible Wales	The environment supplies all our material resources, so we must better understand the impacts of our activities globally in terms of both imports and exports. By making these inter-linkages and dependencies more explicit, it becomes clear that taking action to build the resilience of natural resources will provide significant other benefits across the Well-Being Goals.

Source: State of Natural Resources Report, 2016

7.4 Sustainable Development Five Ways of Working

In addition the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 sets out five ways of working linked to sustainable development, that public bodies must adhere to in order to demonstrate how they are meeting their duty. Any plan/project must now demonstrate that they are following these ways of working.



7.5 Link to the Environment (Wales) 2016 Act Ecosystem Approach

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 helps to deliver the sustainable management of natural resources as it requires the Local Authority, in delivering the new biodiversity duty, to promote the resilience of ecosystems – the ‘**ecosystem approach**’. This approach, developed by the UN Convention on Biological Diversity has been acknowledged internationally as the most effective method of addressing biodiversity decline.

The Environment (Wales) Act puts the ecosystem approach into statute through a set of principles, which are based on the 12 principles of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). These principles must be used in designing and implementing projects and programmes of work.

The ecosystem approach is an application of joined-up planning and management processes that look at ecosystems as a whole and seeks to build the resilience of those ecosystems and the multiple benefits that they provide. As biodiversity underpins the resilience of ecosystems, it is a fundamental component of the approach.

Ecosystem Approach Principles

1. **Societal Choice:** The objectives of management of land, water and living resources are a matter of societal choices.
2. **Localised Decisions:** Management should be decentralized to the lowest appropriate level
3. **Adjacent Effects:** Ecosystem managers should consider the effects (actual or potential) of their activities on adjacent and other ecosystems
4. **Economic Drivers:** Recognizing potential gains from management, there is usually a need to understand and manage the ecosystem in an economic context. Any such ecosystem-management programme should:
 - a. Reduce those market distortions that adversely affect biological diversity;
 - b. Align incentives to promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable use;
 - c. Internalize costs and benefits in the given ecosystem to the extent feasible.
5. **Resilience:** Conservation of ecosystem structure and functioning, in order to maintain ecosystem services, should be a priority target of the ecosystem approach
6. **Integrity:** Ecosystem must be managed within the limits of their functioning
7. **Spatial and Temporal Scale:** The ecosystem approach should be undertaken at the appropriate spatial and temporal scales
8. **Temporal Scale:** Recognizing the varying temporal scales and lag-effects that characterize ecosystem processes, objectives for ecosystem management should be set for the long term.
9. **Managing Change:** Management must recognize that change is inevitable

10. **Balancing conservation and use of biodiversity:** The ecosystem approach should seek the appropriate balance between, and integration of, conservation and use of biological diversity
11. **Evidence:** The ecosystem approach should consider all forms of relevant information, including scientific and indigenous and local knowledge, innovations and practices.
12. **Stakeholder Engagement:** The ecosystem approach should involve all relevant sectors of society and scientific disciplines.

7.6 Link to Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales

The Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales produced by Welsh Government in 2015 is aimed at addressing the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by:

- putting nature at the heart of decision-making
- increasing the resilience of the natural environment
- taking specific action for habitats and species

It sets out how Wales will deliver the commitments of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity and the EU Biodiversity Strategy to halt the decline in biodiversity by 2020 and then reverse that decline.

By fulfilling the Environment Act's biodiversity and ecosystem resilience duty, the Local Authority will help to achieve the Nature Recovery Action Plan objectives. These are:

- Objective 1: Engage and support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels.
- Objective 2: Safeguard species and habitats of principle importance and improve their management
- Objective 3: Increase the resilience of our natural environment by restoring degraded habitats and habitat creation
- Objective 4: Tackle key pressure on species and habitats
- Objective 5: Improve our evidence, understanding and monitoring
- Objective 6: Put in place a framework of governance and support for delivery

7.7 Service Area Action Plan interview template

Generating Service Area Action Plans

to contribute to the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan to meet Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's duty under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016

These questions are aimed at finding out what we do well already and what areas we need to focus on to help deliver the obligations under the Act. Your answers will form the basis of service area action plans which will be shared with the service area for feedback before completion of the forward plan.

Name	
Job Title	
Service Area	

Questions

1. What are the opportunities for your service area to gain more from the Green Infrastructure¹ currently present in Blaenau Gwent?
2. Please indicate areas of responsibility/activity within your department:

- Influencing land or resource use
- Land management e.g. activities such as grazing, vegetation removal, planting
- Authorising activities on land
- Utilising council owned land for activities, e.g. Local Nature Reserves or/and the Green Infrastructure network in Blaenau Gwent (footpaths, cycle paths etc.)
- Liaising with environmental organisations or/and community groups
- Work related to energy use; carbon emission etc.
- Procuring or using natural resources on council business e.g. stationary, food, building materials

Others:

¹ Green Infrastructure: is a network of connected, accessible, multi-functional sites (including parks, woodland, informal open spaces, and nature reserves) as well as linkages (such as river corridors and wildlife corridors) that can bring about multiple social, health, economic and environmental benefits to the area. The sites are multi-functional in that apart from their ecological value they can be used for various purposes, for example, leisure activities and promoting tourism with associated benefits in terms of health and the economy.

3. What do you think you already do well?
Examples could be:
policies / actions on the ground / supporting volunteers or community groups
4. What could you do better, or more of, and what are the barriers?

(E.g. when planting areas with wildflowers for pollinators make sure that the habitat is also suitable for other stages of the invertebrate life cycle)

5. Have you started to incorporate the five ways of working linked to sustainable development from the Wellbeing of Future Generations act?
(Long-term/ Prevention/ Integration/ Collaboration/ Involvement)
6. Are there any aspects of green infrastructure or/and biodiversity and ecosystem resilience that you or your service area would like to understand better – please describe?
7. Evidence collecting, decision making and reporting. Are you collecting evidence on the need for, and monitoring the success or otherwise of your actions? Any examples, and can we share your case study/ data?

Further information

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 enhances the previous NERC² Act 2006 duty to require all public authorities, when carrying out their functions in Wales, to seek to “maintain and enhance biodiversity” where it is within the proper exercise of their functions. In doing so, public authorities must also seek to “promote the resilience of ecosystems”.

Under the Act, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has to report to Welsh Government on the actions we aim to take.. This is a statutory requirement that the Council must comply with.

We are currently in development of the Forward Plan. It was agreed at SMT in May 2017 to take forward proposals to interview all service area managers to establish what we are doing well already and what actions we need to take to comply with the Act.

Contacts:

Chris Engel, Green Infrastructure Team Manager, extension 5545
Liz Hancocks, Ecologist, extension 5702

The Green Infrastructure Team is responsible for leading the reporting on and providing advice related to the implementation of the Environment Act across Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council.

² NERC – Natural Environment and Rural Communities

Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan (2019-2022) 2019/20 annual report

Section 2.5. Appendix 2.

2019/20 Progress and 2020/21 Activity Plan

Service Area	Business Plan linked Objectives	Progress 2019/20	Areas of Focus and Opportunity 2020/21	Environment Champion/s	Assessment Red – Amber – Green
Governance & Partnerships	1. Support the integration of Forward Plan objectives into council Corporate Business Plans and provide quarterly reporting 2. Provide a link to Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan and Public Service Board	1. Objectives now in all Service Area business plans where relevant. 2. Led on delivery of BG on the Move project with associated biodiversity benefits on the Ebbw Fawr Trail. PSB project funded by partners.	Share action on Section 6 duty with other public bodies via Blaenau Gwent Public Service Board and Well-being Plan linked projects. Reference Section 6 duty in Council report guidance	Yes – One (Governance)	Green
Resources	None set	-	Set objectives with Section 6 duty leads	Yes – One (Accounting)	Amber
Commercial Services	Organisational Development (OD): 1. Take further steps towards implementation of a “paperless office” via the further development of the iTrent system and the roll-out of the self service functions	Pay slips now paperless Expenses now paperless Progress has been made through the Low Carbon project, part of the Bridging the Gap programme, on the resource use aim, in line with the ambition to have a zero carbon public sector by 2030.	Include section in Staff Newsletter	Yes – Two (OD; Business Support)	Green

Social Services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Environment Act leads to attend Provider Managers meeting annually 2. Encourage nature friendly management at our Provider Services outside spaces 3. Engage our citizens and staff with the environment through involvement in environmental projects within our Provider Services 	Ongoing development of outside spaces and delivery of projects.	To be determined	Yes – Two (Adult; Child)	Green
Regeneration & Community Services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work towards the Local Development Plan (LDP) aims 2. Maintain and enhance biodiversity and improve ecosystem resilience on council owned land, particularly with regard to Section 7 priority species and habitats in partnership with community groups, Gwent Wildlife Trust and others. 3. Ensure that the Council Embraces the Well-being of Future 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Supported the inclusion of ecosystem resilience in the Local Development Plan 2018-2033 and reference up to date policies from the Environment Act including Natural Resources Policy and Area Statements. 2. Five Local Nature Reserves were designated in March 2019 3. Engaged with student project to recycle crisp packets (Appendix 2a). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop Biodiversity Net Benefit tracking system in Planning development control as required by Planning Policy Wales 10 (2018) and highlighted by the Chief Planner in October 2019 (Appendix 2d). 2. Support Local Nature Reserves and community groups via collaborative management plans. 3. Continue 4. Support the Blaenau Gwent & Torfaen Local Nature 	Yes – Two (Regeneration; Natural Environment)	Green

	<p>Generations Act across the service functions and contribute to improving educational standards in relation to biodiversity.</p> <p>4. Support the Local Nature Partnership (LNP) in its work as a strategic partnership of organisations and individuals directing and delivering nature conservation in both Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent boroughs, at local and wider landscape scales.</p>	<p>4. Supported the Local Nature Partnership (Appendix 2b).</p> <p>Supported community groups running events and assisted with promotion materials for Wales Nature Week in June 2019 (Appendix 2c).</p>	<p>Partnership Nature Recovery Action Plan. Bring to council for scrutiny and approval.</p>		
Education	<p>1. Engage schools and students via educational sessions and eco-councils and embed sustainability</p> <p>2. Environment Act leads to attend a Head Teachers meeting annually</p> <p>3. Encourage nature friendly management on school grounds</p> <p>4. Engage young people with the environment through the youth service</p>	<p>1. SLA with Natural Environment team; engaging with 17 schools providing indoor and outdoor learning sessions linked to the natural environment</p> <p>2. Update provided in newsletter</p> <p>3. Via School Eco Councils</p> <p>4. Ongoing</p> <p>Schools built as part of the 21st Century Schools programme built to excellent Building Research</p>	<p>To be determined. Adaptation required for Covid-19 restrictions.</p> <p>Schools built as part of the 21st Century Schools programme built to excellent Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) standard.</p>	<p>Yes – One (Education transformation)</p>	<p>Green</p>

		Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) standard.			
Councillors	N/A	N/A	Update briefing on Activity Plan and funding outputs. Virtual or in person.	Yes – Nature Champion Cllr Lee Parsons	Green

WALKERS Crisps Recycling Scheme



DROP YOUR EMPTY CRISP PACKETS HERE

**ANY BRAND OF CRISP PACKET IS ACCEPTED -
NOT JUST WALKERS**

The crisp packets will be cleaned, shredded and turned into small pellets which will then be converted into plastic items such as benches, plant pots and watering cans.

This page is intentionally left blank

WALKERS Crisps Recycling Scheme



DROP YOUR EMPTY CRISP PACKETS HERE

**ANY BRAND OF CRISP PACKET IS ACCEPTED -
NOT JUST WALKERS**

The crisp packets will be cleaned, shredded and turned into small pellets which will then be converted into plastic items such as benches, plant pots and watering cans.

This page is intentionally left blank

**Blaenau Gwent,
Caerphilly & Torfaen**



**WYTHNOS NATUR CYMRU
WALES NATURE WEEK**
1 - 9 MEHEFIN/JUNE 2019

Events / Digwyddiadau

Friday 31st May Bioblitz the Park!:

10am-2pm at Parc Bryn Bach, Tredegar

Join us to explore and record the biodiversity of Parc Bryn Bach.

FREE. Booking is essential-limited spaces. For more information please contact Nadine Morgan, Biodiversity Officer Nadine.morgan@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk



© Jane Corey

Saturday 1st Go Wild! 11am-4pm at Parc Penallta, Ystrad Mynach

Caerphilly County Borough Council's Countryside and Caerphilly Biodiversity Partnership are hosting a great opportunity to meet lots of wildlife and learn about local wildlife. This year's theme is 'Give Nature a Chance'.

FREE, but car parking charges will apply. For more information please get in contact with Maggie Iles, Ecologist ilesm@caerphilly.gov.uk

Tuesday 4th Evening Nature Walk: 5.30pm-7.30pm at Central Valley, Ebbw Vale

Enjoy an evening walk around Central Valley, discovering wildlife highlights and reconnecting to nature; led by Gwent Wildlife Trust.

FREE. Booking is Essential. For more information please contact Gwent Wildlife Trust rward@gwentwildlife.org.



© Nadine Morgan

Wednesday 5th Evening Nature Walk:

5.30pm-7.30pm at 'The British', Torfaen

Enjoy an evening walk around The British site, discovering wildlife highlights and reconnecting to nature; led by Gwent Wildlife Trust. FREE. Booking is Essential. For more information please contact Gwent Wildlife Trust

rward@gwentwildlife.org



Thursday 6th Wildlife Walk along the Brynmawr Common: 6.00pm

Enjoy a walk along the common, discovering wildlife highlights and reconnecting to nature; led by Sustrans and local expert.

FREE. For more information please contact Elena Bianchi , Elena.Bianchi@sustrans.org.uk or 07717 348082.



Friday 7th Wildlife and Wellbeing Day:

10am-3pm at Bedwellty House and Park, Tredegar

A get together of lovely people to chat, learn and explore wildlife. Opportunities include bird watching and nature orienteering.

FREE. Booking is essential- limited spaces. For more information please contact Nadine Morgan, Biodiversity Officer Nadine.morgan@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk



Saturday 8th Open Day at Parc Nant Y Waun 11am-3pm

Join us to explore and record the biodiversity of Parc Nant Y Waun.

FREE. For more information please contact admin@parcnantywaun.org.uk



© Aileen Vaughan

Saturday 8th Butterflies on the British:

11.00am-1pm 'The British', Torfaen

Learn about the rich variety of butterflies on The British site in Torfaen.

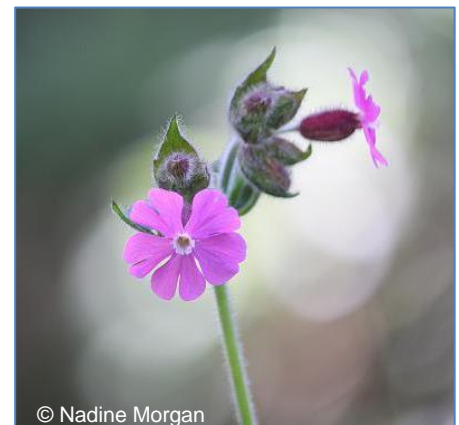
FREE. Booking is Essential. For more information please contact Gwent Wildlife Trust rward@gwentwildlife.org

Saturday 9th Bioblitz!:

10am-3pm at Central Valley Nature Reserve, Ebbw Vale

Join us to explore and record the biodiversity of Central Valley.

FREE. For more information please contact Gwent Wildlife Trust rward@gwentwildlife.org or tel: 01495 307525



© Nadine Morgan

Share your Nature Week fun! Use the hashtag #WNW2019





To: Heads of Planning

23/10/19

Dear Colleagues,

Securing Biodiversity Enhancements

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) 10 sets out that *“planning authorities must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of their functions. This means that development should not cause any significant loss of habitats or populations of species, locally or nationally and must provide a net benefit for biodiversity”* (para 6.4.5 refers). This policy and subsequent policies in Chapter 6 of PPW 10 respond to the Section 6 Duty of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016*.

The purpose of this letter is to clarify that in light of the legislation and Welsh Government policy outlined above, where biodiversity enhancement is not proposed as part of an application, significant weight will be given to its absence, and unless other significant material considerations indicate otherwise it will be necessary to refuse permission.

It is important that biodiversity and ecosystem resilience considerations are taken into account at an early stage in development plan preparation and when proposing or considering development proposals. Planning authorities should be proactive and embed appropriate policies into local development plans to protect against biodiversity loss and secure enhancement.

The attributes of ecosystem resilience (PPW para 6.4.9 refers) should be used to assess the current resilience of a site, and this must be maintained and enhanced post development. If this cannot be achieved, permission for the development should be refused.

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

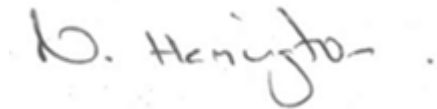
We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Welsh Government Offices
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre
0300 0604400

Securing a net benefit for biodiversity within the context of PPW requires a pragmatic response to the specific circumstances of the site. Working through the step wise approach (PPW para 6.4.21 refers), if biodiversity loss cannot be completely avoided (i.e. maintained), and has been minimised, it is useful to think of net benefit as a concept to both compensate for loss and look for and secure enhancement opportunities. A net benefit for biodiversity can be secured through habitat creation and/or long term management arrangements to enhance existing habitats, to improve biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems. Securing a net benefit for biodiversity is not necessarily onerous; through understanding local context, it is possible to identify new opportunities to enhance biodiversity.

Yours faithfully,



Neil Hemington
Prif Gynllunydd, Y Gyfarwyddiaeth Gynllunio
Chief Planner, Planning Directorate

***Section 6 – Biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty**

Section 6 under Part 1 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 introduced an enhanced biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty (the S6 duty) for public authorities in the exercise of functions in relation to Wales.

6. Biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty

(1) A public authority must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of functions in relation to Wales, and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems, so far as consistent with the proper exercise of those functions.

Agenda Item 18

Council and Executive Only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 23.11.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 24.11.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **9th December 2020**

Report Subject: **Outcome of the Leisure Review and Performance Monitoring for the Aneurin Leisure Trust**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Joanne Collins, Executive Member for Education**

Report Submitted by: **Corporate Director for Education, Lynn Phillips**

Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
√	√	24.11.20			03.11.20	09.12.20		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Executive Committee with an update on the outcome of the Leisure Trust Review, to clarify that the client function is now aligned within the Education Portfolio and is also an opportunity to consider the future performance monitoring arrangements of the Aneurin Leisure Trust.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 In April 2018, the Council commenced a review of the provision of Leisure and Culture Services. This review was in line with the finance and management agreement between the Council and the Aneurin Leisure Trust (ALT). The review included two phases and the second phase of the review concluded early 2020.
- 2.2 In parallel to the review, the Council developed the Leisure and Culture Strategy 2019-29 (Appendix 1) to provide strategic direction for the future of leisure services and identified key priorities for the next 10 years.
- 2.3 Due to the emergence of COVID-19 and subsequent national lockdown, the outcome of the review was not presented to Full Council until August 2020. However, at that meeting, Option 2 was agreed which stated:

‘Provide a time limited contract extension period of five years with a break/review point at year 3. Using the proposed new governance structure to formally review the performance of ALT’s delivery of the business plan against the new specification and revised financial and management arrangement. Use clear checkpoints to identify risks and take action to mitigate those in a timely manner. If ALT fully deliver to their business plan the Council will consider a further extension to the contract subject to a further review’.

2.4 In addition, along with the appointment of the Interim Director of Education, it was agreed in April 2020 to move the lead responsibility for Leisure and Culture from the Regeneration and Environment Directorate to the Education Directorate, undertaking the role of client for these services, and appointing an interim lead officer for this function.

2.5 Since April, the following areas have been prioritised:

- Establishing regular meetings and protocols between the Education link officer and senior managers in the ALT;
- Supporting the Trust through lockdown, phased reopening and understanding any financial impact;
- Identifying areas for development following the review, including the service specification, governance structure, Service Level Agreements, reporting framework; and,
- Handover from previous link officer including the Met Community Asset Transfer, Head 4 Arts etc.

2.6 **Response to COVID-19**

Throughout lockdown, many of the Trust's employees were initially redeployed to support the Council's response to the pandemic, including the community hubs and later providing summer activities for vulnerable children. However, the Trust also placed the majority of the workforce onto the Job Retention Scheme (furlough) in order to safeguard the business. A robust phased reopening plan was developed and gradually many of the Trust's services have moved to partial or full re-opening, working closely with Health and Safety colleagues to put the appropriate risk assessments in place.

2.7 The review recognised that key to the successful delivery of a sustainable Leisure and Culture offer is improved governance and contract management arrangements. Therefore, since April, developments have focussed on finalising the draft service specification which outlines exactly what services are being requested. The specification includes:

- i. Core services required including Sport and Leisure Centres; Sports and Physical Activity Development; Outdoor Activity Centres; Destination Venues; Libraries; and Adult Learning.
- ii. Strategic Outcome Performance Indicators (SOPIs)
- iii. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
- iv. Service Level Agreements (Appendix 2)
- v. A new governance structure which includes Terms of Reference (Appendix 3) for a new Joint Strategic Partnership Group, which will meet twice a year with representation from the most senior representatives from the Local Authority and the Trust.
- vi. Performance management and monitoring processes

2.8 **Monitoring and Scrutinising Performance**

In order to monitor and scrutinise the progress and impact of the Trust, the intention is for a full progress report to be presented to the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee twice a year, reporting against the agreed KPIs within the specification. The performance indicators are outlined in section 6.1. Other reports may be presented throughout the year by exception. These reports will also be presented to the Executive Committee and the Joint Strategic Partnership Group for comment.

- 2.9 The working relationship between the Council and Aneurin Leisure Trust has greatly improved during phase 2 of the review. This positive working relationship has continued to improve throughout lockdown and into the re-opening phase. This has been enhanced through establishing weekly structured meetings between the link officer and senior managers in the Trust.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

- 3.1 This report has been discussed by Education DMT, CLT and Scrutiny Committee prior to submission to the Executive Committee. Members are asked to consider the following options:

3.2 Option 1: That the Executive Committee accept the report as presented.

3.3 Option 2: Members are requested to review the information detailed within the report and contribute to the continuous assessment of effectiveness.

4. **Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 **Corporate Plan Priorities**

This report supports the Council's Performance Management Framework and the work of the Aneurin Leisure Trust contributes to the Council Priority, Protect and enhance our environment and infrastructure to benefit our communities, the delivery of statutory responsibilities for providing library services and the core elements of the Blaenau Gwent Wellbeing plan.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 **Impact on Budget**

This proposal in this report will ensure that the Council is getting the most out of the investment through the commissioned service. The proposed new reporting process will ensure that the investment is delivering the outcomes as articulated in the Leisure and Culture Strategy. The full impact of COVID-19 on the Trust's Business Plan is not yet fully realised, as the furlough scheme has provided much needed financial support. However, the Trust has a clear delivery plan and financial forecast which takes account of this uncertainty, and is being closely monitored

5.2 Risk

The risk of not monitoring progress against the agreed performance indicators could lead to the outcomes in the Leisure and Culture Strategy not being met, and the Trust not meeting the requirements set out in the service specification.

5.3 Legal

Monitoring performance in line with the agreed performance indicators is a requirement within the Service Specification, which is part of the Finance and Management Agreement. The Finance and Management Agreement represents all the legal and financial arrangements for the relationship between the Council and ALT.

5.4 Human Resources

There are no direct Human Resources implications associated with this report other than the allocation of time from the link officer.

6. Supporting Evidence

N/A

6.1 Performance Information and Data

The bi-annual reports will report progress against the following performance indicators. The 4 Strategic Outcome Performance Indicators are as follows:

1. Increasing Participation for All
2. Improving health and wellbeing, and reducing health inequalities
3. Providing Local Economic and Social Benefit building upon the leisure and culture offer
4. Developing effective collaboration with partners

The 7 Key Performance Indicators which will be used to monitor progress are based on the information below. Targets and/or actions are being set against each of these areas to provide clarity on what is expected for the Trust and also to ensure Members can make judgements on what is going well and what needs to improve:

1. Governance, Leadership and Advocacy
The operator is focussed on the key priorities and ensuring the Council, and strategic partners collaborate effectively to meet strategic outcomes.
2. Financial Sustainability
The operator has sound finances and is it able to provide the services to meet residents needs now and in the future. This will form part of the financial monitoring arrangements.
3. Use of the Services
Residents are accessing the services to support behavioural change.

4. **Operational Performance**
The service operations provided by the operator are efficient and effective.
5. **Customer & Staff Satisfaction**
To what extent are our customers/staff satisfied with the service / organisation?
6. **Library Services Standards**
To what extent do our library services comply with Welsh Public Library Standards?
7. **Environmental Sustainability**
The operator will reduce the environmental impact of its people, activities and operations to meet the Council's carbon reduction target.

6.2 Expected outcome for the public

The expected outcome for the public will be to achieve the aspirations in the Leisure and Culture Strategy.

6.3 Involvement

The updating of the service specification and performance indicators has been developed in collaboration between the Council and the Trust.

6.4 Thinking for the Long term

Blaenau Gwent's decision to commission the provision of Leisure and Culture Services from ALT is intended to secure the long term provision of Leisure and Culture provision in the County Borough. The monitoring and reporting process, in line with the finance and management agreement, seeks to strengthen the long term provision by ensuring that provision is in line with what is required.

6.5 Preventative focus

The impact of leisure and cultural provision on wellbeing has been recognised for a long time and is preventative in its approach.

6.6 Collaboration / partnership working

The new governance model within the service specification ensures that collaboration is at the heart of all decisions. The Joint Strategic Partnership Group will strengthen this approach and encourage greater partnership working.

6.7 Integration

The move of the client function to Education will only further enhance opportunities for integration between the Trust and across areas within the Council.

6.8 **EqIA**

There is no requirement for an EQIA assessment as all partners will have their own equality planning arrangements in place.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The proposed reporting arrangements, along with the new governance structure will ensure that the performance of the Trust is transparent and accountable. Reports will be presented to CLT, Scrutiny Committee, Executive, Council and the new Joint Strategic Partnership Group on a six monthly basis.

Background Documents / Electronic Links

Appendix 1 - BG Leisure and Culture Strategy 2019 – 2029

Appendix 2 – Review of SLAs 2019/2020

Appendix 3 - Terms of Reference for Strategic Partnership Group

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council



Leisure and Culture Strategy 2019 - 2029

'Building on our proud heritage and strong communities to enhance the lives of residents for a brighter future'

Foreword

PICTURE
OF
LEADER

PICTURE
OF
LEISURE /
CULTURE
OFFICER

TO BE INSERTED AT IN FINAL STRATEGY DOCUMENT

Contents

Foreword.....	2
1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	3
2. INTRODUCTION	19
3. WHERE WE ARE NOW	21
4. STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW.....	33
5. LEISURE AND CULTURE MAP.....	39
6. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT	40
7. OUR AMBITION	42
8. PARTNERSHIPS	46
9. MANAGING PERFORMANCE AND RISK	49
10. CONSULTATION	51
References	52
Appendix 1 – Draft Delivery Plan.....	52

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The Leisure and Culture Strategy is the first combined strategy for culture, leisure and physical and mental wellbeing in Blaenau Gwent. It replaces the previous Sport and Active Living Strategy 2014 and sits alongside other Council strategy documents that include the Corporate Plan, the Health and Wellbeing Plan 2018 -2023, a Strategy for the Future Direction of the Arts Service in Blaenau Gwent and the Leisure Library Strategy 2018.

The Leisure and Culture Strategy will set out the direction for our five core community services:



The Strategy aims to deliver a range of sustainable cultural, sporting and wellbeing activities across the five core services within the local community over the next ten years, by establishing an overarching ambition and performance outcomes for the service delivery within Blaenau Gwent.

The ambition is to be realised through a series of long-term objectives over the next ten years, with key priorities for action and delivery within the next five (5) years which will be monitored closely and reviewed annually. The strategy is intended as a high-level document to identify strategic and overarching issues; however, it also

provides an Action Programme of key areas of work to be delivered, identifying those organisations or person(s) responsible for ensuring that this work is undertaken.

The Strategy will be implemented and monitored to ensure that the key ambitions, objectives and actions are delivered. The strategy pulls together national and local priorities across a range of areas that shape culture, leisure and physical activity, to produce a co-ordinated approach to the service provision.

The Strategy is an important way forward in the delivery of service developments within Leisure and Culture provision, which will have longer term benefits for our residents and visitors.

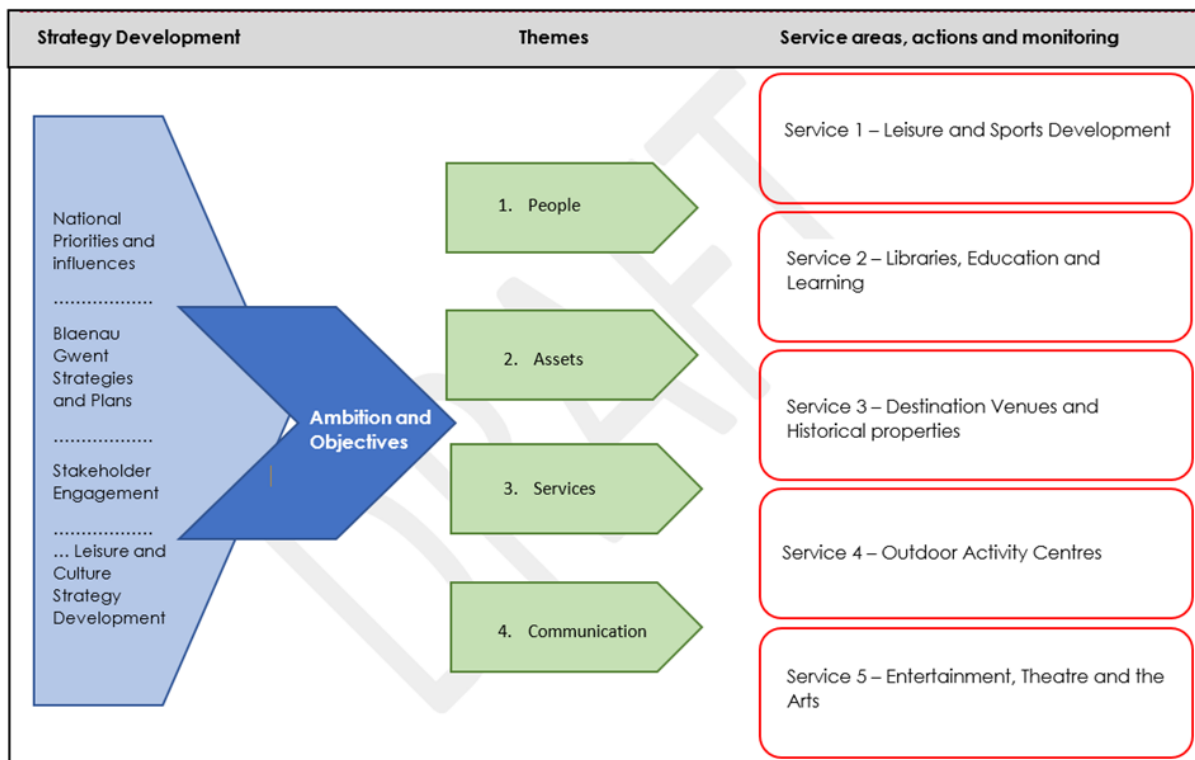
The Strategy will enable Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council to achieve value for money at a time when finances become more limited; though the needs, expectations and aspirations of our community members and partners are increasing. We believe this strategy sets clear ambitions for strong, sustainable and joined-up service provision which has no end. At its core is a staged approach on a long-term collaborative journey with committed partners, to allocate resources and targeted development work to ensure a sustainable future for lifelong participation in Sport, Culture and Physical Activity.

Any organisation may contribute towards achieving the ambitions and objectives set out in this strategy and are encouraged to utilise the strategy for their own businesses, organisations and societies so that together we may all build on our proud heritage and strong communities to enhance the lives of residents in Blaenau Gwent for a brighter future.

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

This strategy has been developed in the context of national priorities and influences set against our local strategies and plans.

We have undertaken stakeholder engagement to help inform our priorities over the period of this strategy focussing on four key themes of 'People', 'Assets', 'Services' and 'Communication' which are applied to each of our five service areas to identify innovative service developments and investments to meet the expectations of our residents over the next ten years.



WHERE WE ARE NOW

There are many strategies, policies and existing plans that impact on the Leisure and Culture Strategy. This strategy will aim to acknowledge these and map out the inter relationships between such plans and strategy documents and how these will impact on the delivery of the leisure and culture strategy to ensure it provides a meaningful impact.

Blaenau Gwent as a place

Blaenau Gwent is a place of heritage and dramatic change, with a sense of its past but its eyes firmly on the future. It is relatively small geographically, being at most 15 miles north to south, and 8 miles east to west. It is defined physically by high hillsides dividing the three main valleys. These valleys are home to towns and villages which seem to merge together into one. However, each community proudly maintains its own character and traditions.

Although the towns give the county borough a busy, urban feel, Blaenau Gwent is actually a largely rural area. Wherever you are, beautiful countryside is never far away.

In the last 20 years the people of Blaenau Gwent have faced challenges including the closure of coal mines in the 1980s and the closure of Ebbw Vale Steelworks in 2002, leading to huge job losses.

This is highlighted by a 5% reduction in the population between 1991 and 2011 which is in contrast to Wales overall which has seen a 4% increase. Currently, 49% of Blaenau Gwent working residents commute outside the borough to work and commuting distances have increased.

This period has however also seen significant structural and environment improvement, following major levels of capital investment, and the greening of our valleys as nature recovers from the long-term scarring caused through our historical industries. To reduce the effect of pit and steelwork closures, significant effort has been geared to re-focusing towards the manufacturing and services industry, which now makes up a significant part of the local economy.

The Blaenau Gwent Well-being Assessment, published in May 2017, provides a more detailed picture of local well-being.

Local Context

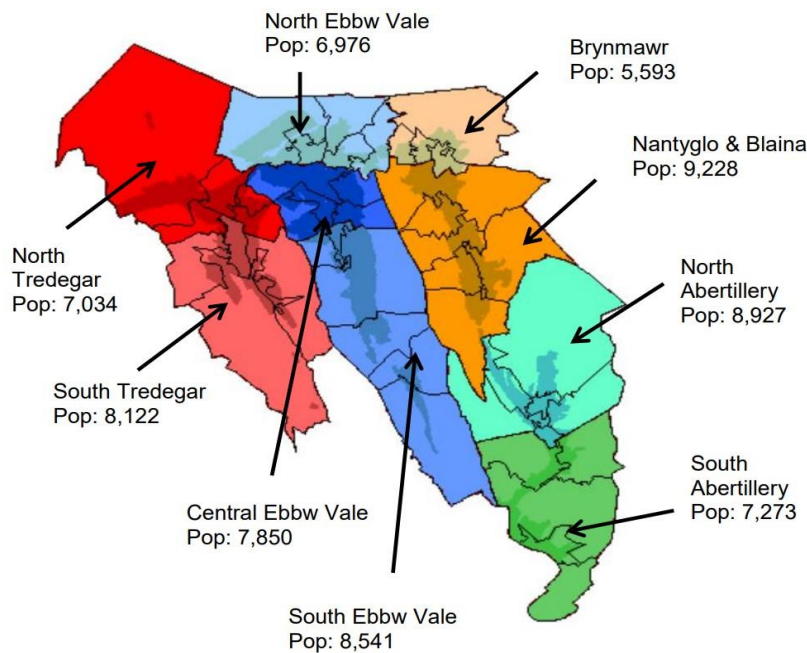
Blaenau Gwent facts and figures and key considerations

Some of the key facts to be considered in future planning and delivery of leisure opportunities are captured below:

- In 2015, the population of Blaenau Gwent was 69,544. This makes the area one of the smallest local authority areas in Wales.
- The population of the area is falling; however, the rate of decline is more stable than at any point since 1921 (when the population was over 125,000).
- The population is expected to continue to fall with a 1.2% decrease in the next 10 years.
- The population density in Blaenau Gwent was 638 people per square kilometre, compared with 149 per square kilometre for Wales as a whole.
- Analysis shows that many parts of the area have density levels similar to city areas. Blaenau Gwent, like the majority of places in the UK, has an overall population which is ageing.
- Generally, this is because less people are being born and those people that are alive are living longer.
- 28% of all people who live within Blaenau Gwent stated they had a limiting long-term health problem or illnesses, where day-to-day activities were limited. This was higher than Wales overall (23%) and was the 2nd highest level in Wales (behind Neath Port Talbot with 29%).
- The Blaenau Gwent's Black and Ethnic Minority population in 2011 was just under 1,900 which is 1.5% of the population. However, the number had increased from 1,300 in 2001. This gives the area one of the lowest levels of people from black and minority ethnic groups in Wales.

- Just over 41% of the Blaenau Gwent population stated they have no religion, which is above the Welsh average of 37%. This is a notable increase compared to 2001, with respective levels of 25% and 19%.
- Blaenau Gwent is the area in Wales with the highest percentage of small areas in the most deprived 10% (23.4%).
- There are 233 looked after children and 89 children on the Child Protection Register in Blaenau Gwent.
- 40% of adults across Blaenau Gwent reported drinking above the guidelines on at least one day in the past week, including 25% who reported drinking more than twice the daily guidelines (sometimes termed binge drinking) - this is broadly comparable with data across Wales.

There are four neighbourhood areas which align to our valleys, towns and neighbourhoods. The map below summarises the four areas, with Sirhowy coloured red, Ebbw Fawr coloured blue, Upper Ebbw Fach coloured orange and Lower Ebbw Fach coloured green.



- Obesity levels are increasing in Wales. Leisure has an important role to play in combating this but services and programmes will need to link with a range of health led initiatives and be targeted appropriately.
- Health and Wellbeing is a key focal area for current leisure services. Sport, physical activity and other forms of leisure clearly have a role to play in improving the health and wellbeing of Blaenau Gwent's residents. The "Active Wales" Physical Activity Action Plan identifies the need to develop strong local, formal and informal partnerships, target young people, focus on reducing the number of sedentary adults and increase the frequency of

participation as key areas for local action. These priorities are reflected in our plan.

- The National Vision for Sport highlights the importance of 'hooking' children on sport. It also identifies the need for strengthening partnership working and developing sustainable opportunities within the community. These objectives are reflected in our strategy.
- Economic Development and Tourism – developing and growing tourism is critical for the region and leisure makes a significant contribution. It is estimated that tourism generates £XX for the South Wales Valley's economy and supports an estimated xx jobs in the region. Ensuring the leisure offer remains 'fresh' and appealing is a key priority. 'Turning the Tide - Visitor Economy Strategy', recognises XXXX. This in turn will contribute towards a more sustainable economy. [Awaiting information]
- Educational Attainment and Employment – the latest figures from Sport Wales show that sport alone provides more than 23,000 jobs in Wales (an increase of almost 20% from the previous survey). Sport and leisure can provide opportunities to acquire key life skills, which can contribute to increased educational attainment or development of softer skills, such as confidence which can be key to enhancing employment prospects.
- Social and Community Development and Cohesion – Sport Wales acknowledges the potential of sport to enhance social capital – 23% of all voluntary, community and not-for-profit organisations are sport and recreation bodies. Involvement in leisure can also provide a 'feel good' factor, civic pride and for many can represent the only form of 'community engagement' that they experience.

Future Challenges

While we believe the future is positive, it is not without its challenges. Increased health issues place increased financial pressure on the local health services alongside an ageing population. With many residents working outside of the Borough the local economy is under threat and requires continual injection of support to maintain the status quo. This also presents us with the opportunity of becoming an affordable place to live and commute. With the small population within Blaenau Gwent it is incumbent on every service provider to appeal to wider audiences from neighbouring authorities through to tourists attracted to the area. With its wealth of cultural history, the development of the tourism product will be a key focus for the Council over the next 10 years.

Current service and operating environment

Since 2014 the Leisure and Culture services have been operated by an outsourced Leisure Trust on behalf of the Council. This includes most of our major leisure and cultural assets; the sports centres at Tredegar, Ebbw Vale, and Abertillery; libraries at Tredegar, Ebbw Vale, Cwm, Brynmawr, Blaina and Abertillery; learning action centres at Ebbw Vale and Brynmawr; Bedwellty House, Parc Bryn Bach, and the Metropole in Abertillery.

Despite the critical importance of all these leisure and cultural services and facilities provided by the Council to the health of local people the statutory obligations generally only relate to the provision of library services and learning services, and therefore, places increasing pressure on the Council to find new and innovative ways to provide services in the future.

Importantly, as part of the new strategy, the Council have undertaken a review of the Trust's performance over the first five years of their operation to ensure that arrangements have the best possible chance of success over the next ten years.

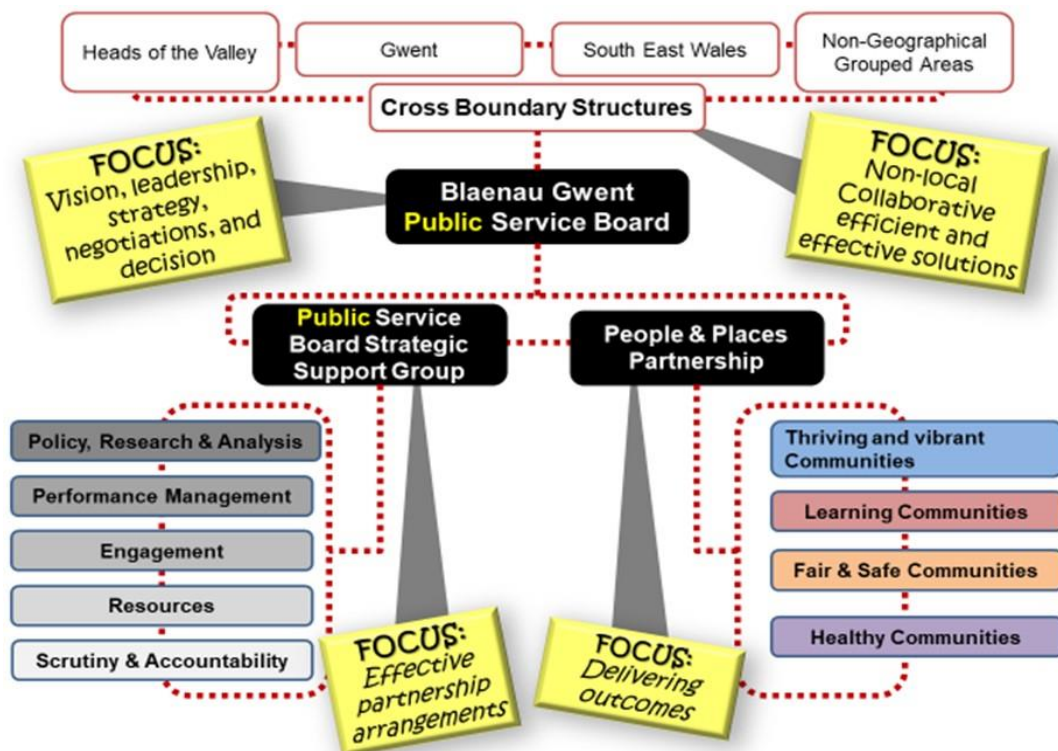
The Council recognises that it faces some significant challenges in terms of its current building assets, with ageing stock and infrastructure investment required, and ensuring that future investments are evidence based and clearly support key objectives in maximising the benefit for local people.

The Council also recognise that in order to have a strong influence on activity levels, and therefore, health and wellbeing of residents, further partnership working and a collaborative approach is required.

This is set in the context of ensuring that services remain accessible to all parts of the community, with targeted interventions in the most deprived areas.

Partnerships

The Council will focus during the period of this strategy on working with existing partners and facilitating effective new partnerships to provide the greatest impact increasing participation for all continuing to improve outcomes through our strategic partnership's framework.



Commercial approaches-external funding partners encouraging innovation

Given the limited financial resources available to the Council we will be seeking out development partners, neighbouring authority links and external funding partners to assist with longer term investments within the Blaenau Gwent area, so that community assets may continue to be developed and maintained for the next 10 years and beyond. Commercial developments will become the priority for the longer-term sustainability of the service, regardless of the organisation that operates these services.

Delivering wider social, education and economic objectives

The importance of leisure in meeting the wider objectives of the council should not be under-estimated. A vibrant leisure offer is important to meet wider health, social, wellbeing, economic and educational priorities. This is reflected in the recent broadening of the scope and remit of the Leisure, Libraries and Culture Service to ensure that planning and delivery contributes to wider council targets. The re-shaped service should include outreach work programmes to target disengaged members of the community. This may include the use of leisure to support young people's personal and social development, empowerment and access to information and resources that will enable them to move from dependants to independent, as well as supporting and reintegrating socially isolated older members of the community.

Key messages from some of our partners:

We consulted and engaged with a number of key local stakeholders and partner organisations in developing this strategy:

- A number of partners said that they would like to work more closely with the council, to have more formal partnership arrangements in place, including meeting and reporting mechanisms.
- Partners highlighted the potential for future joint working and collaboration on projects as part of a multi-agency approach to delivering services in the future.
- The importance of volunteering was mentioned by a number of partners; with some organisations able to offer training and support for staff and volunteers and some suggesting the idea of reward programme to encourage volunteers.
- Partners would be keen to integrate health and community facilities into new developments in the future to achieve good health and well-being outcomes. (housing, arts)
- Partners mentioned the value of invest to save projects so that capital ideas could be progressed and implemented. Strong internal processes will be needed to support contract management.

- Marketing, social media presence and communications systems such as online bookings and databases were mentioned by a number of partners, and some are keen to work together to improve marketing.
- The possibility of sharing of some other central resources such as HR and IT were also mentioned by some partners.
- Partners are keen to mentor young people into employment and training.
- The housing company is concerned with the fitness and health of young people.
- Partners wish to keep their staff fit and healthy and the housing company is concerned with the health and well-being of tenants and keeping people safe in their homes for longer is a priority
- The cost of taking part in leisure is an issue for the client groups of some partners
- There is a need for more safe outdoor play areas - particularly in relation to social housing - and the housing company would be keen to create more community gardens and play areas on the outdoor spaces on their existing developments (funding would be needed).
- There is a need to review dual use arrangements with schools, which aren't felt to work very well, and more dialogue with the headteachers forum is important.
- There is a need to rationalise or reconfigure the library service to make it more sustainable. A strong volunteer base will be needed, and friends' groups should be explored.
- Some partners would like to explore partnering with other cultural trusts in order to deliver joint programming and gain economies of scale and strategic alliances.
- Partners were keen that asset maintenance should be better planned in the future.
- Partners were keen to work together to plan and aspire for the future, and not let past performance be an inhibitor to future achievements.

We are very grateful to all our partner organisations who contributed to the development of the strategy and look forward to working together to deliver the strategy over the next ten years.

OUR AMBITION AND PRIORITIES

Our Ambition

Our ambition for the Leisure and Culture Strategy is to set out the council and its partners' aspirations, direction and priorities for leisure and culture over the next ten years, with a focus on deliverable priorities over the next five-year period.

It is intended to develop the leisure and culture offer already available to residents and visitors across the borough, to increase the number of people engaged in the range of services and involved in the delivery of leisure and culture opportunities, and to increase the profile and importance of leisure and culture participation for all members of the community.

'By 2024 Blaenau Gwent aims to have established a strong reputation for collaborative working across a range of quality service delivery models, that provide accessible leisure opportunities attracting high levels of participation to improve the happiness, mental health and physical wellbeing of residents and visitors alike'

Our Priorities



1. Increasing participation for all



2. Improving physical and mental health and well-being



3. Developing effective collaboration with partners



4. Maintaining and building upon the existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities

1. Increasing participation for all

By increasing participation rates in our leisure and culture services for all demographic groups, encouraging known groups with lower than average rates of participation, we will support growth and efficiency in an inclusive and sustainable manner, whilst at the same time reducing inequality and disadvantage.

We recognise that this will require some inward investment into the asset infrastructure, to provide an opportunity for increased usage and better maintenance of assets, to improve the financial performance that will support and offset those statutory services that inevitably are cost based only and less able to contribute to income targets.

2. Improving physical and mental health and well-being

We know from national research how important physical and mental health is ensure we live full and active lives. An active body and mind can often add years to people's lives.

By supporting initiatives from existing and future partners we can collectively help to increase activity levels across Blaenau Gwent and help in the prevention and management of many conditions and diseases including coronary heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and the growing issue of childhood obesity.

People can engage with leisure and culture in many different ways at every stage of their lives; and each encounter can have a positive impact upon health and wellbeing.

3. Developing effective collaboration with partners

Over the next five years we will continue to focus on more effective ways to deliver our services working, not just with the existing service providers, but with new people, organisations and local investors who can add benefit to the development of the local services and facilities for the enjoyment of all residents of Blaenau Gwent, along with visitors attracted the area.

Regular interaction between partners is essential to help ensure success however the Council does wish to retain influence over council led services, to ensure a consistency of approach, quality assurance and to facilitate the transparency of delivery that is fundamental to the success of the strategy.

We recognise the need to support and help to develop a network of volunteers and staff involved in delivering culture and leisure in Blaenau Gwent, and to help all individuals develop their talent, skills and confidence.

4. Maintaining and building upon the existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities

We live in a very challenging financial climate and working together is vital in maintaining existing provision in the most efficient manner. It is imperative therefore that the leisure and culture services become even more customer and business focussed over the period of this strategy to ensure that the commercial performance can be sustained long term and ultimately without any (or with significantly reduced) service subsidy from the Council.

There is much success to build upon following investment in leisure and culture in the past and we are committed to exploring further investment opportunities in our services in the future.

Delivery Themes

To deliver this vision we aspire to identify what we want, how we will get there and who will be involved. This has been captured within four overlapping themes across each service area as follows:



Key Objectives

Whilst the strategy covers a ten year period from 2019 to 2029, over the first five years we plan to:

- Develop a financial sustainability plan for Leisure Services, in line with the requirements of the Council's medium-term financial strategy (MTFS);
- Explore invest to save initiatives to reduce revenue implications across our leisure and culture services;
- Review delivery options for Leisure and Culture Services;
- Initiate a fundamental review to modernise community library and learning provision;
- Undertake a review of future options for Sports Centres, particularly Tredegar Sports Centre;
- Secure investment in sports and cultural facilities e.g. the 21st Century Schools Programme;
- Transfer responsibilities for sports grounds to local sports clubs ;

DELIVERY

The Council already adopts a mixed model of delivery – directly delivering some services while for others Alternative Delivery Models have been established. For example, traditional Leisure, Culture and Learning Services are now delivered across Blaenau Gwent by a Charitable Trust limited by guarantee. The amount of services the Council directly delivers may decrease further depending on the future financial position. In time, the Council may act as a commissioner of services ensuring that they are responsive to local needs, centred around the person and community based. It will also look to become a more commercial organisation which generates income and delivers cost reductions. This in turn will help to make local services more sustainable and raise money to re-invest in our priorities.

In some instances, it might be appropriate for the Council to move into more of an enabling role supporting community groups and social enterprises to gain the skills and competencies to be able to retain and deliver services locally themselves (i.e. Community Asset Transfers). The council will also look to deliver services in collaboration with other councils in the future. There will also be a role for the Council in developing a renewed sense of place in the area and building pride in the borough, which could involve influencing and supporting partner organisations to work to common goals to meet the needs and aspirations of the community. The Council's role over time may be less about doing things to and for residents and communities and more about creating the capacity, interest, expertise and enthusiasm for individuals and communities to do things for themselves.

MONITORING

It is important that people can see what progress the Council is making against the priorities outlined in this Strategy and hold us properly to account.

We recognise that to maintain and improve opportunities for local residents, it is important to monitor our performance and manage the overall delivery of the key actions.

To monitor performance, a set of specific indicators will be developed. The indicators and targets will need to be agreed with key partners and set in accordance with some of the additional research planned (mapping and auditing), ensuring targets take account of baseline (current position) and ensuring they can be realistically achieved.

Also, it is vital that those employed within these services understand how their contribution to achieving our shared priorities is valued and the positive impact they can have on people's lives through the effective and efficient delivery of services.

It is essential that during the next ten years service providers demonstrate a range of good practice outcomes to future generations set alongside the strategy objectives. We need to be pushing the boundaries of the possible each year and enhancing

the collaborations that take place locally to enhance lives and support community cohesion and wellbeing.

Moving forwards we will also introduce measurements demonstrating the impact of leisure and culture on the socio-economic lifestyles of the local community.

RISK

There are some significant risks associated with delivery of the leisure and culture strategy which will be regularly updated and reviewed:

- Impact on culture – cuts are affecting non-statutory services such as culture and leisure facilities;
- Competition from other local leisure and culture destinations;
- Consequences of the economic challenge facing future generations;
- Impact on income - poverty in Wales is higher than UK average;
- Impact on affordability of services;
- Impact on health - people who experience poverty or who live in deprived areas have fewer years of life free from illness or disability;
- Impact on children – children in low-income households have poorer mental and physical health;
- Growing skills gap – there is likely to be an increase in the skills gap as professional and managerial jobs grow and semi and unskilled jobs reduce;

CONSULTATION

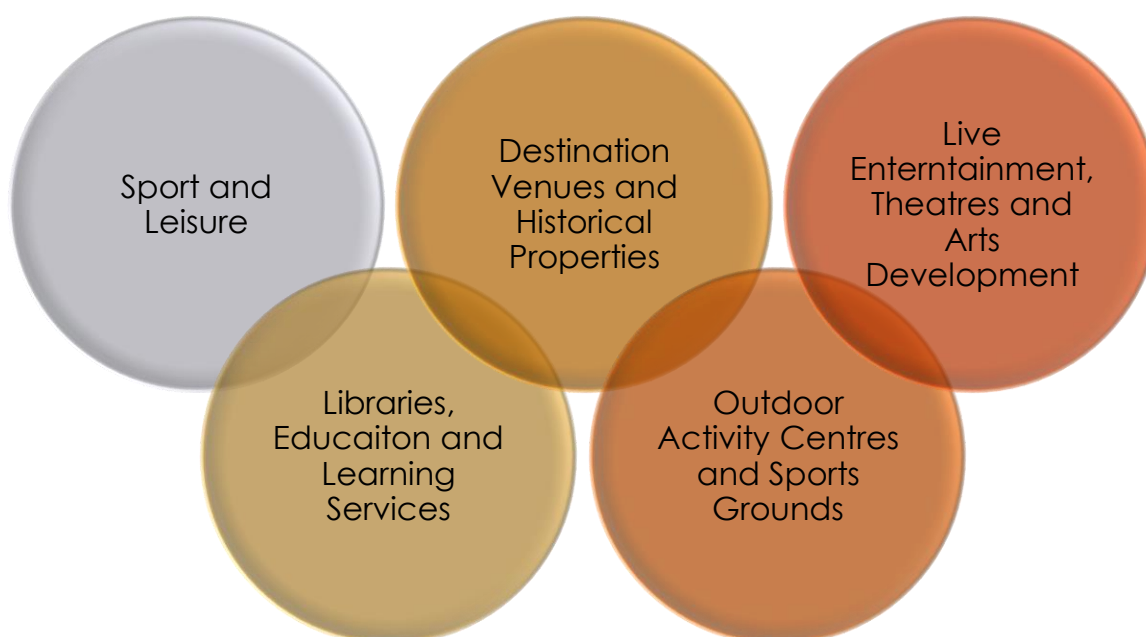
In accordance with the Future Generations Act, following the completion of the draft strategy a wider consultation process will take place for feedback and final collaboration on the completion of the leisure and culture strategy. This consultation process will include a number of strategic partners alongside local community users and groups that are involved in achieving the well-being goals and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the strategy. Once this consultation is completed the final strategy will be put forward for approval by the Council Executive and Scrutiny Committees.

We welcome any feedback you might have about the Leisure and Culture Strategy 2019 - 2029. If there is any information you think could be considered for, or if you require this document in a different format e.g. large print, Braille, audio version, etc please contact us using the information below.

2. INTRODUCTION

The Leisure and Culture Strategy is the first combined strategy for culture, leisure and physical and mental wellbeing in Blaenau Gwent. It replaces the previous Sport and Active Living Strategy 2014 and sits alongside other Council strategy documents that include the Corporate Plan, the Health and Wellbeing Plan 2018 -2023, a Strategy for the Future Direction of the Arts Service in Blaenau Gwent and the Leisure Library Strategy 2018.

The Leisure and Culture Strategy will set out the direction for our five core community services:



The Strategy aims to deliver a range of sustainable cultural, sporting and wellbeing activities across the five core services within the local community over the next ten years, by establishing an overarching ambition and performance outcomes for the service delivery within Blaenau Gwent.

The ambition is to be realised through a series of long-term objectives over the next ten years, with key priorities for action and delivery within the next five (5) years which will be monitored closely and reviewed annually. The strategy is intended as a high-level document to identify strategic and overarching issues; however, it also provides an Action Programme of key areas of work to be delivered, identifying those organisations or person(s) responsible for ensuring that this work is undertaken.

The Strategy will be implemented and monitored to ensure that the key ambitions, objectives and actions are delivered. The strategy pulls together national and local priorities across a range of areas that shape culture, leisure and physical activity, to produce a co-ordinated approach to the service provision.

The Strategy is an important way forward in the delivery of service developments within Leisure and Culture provision, which will have longer term benefits for our residents and visitors.

The Strategy will enable Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council to achieve value for money at a time when finances become more limited; though the needs, expectations and aspirations of our community members and partners are increasing. We believe this strategy sets clear ambitions for strong, sustainable and joined-up service provision which has no end. At its core is a staged approach on a long-term collaborative journey with committed partners, to allocate resources and targeted development work to ensure a sustainable future for lifelong participation in Sport, Culture and Physical Activity.

Any organisation may contribute towards achieving the ambitions and objectives set out in this strategy and are encouraged to utilise the strategy for their own businesses, organisations and societies so that together we may all build on our proud heritage and strong communities to enhance the lives of residents in Blaenau Gwent for a brighter future.

The strategy has been developed by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council in conjunction with FMG Consulting and alongside key partners that include:

- Aneurin Leisure Trust
- Arts Wales
- Museums Archives and Libraries Division (MALD)
- CADW – Welsh Government
- Disability Sport Wales
- The Future Generations Commission
- Sport Wales
- UKactive
- Tai Calon Housing Trust
- The Local Health Board - Aneurin Primary Health Care Trust
- Local education providers, particularly schools.

3. WHERE WE ARE NOW

There are many strategies, policies and existing plans that impact on the Leisure and Culture Strategy. This strategy will aim to acknowledge these and map out the inter relationships between such plans and strategy documents and how these will impact on the delivery of the leisure and culture strategy to ensure it provides a meaningful impact.

Blaenau Gwent as a place

Blaenau Gwent is a place of heritage and dramatic change, with a sense of its past but its eyes firmly on the future. It is relatively small geographically, being at most 15 miles north to south, and 8 miles east to west. It is defined physically by high hillsides dividing the three main valleys. These valleys are home to towns and villages which seem to merge together into one. However, each community proudly maintains its own character and traditions.

Although the towns give the county borough a busy, urban feel, Blaenau Gwent is actually a largely rural area. Wherever you are, beautiful countryside is never far away.

A short history

Before the early 1800s, the area that is now Blaenau Gwent was a quiet, rural area dominated by tiny villages and farmland. Welsh was the only language, and English was little understood.

The start of the industrial revolution sparked transformational change as people looked to take advantage of the plentiful supply of resources that could be found. In the first instance this took the form of ironworks, quickly followed by coal mining and steel making.

As the industries grew, so did the demand for labour and the population of Blaenau Gwent grew remarkably. Between the early 19th and early 20th century the population rose from around 1,200 to well over 120,000.

As our communities thrived, so did the need for services required to deal with this social and cultural explosion, examples being education, health, shops and leisure opportunities. This led to the growth of a network of communities and neighbourhoods, which make up the villages and towns that we know today.

The strong commitment to social justice and a solid work ethic in Blaenau Gwent is demonstrated by campaigns for improvements in standards of living. Examples of this include the first ever board of health which marks Blaenau Gwent as the birthplace of the NHS, campaigns for electoral reform, abolition of company-run shops, and reductions in working hours, many of which still influence the way people live their lives today. The community spirit is a legacy of these achievements and will feature heavily within the Strategy.

Present day Blaenau Gwent

The period from the late 1980s saw the formation of Blaenau Gwent as it is known today. In 1996 it changed from a district of Gwent County to a county borough council, following local government reorganisation.

In the last 20 years the people of Blaenau Gwent have faced challenges including the closure of coal mines in the 1980s and the closure of Ebbw Vale Steelworks in 2002, leading to huge job losses.

This is highlighted by a 5% reduction in the population between 1991 and 2011 which is in contrast to Wales overall which has seen a 4% increase. Currently, 49% of Blaenau Gwent working residents commute outside the borough to work and commuting distances have increased. We cannot underestimate the effect of these issues. Even so, in the last 20 years the area has seen significant structural and environment improvement, following major levels of capital investment, and the greening of our valleys as nature recovers from the long-term scarring caused through our historical industries. To reduce the effect of pit and steelwork closures, significant effort has been geared to re-focusing towards the manufacturing and services industry, which now makes up a significant part of the local economy.

The Blaenau Gwent Well-being Assessment, published in May 2017, provides a more detailed picture of local well-being¹.

National Context

The Leisure and Culture Strategy has been developed at a time of significant financial constraint for Blaenau Gwent Council and change within the public sector. Financial austerity has been a feature of the UK Government's agenda for a number of years and as a result we continue to face cuts to the budget received from Central Government.

By the end of the decade the budget will have been cut in real terms by 7% since 2010 resulting in £1.2bn less to spend on vital public services in Wales. For Blaenau Gwent this has meant Welsh Government funding has remained static since 2010/11, which equates to a real term reduction of £7m. As a result, tough decisions need to be made on priorities for spending, ensuring vital services are maintained for the most vulnerable in our communities.

There may be a secondary financial impact with the UK's decision to leave the European Union with the loss of European Funding from Blaenau Gwent in future years making the financial horizon increasingly challenging.

Local government needs to be equipped with the powers, capability and capacity to address the challenges we all face and deliver the public services our citizens need, ensuring public money is used efficiently and effectively. Regional collaboration is critical to local government and in the future we will undoubtedly see increased levels of regional working. Other strategic collaborations include

¹ Opener to 2.3 is an extract from the Wellbeing Plan 2018

areas like Health, Education and Social Services which remain important in our efforts to improve well-being².

We have a rich heritage in this area and our buildings and countryside are part of Blaenau Gwent's attractiveness as a place to live, work and visit. Our local environment should be used to help improve the health and wellbeing of our families and communities and be enhanced for future generations to continue to enjoy. There is also a real desire to see the communities where people live kept clean, tidy and useable, creating areas that people can be proud of.

The Council are determined to improve the economic outlook for Blaenau Gwent as good quality, well paid employment is a key factor for people to live healthier and happier lives. We are seeking to improve the health and wellbeing of residents through the delivery of effective leisure, culture, historical and tourism services in the area, integrating collaborative working and cross utilisation of facilities by residents and visitors to the area with improved market engagement strategies, better marketing and communications, a transparent approach to service delivery and an open reporting mechanism that will provide confidence to partners and stakeholders.

This strategy has been developed through extensive consultation with both regional and local groups, organisations and service users to establish the priorities for the next ten years.

UKactive - The inactivity crisis

In 2014 leisure industry leaders UKactive released the 'Turning the Tide on Inactivity' Report that created a catalyst for change within the UK. The UKactive research institute provided evidence that physical inactivity accounts for nearly 1/5 of premature deaths in the UK, with projections showing that inactivity levels are due to increase by a further 15% by 2030.

The report also found that inactivity levels were ten per cent higher in the most deprived areas compared to the least deprived. At the time Local authorities were spending on average less than 3% of annual public health budgets on physical inactivity interventions.

Physical inactivity represents 10% of total societal costs when compared against other top-tier public health concerns including sexual health, smoking, obesity and drug and alcohol misuse. On average, it is costing the economy in each local authority £18 million per 100,000 people every year. It was calculated that if every local authority was able to reduce inactivity levels by one per cent year on year over a five-year period they would save local taxpayers £44 per household. More importantly, they would improve the health and wellbeing of the local community³.

This report secured Government and industry support and provided a new focus for leisure providers and local authorities, as the burden of inactivity is placing increased

² Extract from the Blaenau Gwent Corporate Plan 2018-2023 message from the Leader, cut down to one page

³ Extract from UKactive turning the tide on inactivity report

pressure on already strained resources and is unsustainable. Several local authorities have acknowledged this already and are championing collaborations between their leisure, open spaces and public health teams to promote active lifestyles.

Urgent action is required to get more people, more active, more often. This includes taking an innovative and alternative approach to activity delivery to include simple lifestyle changes such as walking and cycling as adopted modes of transport, for children to become physically literate from the earliest possible age, and for an industrial scale shift across society to embed physical activity into people's daily lives and routines.

The leisure and Culture strategy is written against this prevalent backdrop that recognises the positive impact physical activity and leisure engagement has on physical and mental health and wellbeing.

The Wellbeing for Future Generations (Wales)

The Wellbeing for Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 challenges public bodies to make:

“Transformational Change to the way they do their business”, with “decisions that focus on the long-term implications of their actions”. Its vision is “to help create a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future”.

The context of the act in this strategy is ensure the sport and leisure facilities landscape is fit for the well-being of future generations - modern, inclusive, attractive, accessible and efficient; meeting local needs; raising levels of participation in sport and physical activity and contributing to greater success on the international stage.

A future infrastructure where there is a collective responsibility and approach to provide appropriate opportunities - shared by a wide range of organisations involved in the planning, provision and management of sports and leisure facilities (Voluntary and Private Sectors, Schools, Colleges and Universities, alongside Local Government and other public-sector bodies).

The act and stakeholder feedback focussed on embedding the **‘5 ways of working’** in any future strategy or approach taken by the local authority or service delivery partner as a means to success in meeting the Act. The 5 ways of working are:

1. Long-term

The importance of balancing short-term needs with the needs to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs

2. Integration

Considering how the public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies

3. Involvement

The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves

4. Collaboration

Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives

5. Prevention

How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives

These should be considered alongside how best to maximise the **7 wellbeing goals** that have been set out as:

1. A Prosperous wales
2. A Resilient wales
3. A Healthier wales
4. A more equal wales
5. A Wales of cohesive communities
6. A wales of vibrant culture and welsh language
7. A globally responsible wales



The essence of the act seeks to encourage collaboration and to tackle some of the key issues surrounding wales over the coming years which include infrastructure and people – personal developments, skills for the future, volunteer skills development, energy management, climate change, health and wellbeing, tackling social loneliness and isolation, community housing and social prescribing.

There already exists a Memorandum of Understanding between the public health board and sports/arts council to work collaboratively to tackle inactivity, social isolation, mental health and wellbeing issues, with positive results being recorded from this work. This approach needs to be widened to maximise the impact across the County Borough.

Collaborative working already exists within arts and leisure for Blaenau Gwent with the **Active Gwent Board** that includes neighbouring authorities in Caerphilly, Newport, Blaenau Gwent, Monmouthshire and Torfaen working together to deliver the local plan for sport 2018-2019, alongside the 'Art is a Possible' discrete project through the Arts Council.

It is critical to future proof the services against the unknown that may occur in the future, such as the removal of the steelworks which had a significant impact on the local community – what risks exist locally that the leisure and culture strategy need to mitigate against.

Sport Wales

The vision for Sport in Wales is to **'unite a proud sporting nation, where every child is hooked on sport for life** and Wales is a **nation of champions**.

This vision is supported by clearly defined priorities.

1. Sporting innovation: Wales has a sports sector that embraces collaboration, encouraging new ways of delivering opportunities to increase participation and improve elite performance.

2. Skills for life in sport: Every child and young person is provided with the skills and confidence from an early age to be physically literate through high quality, engaging sporting experiences.

3. Sporting communities: We have communities with sport at the heart of them, offering joined up opportunities for every child and young person to undertake at least five hours of safe, high quality sport every week and sustaining their engagement throughout their adult life.

4. Sporting Excellence: We are a nation that excels in nurturing sporting talent and delivers ongoing success on the international stage.

5. Growing a Skilled and Passionate workforce: All those involved in sport, whether in a professional or voluntary capacity, are supported to pass on their skills and passion for sport to the people of Wales.

The aim of this strategy is to shape what this vision will mean for sport and leisure services in Blaenau Gwent and how we will align our approach to that of the national vision. We will need to evidence current performance and set out how we will contribute to this vision in our strategy.

The Sport Wales corporate strategy sets out a new regional way of working which will change the way we engage with Sport Wales and encourage greater collaboration between regional partners. The first Regional structure will be adopted early in North Wales, with Gwent lined up to be the next region. During the next 10 years this new structure will provide new opportunities for joint working on a regional level and will encourage greater collaboration of shared good practice to positively impact on outcomes across leisure, health and communities. The regional structures will have a flexible delivery plan to enable better local decision-making powers and bespoke outcomes prescribed for region.

Sport Wales recognise that Gwent is already successfully working on a regional basis with the 5 Authorities combined to deliver the Active Gwent Board which offers a good standard of reporting outcomes. For a small authority there is good work being delivered including the street games and a strong young ambassador programme at Aneurin Leisure.

There is an 'active and healthy' action plan in development which sets out prosperity for all.

A new sport wales strategy is being launched in April 2019.

Sport Wales community strategy sets out:

'An active, healthy and inclusive Wales, where sport, physical activity and active recreation provide a common platform for participation, fun and achievement, which binds communities and the nation and where the

outstanding environment of Wales is used sustainably to enhance confidence in ourselves.¹⁴

The strategy has been developed to set out clear priorities and focus energy to enable a dramatic shift in the range and number of people involved in sport.

Amongst other outcomes that are set out in the strategy, an ideal sporting community would include;

- Schools which embrace sport's power to positively improve a pupil's wellbeing, ability to learn, grow and develop as young adults;
- Modernised offers, such as short, sharp variations of sports; responding to growing time pressures and lifestyle choices of the Welsh population
- A broad range of quality providers, collaborating effectively to maximise investments for sports participation and minimise wasteful duplication.
- A confident embrace of technology, marketing and PR approaches as a means of attracting participants and recruiting the workforce;
- A diverse, passionate and skilled workforce; paid and voluntary, to encourage, inspire and support participants

Investing in thriving clubs, where quality, varied and sustainable provision becomes the norm, has to be a key focus for Sport Wales, where notable successes has been delivered in this area.

There are five key priority areas for community sports. These are:

- Local decisions – creating opportunities by meeting local demand
- Quality Education – creating opportunities by developing skills, enjoyment and confidence
- Committed workforce – creating opportunities by attracting and investing in the right people, in the right places
- Appropriate facilities – creating opportunities through providing inspirational environments and programming

One of the key areas of focus for facility infrastructure changes moving forwards is to develop a much wider, more appealing offer through more informal and recreational opportunities, capable of engaging children, young people and adults of all abilities, and successfully attracting people to re-join the world of sport. A particular challenge will be to address the decline in the number of young girls and women taking part⁵.

Sport Wales will use five key measures to assess the sector's progress over the period of their new strategies:

1. children doing three occasions of sport in a week (extracurricular and within the wider community setting)
2. club membership;
3. 16-24 adult participation (three occasions per week)
4. school key stage 3 attainment;

⁴ Extract 2.1 of the Inquiry into Participation Levels in Sport In Wales Report

⁵ Extract from the Executive Summary of the Sport Wales Community Strategy

5. number of adults volunteering in Wales.

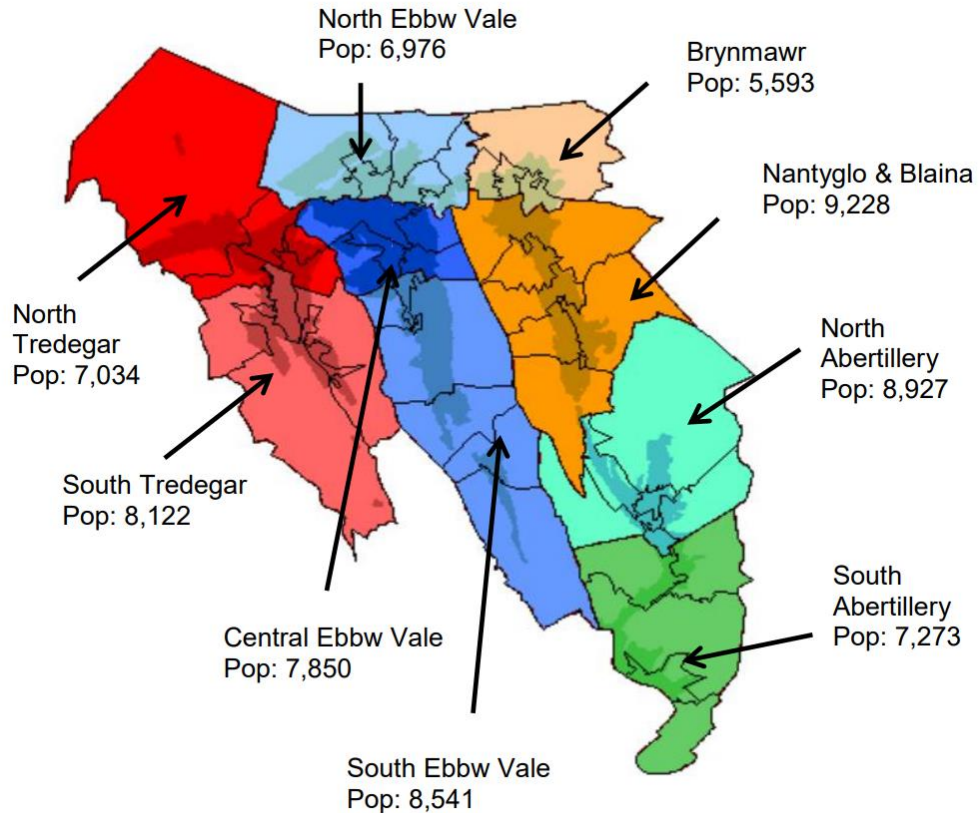
The Local Context

Blaenau Gwent facts and figures and key considerations

Some of the key facts to be considered in future planning and delivery of leisure opportunities are captured below:

- In 2015, the population of Blaenau Gwent was 69,544. This makes the area one of the smallest local authority areas in Wales.
- The population of the area is falling; however, the rate of decline is more stable than at any point since 1921 (when the population was over 125,000).
- The population is expected to continue to fall with a 1.2% decrease in the next 10 years.
- The population density in Blaenau Gwent was 638 people per square kilometre, compared with 149 per square kilometre for Wales as a whole.
- Analysis shows that many parts of the area have density levels similar to city areas. Blaenau Gwent, like the majority of places in the UK, has an overall population which is ageing.
- Generally, this is because less people are being born and those people that are alive are living longer.
- 28% of all people who live within Blaenau Gwent stated they had a limiting long-term health problem or illnesses, where day-to-day activities were limited. This was higher than Wales overall (23%) and was the 2nd highest level in Wales (behind Neath Port Talbot with 29%).
- The Blaenau Gwent's Black and Ethnic Minority population in 2011 was just under 1,900 which is 1.5% of the population. However, the number had increased from 1,300 in 2001. This gives the area one of the lowest levels of people from black and minority ethnic groups in Wales.
- Just over 41% of the Blaenau Gwent population stated they have no religion, which is above the Welsh average of 37%. This is a notable increase compared to 2001, with respective levels of 25% and 19%.
- Blaenau Gwent is the area in Wales with the highest percentage of small areas in the most deprived 10% (23.4%).
- There are 233 looked after children and 89 children on the Child Protection Register in Blaenau Gwent.
- 40% of adults across Blaenau Gwent reported drinking above the guidelines on at least one day in the past week, including 25% who reported drinking more than twice the daily guidelines (sometimes termed binge drinking) - this is broadly comparable with data across Wales.

There are four neighbourhood areas which align to our valleys, towns and neighbourhoods. The map below summarises the four areas, with Sirhowy coloured red, Ebbw Fawr coloured blue, Upper Ebbw Fach coloured orange and Lower Ebbw Fach coloured green.



- Obesity levels are increasing in Wales. Leisure has an important role to play in combating this but services and programmes will need to link with a range of health led initiatives and be targeted appropriately.
- Health and Wellbeing is a key focal area for current leisure services. Sport, physical activity and other forms of leisure clearly have a role to play in improving the health and wellbeing of Blaenau Gwent's residents. The "Active Wales" Physical Activity Action Plan identifies the need to develop strong local, formal and informal partnerships, target young people, focus on reducing the number of sedentary adults and increase the frequency of participation as key areas for local action. These priorities are reflected in our plan.
- The National Vision for Sport highlights the importance of 'hooking' children on sport. It also identifies the need for strengthening partnership working and developing sustainable opportunities within the community. These objectives are reflected in our strategy.
- Economic Development and Tourism – developing and growing tourism is critical for the region and leisure makes a significant contribution. It is estimated that tourism generates £XX for the South Wales Valley's economy and supports an estimated XX jobs in the region. Ensuring the leisure offer remains 'fresh' and appealing is a key priority. 'Turning the Tide - Visitor Economy Strategy', recognises XXXX. This in turn will contribute towards a more sustainable economy. [AWAITING INFORMATION]
- Educational Attainment and Employment – the latest figures from Sport Wales show that sport alone provides more than 23,000 jobs in Wales (an increase of

almost 20% from the previous survey). Sport and leisure can provide opportunities to acquire key life skills, which can contribute to increased educational attainment or development of softer skills, such as confidence which can be key to enhancing employment prospects.

- Social and Community Development and Cohesion – Sport Wales acknowledges the potential of sport to enhance social capital – 23% of all voluntary, community and not-for-profit organisations are sport and recreation bodies. Involvement in leisure can also provide a 'feel good' factor, civic pride and for many can represent the only form of 'community engagement' that they experience.

The Future Challenges

While we believe the future is positive, it is not without its challenges. Increased health issues place increased financial pressure on the local health services alongside an ageing population. With many residents working outside of the Borough the local economy is under threat and requires continual injection of support to maintain the status quo. This also presents us with the opportunity of becoming an affordable place to live and commute. With the small population within Blaenau Gwent it is incumbent on every service provider to appeal to wider audiences from neighbouring authorities through to tourists attracted to the area. With its wealth of cultural history, the development of the tourism product will be a key focus for the Council over the next 10 years.

Current Service and Operating Environment

Since 2014 the Leisure and Culture services have been operated by an outsourced Leisure Trust on behalf of the Council. This includes most of our major leisure and cultural assets; the sports centres at Tredegar, Ebbw Vale, and Abertillery; libraries at Tredegar, Ebbw Vale, Cwm, Brynmawr, Blaina and Abertillery; learning action centres at Ebbw Vale and Brynmawr; Bedwellty House, Parc Bryn Bach, and the Metropole in Abertillery.

Despite the critical importance of all these leisure and cultural services and facilities provided by the Council to the health of local people the statutory obligations generally only relate to the provision of library services and learning services, and therefore, places increasing pressure on the Council to find new and innovative ways to provide services in the future.

Importantly, as part of the new strategy, the Council have undertaken a review of the Trust's performance over the first five years of their operation to ensure that arrangements have the best possible chance of success over the next ten years.

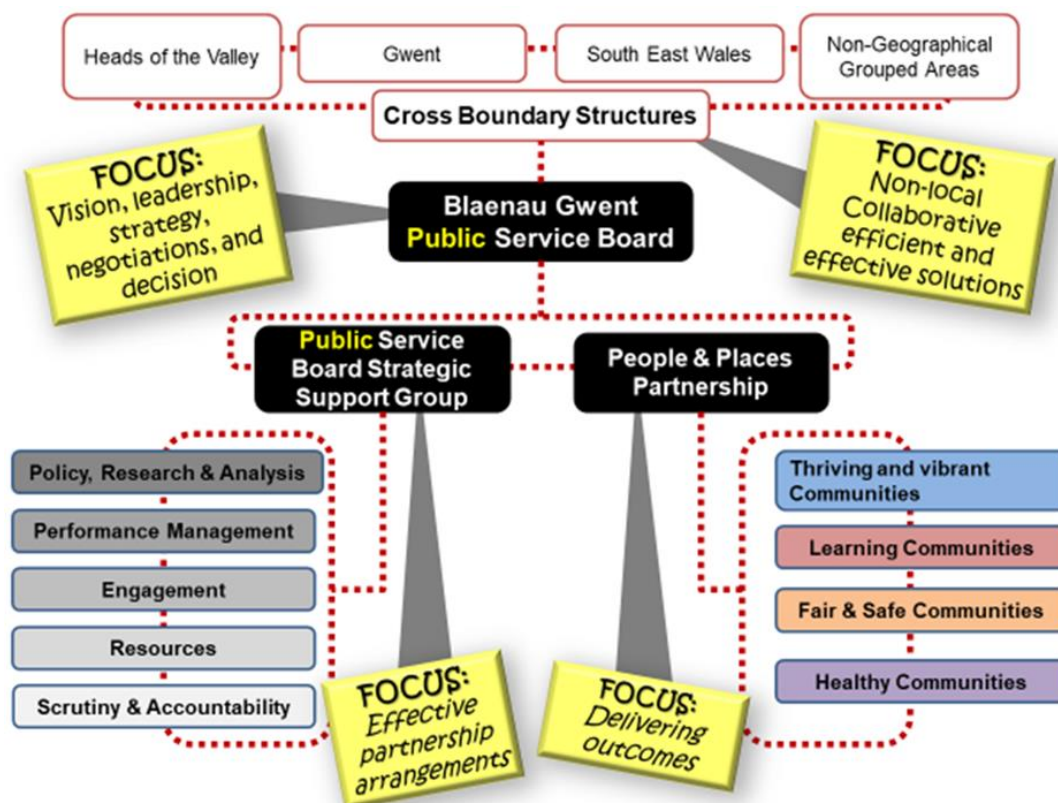
The Council recognises that it faces some significant challenges in terms of its current building assets, with ageing stock and infrastructure investment required, and ensuring that future investments are evidence based and clearly support key objectives in maximising the benefit for local people.

The Council also recognise that in order to have a strong influence on activity levels, and therefore, health and wellbeing of residents, further partnership working and a collaborative approach is required.

This is set in the context of ensuring that services remain accessible to all parts of the community, with targeted interventions in the most deprived areas.

Partnerships

The Council will focus during the period of this strategy on working with existing partners and facilitating effective new partnerships to provide the greatest impact increasing participation for all continuing to improve outcomes through our strategic partnerships framework.



Community Asset Transfer (CAT)

CAT has become a more popular way to deliver services in recent years because of decreasing budgets to operate a range of community-based services, not all can be sustained. The opportunity to transfer assets from the Council to local community groups and volunteers when the costs of maintaining the service in-house are no longer viable, provides much needed support for local assets that have a community following.

CAT will continue to be considered where finances and sustainability demands it.

Subcontracted services

Where services are subcontracted to professional organisations, a transparent delivery and reporting mechanism needs to be adopted to provide valuable insight

into the operation and performance of the contract. The Council will want to influence subcontractors' approach to the delivery of these services to ensure they meet the specification of the leisure and culture strategy and will want to be provided with evidence that this is happening on the ground.

Visitor numbers and participation

The leisure and culture services we provide through our partner organisations will continue to be monitored, reviewed and assessed regularly and will have a direct impact on how the leisure and culture strategy is delivered.

Commercial approaches-external funding partners encouraging innovation

Given the limited financial resources available to the Council we will be seeking out development partners, neighbouring authority links and external funding partners to assist with longer term investments within the Blaenau Gwent area, so that community assets may continue to be developed and maintained for the next 10 years and beyond. Commercial developments will become the priority for the longer-term sustainability of the service, regardless of the organisation that operates these services.

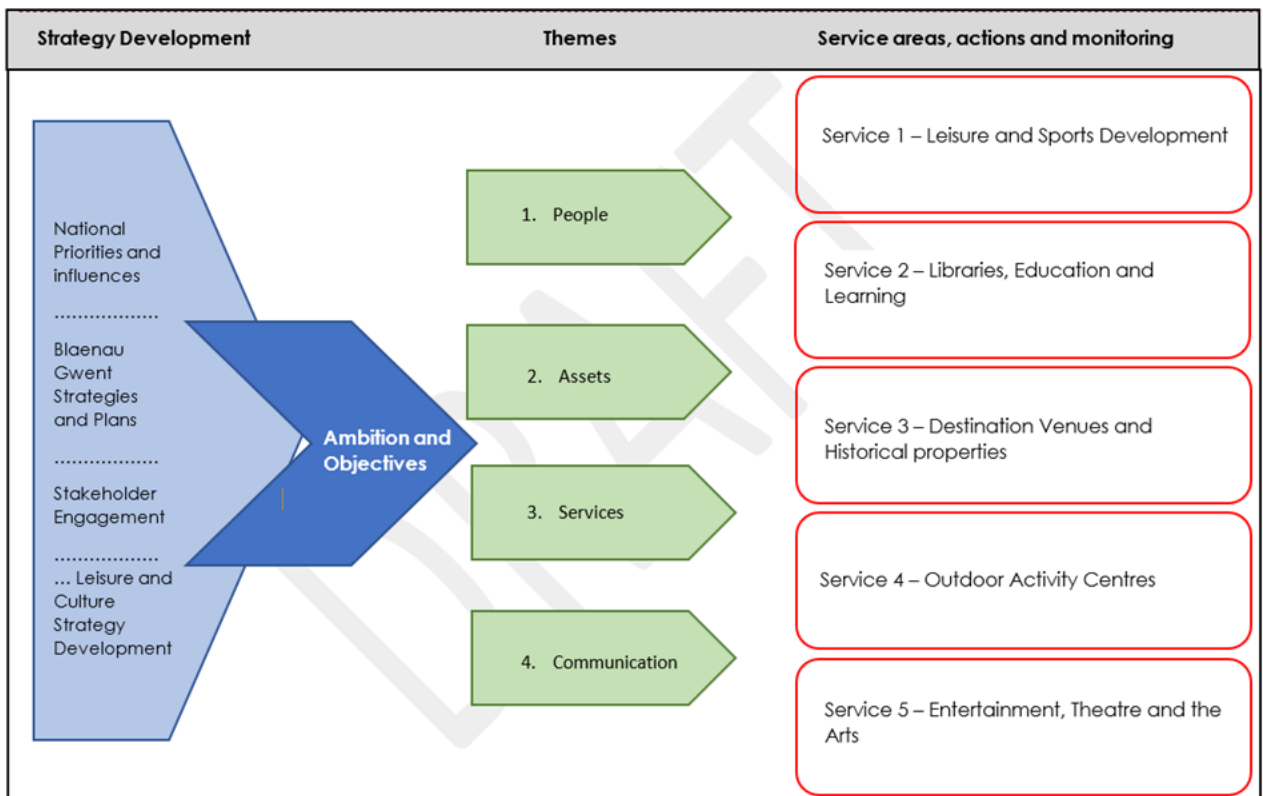
Delivering wider social, education and economic objectives

The importance of leisure in meeting the wider objectives of the council should not be underestimated. A vibrant leisure offer is important to meet wider health, social, wellbeing, economic and educational priorities. This is reflected in the recent broadening of the scope and remit of the Leisure, Libraries and Culture Service to ensure that planning and delivery contributes to wider council targets. The re-shaped service should include outreach work programmes to target disengaged members of the community. This may include the use of leisure to support young people's personal and social development, empowerment and access to information and resources that will enable them to move from dependants to independent, as well as supporting and reintegrating socially isolated older members of the community.

4. STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW

This strategy has been developed in the context of national priorities and influences set against our local strategies and plans.

We have undertaken stakeholder engagement to help inform our priorities over the period of this strategy focussing on four key themes of 'People', 'Assets', 'Services' and 'Communication' which are applied to each of our five service areas to identify innovative service developments and investments to meet the expectations of our residents over the next ten years.



Services Included

Leisure and Sports Development

Residents of Abertillery, Ebbw Vale and Tredegar have direct access to affordable and accessible sports facilities and services. These include a wide range of facilities, programmes and services provided by a local charitable community Trust called Aneurin Leisure Trust.

The Trust operates three leisure centres, all are located within school sites.

Ebbw Vale Leisure Centre was built in 2013 and is considered the flagship site for the County Borough, while the two school sites provide community-based activities, which include swimming alongside a range of indoor and outdoor sports facilities delivered via artificial grass pitches, fitness suites, sports halls and studios.

Tredegar Sports Centre is a welcoming and accessible community sports facility that focusses on group bookings, clubs and societies. The centre has many sports activities and classes run by qualified instructors. Tredegar Sports Centre is the oldest of the sites and will require significant investment if it is to remain open as it is nearing the end of its useful life an assessment will need to be undertaken. Servicing a population catchment of just 19,000 it may not be possible to maintain the facility in its current form over the term of this strategy.

Abertillery Sports Centre has a more modern mix of facilities than Tredegar also in a local community setting and acts as the main hub for sport in the area. The centre has many sports and activities and includes an impressive outdoor full size 3G pitch. Whilst the main building is in reasonable condition it does require some reinvestment within the period of this strategy to ensure that it remains a popular destination for local people.

Schools and colleges remain a priority for engagement with younger residents influencing long-term attitudes towards activity, behaviour and lifestyle patterns. Undoubtedly there is a need for a modern infrastructure to engage and inspire activity levels amongst younger residents.

The 21st Century Schools Programme is critical to achieving this aim and may provide a funding solution to the requirements of the school based provision on secondary school sites.

The Sports Development Service delivers a range of community programmes for target groups, which include disability sport programmes, exercise referral schemes (delivered through NERS), the Welsh Government Funded Free Swimming Initiative for over 60s and under 16s children, Dragon Sport targeting primary school children, Fit and Fed projects tackling deprivation impact during the school holidays alongside learning and employment opportunities through the Coaches for the Future Scheme.

Libraries, education and learning

The six libraries within Blaenau Gwent offer local communities a range of books across a selection of interest areas, including e-books and e-magazines, alongside educational, training and employment support services and workshops for people of all ages and abilities.

The libraries offer free wi-fi and computer access, with most libraries offering attractive IT rooms with ten or more computers and they provide a range of educational sessions to help customers get to grips with all the latest technologies.

While some of the libraries have had to be located into smaller venues in the last few years to facilitate reduced demands and decreasing service budgets, they continue to be supported by loyal community members and volunteers who expect these facilities to remain open to the local catchment area.

Other community groups make use of these community facilities to include Macmillan Cancer Support and the Adult and Community Learning (ACL) service, while local community groups house a number of local museum and historical pieces of local relevance in adjoining suites under a separate tenancy agreement.

What is clear is that during the period of this strategy there will be a continued need to work even more closely with local partners including identifying opportunities for service integration and co-location, building on the services current success.

Destination venues and historical properties

Bedwellty House and its surrounding 26-acre Parc in Tredegar dates back to 1822 when Samuel Homfray, Richard Fothergill and Matthew Monkhouse owned the Tredegar Iron Company and built this (now) historical attraction.

Following the decline of the iron industry both the Parc and House were gifted to the



Bedwellty Park Fountain at the side of Bedwellty House, 1951.



Bedwellty House in 1998.

Council to be utilised as a public Parc.

The history of Bedwellty House is linked to the early political career of Aneurin Bevan who was elected to Tredegar Urban District Council in 1922, spending much of his time in the Council Chamber within Bedwellty House, and later became the parliamentary candidate for Ebbw Vale in 1929.

When the Labour Party won the 1945 General Election Bevan was appointed as Secretary of State for Health. He is recorded as having said of the NHS, "All I am doing is extending to the entire population of Britain the benefits we had in Tredegar for a generation or more. We are going to 'Tredegar-ise' you."

The house and Parc are now open to the public and provide events spaces for weddings, conference, meetings and events as well as maintaining the historical base for the Tredegar Town Council Chambers and Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Registrar's department.

Bedwellty House presents a development opportunity and is considered one of the Councils best assets. The House, as well as the venue for local Town Council meetings is widely used by the local community including as a hub for dementia sufferers as well as a stroke society and healthy walks. More recently the venue is being used more for special events and weddings and has become the administrative headquarters for the Leisure Trust.

Outdoor activity centres and sports grounds

Parc Bryn Bach is set in 340 acres of natural idyllic grass and woodland with a stunning 36-acre lake at its heart. It is an ideal setting for a range of adventure activities for visitors and has developed a diverse activity experience and outdoor education learning programme delivered from the main visitor centre overlooking the lake.

The Parc exemplifies the rich and attractive wealth of outdoor recreational space available in and around the County Borough, which includes opportunities for cycling, camping, canoeing, walking, hiking, fishing and rock climbing to name a few.

There are many physical and social rewards attributable to outdoor activities, some goal-directed activities require physical and mental agility which provides by return a wealth of positive emotional and spiritually rewards including increased self-esteem and improved mental health.

Outdoor activities provide alternative forms of activity to formal leisure and sport activities housed within leisure centres, and are frequently used as a medium for education and team building.

Parc Bryn Bach is home to the Blaenau Gwent Scouts Group, the Model Boat Club and offers opportunities for further physical and service developments.

The Parc Bryn Bach has tremendous development potential which will be a key objective of the new Leisure and Culture strategy.

[Sports Ground information to be included]

Entertainment Theatre and the Arts

Originally the 'Metropole Theatre and Dance Hall', the 'Met' dates back to 1892 where it serviced a much larger community of 40,000 when coal mining was the core industry at that time. The venue was famous locally and drew in international names such as Charlie Chaplin. Over the years the mining industry disappeared, and the town's prosperity declined, so the venue was used as an indoor market and later a cinema. In the late 1990's the Met fell into disrepair and the building had to close due to structural problems.

The Met Theatre reopened in 2007 following a major refurbishment, funded by the Welsh Assembly Government. The 216 seat Victorian theatre exudes character with restored Victorian grandeur, original timber roof structures imported from Canada, iron columns and decorative panels, the Met delivers a range of diverse programmes that include dramas, musical theatre shows, rock and pop music events and children's theatrical performances.

The Met is now a leading arts and cultural hub for shows and performances with the Arts Development Service operating from the venue, it has become a place for meetings and conferences and home to the 'Head for Arts' programme which the Arts Council consider to be an exemplar model for successful collaborative community Arts programming across the Heads of the Valley's area.

The building's excellent facilities and place within the Community were recognised by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors who awarded the 'Building Which Most Benefits A Community' all-Wales award in 2008.

All staff at the Met are Dementia Friendly Trained and the venue is completely accessible to every member of the community.

The Arts Development Service is almost entirely grant funded to deliver community-based arts and wellbeing activities.

In these continuing times of austerity, it is beholden on the Arts Development and Theatre teams to ensure all commercial generating activities are explored, and that the service deficit is minimised over the course of the next 10 years. This will not be an easy objective given the size and scale of the theatre operation in Blaenau Gwent. However inward investment, commercial support in the form of corporate sponsorship and service developments to include increased catering provision could enhance the customer experience and improve bottom line performance, enhancing and not detracting from the already exceptional work being carried out by the local team.



The Beaufort Theatre in Ebbw Vale and Market Hall Cinema have been transferred to local Community Groups. These venues still play a significant role for their respective communities and are included in the strategy to ensure that the future of these venues can be secured as a community based cultural service and also to encourage ongoing partnership working between individual community cultural providers.

The Beaufort theatre offers a 338-seater auditorium and Ballroom. The theatre is also host to nine voluntary arts organisations who present annual productions there.



5. LEISURE AND CULTURE MAP



6. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

We consulted and engaged with a number of key local stakeholders and partner organisations in developing this strategy, including:

- Aneurin Leisure Trust;
- Tai Calon Social Housing;
- MALD (Museums, Archives & Libraries Division);
- CADW Historic Environment Service;
- The Local Health Board; and
- Local schools.

This section summarises the key messages from these partners. There is further detail about the stakeholder engagement in Appendix 1.

Key messages from some of our partners:

- A number of partners said that they would like to work more closely with the council, to have more formal partnership arrangements in place, including meeting and reporting mechanisms.
- Partners highlighted the potential for future joint working and collaboration on projects as part of a multi-agency approach to delivering services in the future.
- The importance of volunteering was mentioned by a number of partners; with some organisations able to offer training and support for staff and volunteers and some suggesting the idea of reward programme to encourage volunteers.
- Partners would be keen to integrate health and community facilities into new developments in the future to achieve good health and well-being outcomes. (housing, arts)
- Partners mentioned the value of invest to save projects so that capital ideas could be progressed and implemented. Strong internal processes will be needed to support contract management.
- Marketing, social media presence and communications systems such as online bookings and databases were mentioned by a number of partners, and some are keen to work together to improve marketing.
- The possibility of sharing of some other central resources such as HR and IT were also mentioned by some partners.

- Partners are keen to mentor young people into employment and training.
- The housing company is concerned with the fitness and health of young people.
- Partners wish to keep their staff fit and healthy and the housing company is concerned with the health and well-being of tenants and keeping people safe in their homes for longer is a priority
- The cost of taking part in leisure is an issue for the client groups of some partners
- There is a need for more safe outdoor play areas - particularly in relation to social housing - and the housing company would be keen to create more community gardens and play areas on the outdoor spaces on their existing developments (funding would be needed).
- There is a need to review dual use arrangements with schools, which aren't felt to work very well, and more dialogue with the headteachers forum is important.
- There is a need to rationalise or reconfigure the library service to make it more sustainable. A strong volunteer base will be needed, and friends' groups should be explored.
- Some partners would like to explore partnering with other cultural trusts in order to deliver joint programming and gain economies of scale and strategic alliances.
- Partners were keen that asset maintenance should be better planned in the future.
- Partners were keen to work together to plan and aspire for the future, and not let past performance be an inhibitor to future achievements.

We are very grateful to all our partner organisations who contributed to the development of the strategy and look forward to working together to deliver the strategy over the next ten years.

7. OUR AMBITION

Our Ambition

Our ambition for the Leisure and Culture Strategy is to set out the council and its partners' aspirations, direction and priorities for leisure and culture over the next ten years, with a focus on deliverable priorities over the next five-year period.

It is intended to develop the leisure and culture offer already available to residents and visitors across the borough, to increase the number of people engaged in the range of services and involved in the delivery of leisure and culture opportunities, and to increase the profile and importance of leisure and culture participation for all members of the community.

'By 2024 Blaenau Gwent aims to have established a strong reputation for collaborative working across a range of quality service delivery models, that provide accessible leisure opportunities attracting high levels of participation to improve the happiness, mental health and physical wellbeing of residents and visitors alike'

Our Priorities



1.1. Increasing participation for all



1.2. Improving physical and mental health and well-being



1.3. Developing effective collaboration with partners



1.4. Maintaining and building upon the existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities

1. Increasing participation for all

By increasing participation rates in our leisure and culture services for all demographic groups, encouraging known groups with lower than average rates of participation, we will support growth and efficiency in an inclusive and sustainable manner, whilst at the same time reducing inequality and disadvantage.

We recognise that this will require some inward investment into the asset infrastructure, to provide an opportunity for increased usage and better maintenance of assets, to improve the financial performance that will support and offset those statutory services that inevitably are cost based only and less able to contribute to income targets.

2. Improving physical and mental health and well-being

We know from national research how important physical and mental health is ensure we live full and active lives. An active body and mind can often add years to people's lives.

By supporting initiatives from existing and future partners we can collectively help to increase activity levels across Blaenau Gwent and help in the prevention and management of many conditions and diseases including coronary heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and the growing issue of childhood obesity.

People can engage with leisure and culture in many different ways at every stage of their lives; and each encounter can have a positive impact upon health and wellbeing.

3. Developing effective collaboration with partners

Over the next five years we will continue to focus on more effective ways to deliver our services working, not just with the existing service providers, but with new people, organisations and local investors who can add benefit to the development of the local services and facilities for the enjoyment of all residents of Blaenau Gwent, along with visitors attracted the area.

Regular interaction between partners is essential to help ensure success however the Council does wish to retain influence over council led services, to ensure a consistency of approach, quality assurance and to facilitate the transparency of delivery that is fundamental to the success of the strategy.

We recognise the need to support and help to develop a network of volunteers and staff involved in delivering culture and leisure in Blaenau Gwent, and to help all individuals develop their talent, skills and confidence.

4. Maintaining and building upon the existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities

We live in a very challenging financial climate and working together is vital in maintaining existing provision in the most efficient manner. It is imperative therefore that the leisure and culture services become even more customer and business focussed over the period of this strategy to ensure that the commercial performance can be sustained long term and ultimately without any (or with significantly reduced) service subsidy from the Council.

There is much success to build upon following investment in leisure and culture in the past and we are committed to exploring further investment opportunities in our services in the future.

Delivery Themes

To deliver this vision we aspire to identify what we want, how we will get there and who will be involved. This has been captured within four overlapping themes across each service area as follows:



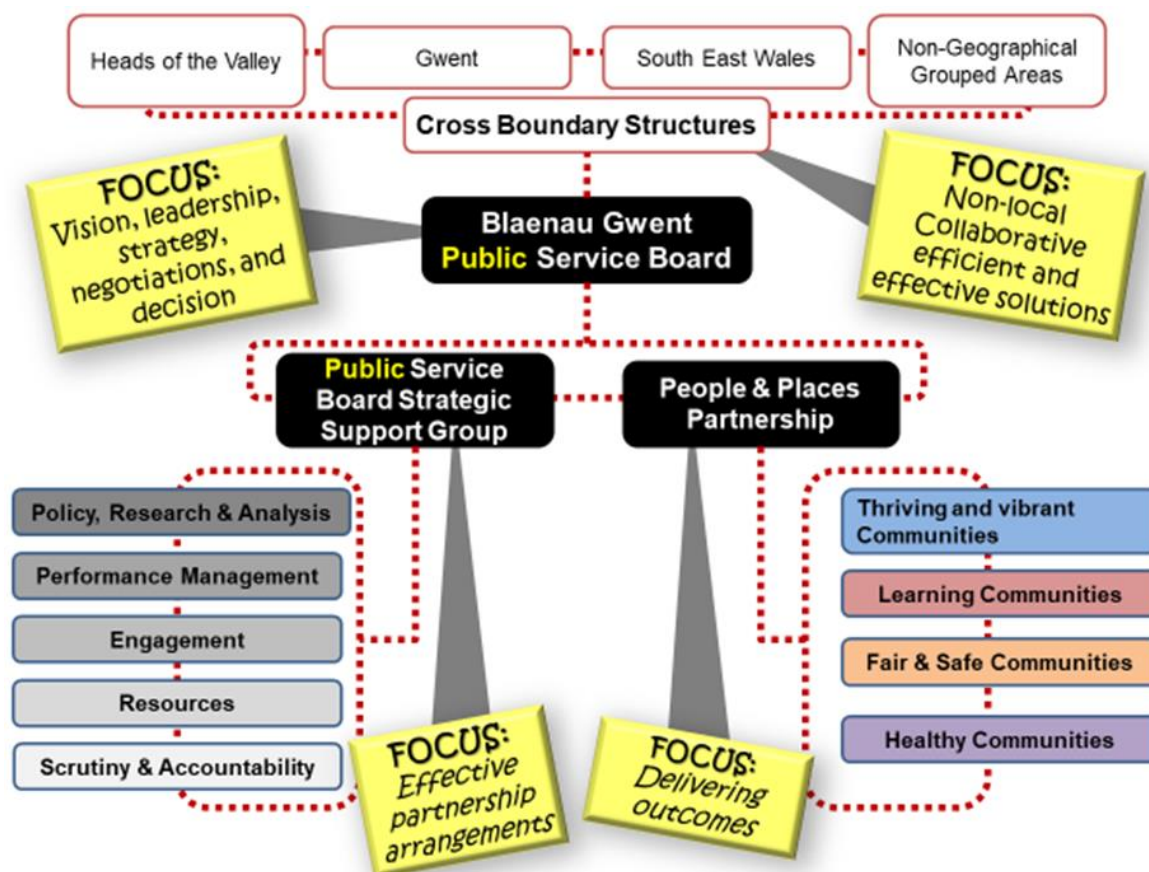
Key Objectives

Whilst the strategy covers a ten year period from 2019 to 2029, over the first five years we plan to:

- Develop a financial sustainable plan for Leisure Services, in line with the requirements of the Council's medium-term financial strategy (MTFS);
- Explore invest to save initiatives to reduce revenue implications across our leisure and culture services;
- Review delivery options for Leisure and Culture Services;
- Initiate a fundamental review to modernise community library and learning provision;
- Undertake a review of future options for Tredegar Sports Centre;
- Secure investment in sports and cultural facilities via the 21st Century Schools Programme;
- Transfer responsibilities for sports grounds to local sports clubs by March 2019;

8. PARTNERSHIPS

The Council will focus during the period of this strategy on working with existing partners and facilitating effective new partnerships to provide the greatest impact increasing participation for all continuing to improve outcomes through our strategic partnerships framework shown below.



The Council current work with a range of partners:

- Natural Resources Wales were recommended as a partner to engage with by Future Generations Commission given the outdoor space available for recreation and leisure in Blaenau Gwent.
- GP surgeries for NERS referral programme - There are two Neighbourhood Care Networks (NCNs) in Blaenau Gwent. There are five practices which operate in the Blaenau Gwent East Cluster area
- Aneurin Trust local health board
- Valley Task Force (outdoor recreation, links to skills and prosperity)

- Neighbouring local authorities for partnerships in public bodies such as the Active Gwent Board that includes Caerphilly, Newport, Blaenau Gwent, Monmouthshire and Torfaen.
- Aneurin Leisure Trust
- The Future Generations commission local liaison office
- Arts Council Wales
- Wales Arts for Health Network
- The Welsh NHS Federation

In addition to this our delivery partner Aneurin Leisure currently work with a range of sport, culture, arts, and health organisations including:

- Chief Culture and Leisure Officers Wales Group – this focusses on all aspects of policy and strategic issues across leisure and culture.
- Gwent Chief Leisure Officer Group for Culture and Leisure – a collaboration with 5 Gwent LAs working very closely together to improve sports participation)
- Bookstart Cymru Strategic Board
- SCL (Society of Chief Librarians)
- Sporta South West and Wales Group
- Sporta UK HR Group

Anerin Leisure are also working with the Welsh Government Future Generations Commissioners Office on a potential collaboration across Arts.

Regional

- Heads of the Valleys Taskforce
- Coleg Gwent Franchise Group
- Head 4 Arts Development
- Integrated Autism Service Gwent
- Blaenau Gwent
- Blaenau Gwent Public Service Board Strategic Steering Group
- Blaenau Gwent Integrated Partnership Board (Health related)
- Blaenau Gwent Poverty Implementation Group
- Neighbourhood Cluster networks of general Practitioners * 2 in Blaenau Gwent

- DISP (Digital Inclusion Strategic Group)
- EYDCPP (Early Years Blaenau Gwent)
- Age Cymru/Carers Group

Memberships:

- Sporta South West and Wales
- Arts & Business Cymru
- IoD Wales
- South Wales Chamber of Commerce

9. MANAGING PERFORMANCE AND RISK

It is important that people can see what progress the Council is making against the priorities outlined in this Strategy and hold us properly to account.

We recognise that to maintain and improve opportunities for local residents, it is important to monitor our performance and manage the overall delivery of the strategy key actions.

To monitor performance, a set of specific indicators will be developed. The indicators and targets will need to be agreed with key partners and set in accordance with some of the additional research planned (mapping and auditing), ensuring targets take account of baseline (current position) and ensuring they can be realistically achieved.

The monitoring of the strategy will take place using the council's corporate performance management framework. Once developed, the indicators and actions will be included as part of the delivery plan for leisure and culture.

The overall monitoring of the strategy delivery, and agreed indicators will take account of:

INPUTS - resources being invested in the service, activities, and the services being provided with this resource;

OUTPUTS - including numbers of users, and outcomes of what is being achieved.

To align with the council's corporate performance management framework the strategy will be monitored quarterly, reporting as appropriate.

Monitoring and review is very much an ongoing process to inform decisions and shape changes to delivery, as opposed to a reflection at the end of delivery.

Regular reporting will include a report on progress overall, with a designation of 'red', 'amber' or 'green' status, and a review of reasons for divergence from agreed targets.

The monitoring and reviewing process will involve collecting and collating data from the following areas:

- Strategy review meetings;
- Residents opinions from corporate consultation exercises and leisure related surveys;
- Financial and attendance management data relating to formal facilities and programmes;
- National data (such as the Sport Wales Active Wales Survey);
- Consultation with delivery staff;

- Relevant evidence and data from key partners; and
- Monitoring returns submitted to external funders

An annual strategy review report will be produced to outline overall progress and key changes to agreed actions.

Also, it is vital that those employed within these services understand how their contribution to achieving our shared priorities is valued and the positive impact they can have on people's lives through the effective and efficient delivery of services.

It is essential that during the next ten years service providers demonstrate a range of good practice outcomes to future generations set alongside the strategy objectives. We need to be pushing the boundaries of the possible each year and enhancing the collaborations that take place locally to enhance lives and support community cohesion and wellbeing.

Moving forwards we will also introduce measurements demonstrating the impact of leisure and culture on the socio-economic lifestyles of the local community.

Risk

There are some significant risks associated with delivery of the leisure and culture strategy which will be regularly updated and reviewed:

- Impact on culture – cuts are affecting non-statutory services such as culture and leisure facilities the most, creating a barrier to cultural participation - with children in deprived communities missing out the most. At a time when the creative industries sector is rapidly expanding this could have a detrimental impact on the future growth of the sector and damage potential employment opportunities for young people in these industries⁶
- Competition from other local leisure and culture destinations;
- Consequences of the economic challenge facing future generations;
- Impact on income - poverty in Wales is higher than UK average, and rates have stayed the same for the past 12 years;
- Impact on affordability of products and services - 23% of households in Wales, about 291,000 households, live in fuel poverty;
- Impact on health - people who experience poverty or who live in deprived areas have fewer years of life free from illness or disability and are likely to die sooner. According to Public Health Wales obesity is more prevalent in areas where people experience poverty, and more adults die as a result of smoking and alcohol misuse in these areas compared to the least deprived areas. Unemployment, especially long-term unemployment, is also a contributing factor towards mental health conditions in adults (24%), smoking (43%), physical inactivity (60%). Even more worryingly it increases mortality rate by 20-25% in the 10 years following the loss of a job

⁶ Future Generations Report

- Impact on children – 29% of children live in poverty. Children in low-income households have poorer mental and physical health and achieve worse school results than those in better-off families, increasing the risk of staying in poverty across generations. They are also at greater risk of multiple Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) which can lead to greater likelihood of health-harming behaviours during their lives, and affecting the life chances of the next generation;
- Growing skills gap – there is likely to be an increase in the skills gap as professional and managerial jobs grow and semi and unskilled jobs reduce, leading to intense competition for jobs. For children and young people growing up in poverty they will be most affected as they are at risk of achieving poor educational results, have lower skills and aspirations, and are also more likely to be low paid, unemployed and welfare dependent in adulthood;
- Cost of providing services – Wales' high levels of poverty and social need mean we are spending £3.6 billion every year to provide services that deal with the social consequences through the health, education, social care and criminal justice systems. This means £1 in every £5 of spending on public services is poverty-related and impacts on equalities. Children, lone parent families, women, disabled people, people from non-white ethnicities, asylum seekers and refugees are all at a greater risk of poverty than the rest of the population. Therefore, a failure to address the drivers of poverty will continue to have an un-equalising effect on Welsh society;

10. CONSULTATION

In accordance with the Future Generations Act, following the completion of the draft strategy a wider consultation process will take place for feedback and final collaboration on the completion of the leisure and culture strategy. This consultation process will include a number of strategic partners alongside local community users and groups that are involved in achieving the well-being goals and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the strategy. Once this consultation is completed the final strategy will be put forward for approval by the Council Executive and Scrutiny Committees.

We welcome any feedback you might have about the Leisure and Culture Strategy 2019 - 2029. If there is any information you think could be considered for, or if you require this document in a different format e.g. large print, Braille, audio version, etc please contact us using the information below.

References

In Final Strategy

Appendix 1 – Draft Delivery Plan

Delivery Plan Overview

The Council already adopts a mixed model of delivery – directly delivering some services while for others Alternative Delivery Models have been established. For example, traditional Leisure, Culture and Learning Services are now delivered across Blaenau Gwent by a Charitable Trust limited by guarantee. The amount of services the Council directly delivers may decrease further depending on the future financial position. In time, the Council may act as a commissioner of services ensuring that they are responsive to local needs, centred around the person and community based. It will also look to become a more commercial organisation which generates income and delivers cost reductions. This in turn will help to make local services more sustainable and raise money to re-invest in our priorities⁷.

In some instances, it might be appropriate for the Council to move into more of an enabling role supporting community groups and social enterprises to gain the skills and competencies to be able to retain and deliver services locally themselves (i.e. Community Asset Transfers). The council will also look to deliver services in collaboration with other councils in the future. There will also be a role for the Council in developing a renewed sense of place in the area and building pride in the borough, which could involve influencing and supporting partner organisations to work to common goals to meet the needs and aspirations of the community. The Council's role over time may be less about doing things to and for residents and communities and more about creating the capacity, interest, expertise and enthusiasm for individuals and communities to do things for themselves⁸.

⁷ Services in the future extract from Corporate Plan 2018-2023

⁸ Services in the future extract from Corporate Plan 2018-2023

Delivery Plan – Service Wide

Theme	Priority	Objectives	Outcomes
People	Developing effective collaboration with partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formalise existing relationships with key partners and identify future partners ensuring that the leisure and culture agenda is represented. 	
	Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the volunteer programme across the services creating incentives and a rewards programme to support volunteer commitments in support of the future sustainability of services. 	
	Developing effective collaboration with partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To facilitate appropriate governance arrangements to support the implementation of the strategy we will focus on identification and support of key community advocates such as community group leaders, local clubs and associations. 	
	Increasing participation for all	<p>Grow a skilled and passionate workforce by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing an effective apprenticeship programme that works across all service areas and provides skilled work 	

		<p>for school leavers and those in NEET.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a skills development programme to further enhance employee skills in customer service standards, health and safety, tourism and marketing, so that every member of staff is able to engage with and cross promote services. • To achieve the Gold standard “Insport” gradings for the Councils inclusive work. Blaenau Gwent are currently averaging a Bronze Standard. 	
Assets	Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.	<p>Local People Managing Local Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will work with communities where there is interest for communities to take greater control of leisure and culture assets and encourage improvement of facilities under their ownership/management. 	Protecting important local assets and services. ‘Local people managing local services’.
	Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate opportunities for co-location and service integration within the leisure and culture service. 	Improved efficiency of delivering community services.
	Increasing participation for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide inward investment into maintaining and enhancing existing and new leisure facilities by establishing an asset invest to save protocol with our partners. 	Improved efficiency of delivering community services to support further targeted intervention where higher levels of subsidy are required.

	Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify capital investment and operational efficiency opportunities to improve the financial performance of the leisure and cultural facilities. • Establish an annual planned preventative maintenance programme seeking to reduce our carbon footprint. • Continue to invest in inclusivity developments to ensure access to services is available to all. • Identify co-location and service integration opportunities through collaboration with local service delivery partners. 	
	Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a carbon reduction programme across the assets and share best practise with partner organisations. 	Reduced cost of running the service.
Services	Improving physical and mental health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessing harder to reach communities and target groups BME/Women/Teenage girls through the relationship with the Social Services Department based at Parc Bryn Back, delivering cultural and leisure programmes with the local social housing group. 	
	Improving physical and mental health and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will promote active travel with strong linkages with the local transport to provide more active and sustainable means. 	

	Increasing participation for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will make the most out of digital opportunities to improve access to services. 	
	Increasing participation for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will work to remove the barriers to accessing facilities and activities through targeted pricing and free taster sessions. 	
Communications	Increasing participation for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will facilitate improved co-ordination, signposting and linkages between our partners ensuring the wealth of information currently available is provided efficiently and via multiple sources including social media channels, celebrating and raising awareness of our collective successes. 	
	Increasing participation for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will ensure that marketing and communications are embedded as a central element to the delivery of our priorities aligning to national and local leisure and cultural events and campaigns to maximise their impact across Blaenau Gwent. 	
	Increasing participation for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will capture and disseminate opportunity data (the what, when, where of physical activity sessions) to ensure lack of information is not a barrier to participation. 	

Delivery Plan – Leisure and Sports Development

Themes	Priority	Objectives	Outcomes
People	Increasing participation for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing Physical Literacy from an early age in nurseries, schools, community centres and leisure centres. • Affordable children's programmes and activities. • Delivery of Hooked on Sport Programmes and school sport programmes. • Dragon Sport participation • One More programmes delivered through secondary schools • Sports festival development • Improve the hooked on sports, school sports survey results year on year. 	<p>Measurement of success against 'Sport Wales' national performance framework outcomes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children doing three occasions of sport in a week (extracurricular and within the wider community setting) 2. Increase in Club membership. 3. 16-24 adult participation (three occasions per week) 4. School key stage 3 attainment; 5. Number of Adults volunteering in Wales.
Assets	<p>Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.</p> <p>Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review, with our key partners, future options for Tredegar Sports Centre. • Review the school use agreements with our partners to ensure they are still fit for purpose. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved efficiency in delivery of services. • Improved health and wellbeing for the community.

Services	Increasing participation for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide informal places for activity including continued development of street games and the young ambassador programme. • Provide affordable children's programmes and activities. • Deliver 'Hooked on Sport' Programmes and school sport programmes. • Deliver 'Dragon Sport' and 'One More' programmes in secondary schools. • Sports festival development • Further develop health referral services. • Further develop health referral services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Communications	Increasing participation for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparency of performance information 	
	Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced and targeted marketing for each leisure centre • On-line joining functionality for memberships • Online booking functionality for classes and courses 	
	Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased social media engagement with local community members creating referrals and increased participation. 	

Delivery Plan – Libraries, Education and Learning Development

Themes	Priority	Objectives	Outcomes
People	Increasing participation for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce a volunteer led project reading to socially isolated or vulnerable people in the community on a regular basis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved health and wellbeing targeting vulnerable people.
Assets	Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review co-location and service integration opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Services	Increasing participation for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to deliver the positive programmes to tackle social exclusion, inactivity through the Active Gwent Board and aim to widen the impact across the County Borough. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Communications	Increasing participation for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on becoming a 'Go to' provider of digital support in the community' through ongoing investment in modern equipment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase use and access to the service.
	Increasing participation for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a coordinated approach to marketing by working with our partners and focussing on improvement in joint initiatives and digital 	

		communication such as social media.	
--	--	-------------------------------------	--

Delivery Plan – Destination Venues and Historical Properties

Themes	Priority	Objectives	Outcomes
People	Increasing participation for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the volunteer programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Assets	Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review internal and external commercial options for investment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved sustainability.
Services	Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the venue for more weddings and special events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved sustainability.
Communications	Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a more extensive events programme at the venue using the historical appeal and grounds to develop a rich cultural programme of activities for the community including concerts and picnics in the Parc, events and historical readings and plays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

Delivery Plan – Outdoor Activity Centres and Sports Grounds

Themes	Overarching Aim	Objective	Outcomes
Assets	Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver CAT transfer of sports grounds in line with current Council policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Assets	Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enhance the natural appeal of Bryn Bach Parc (and others) protecting and developing the natural resources and utilising these as active recreation opportunities to get more people active 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
	Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To review commercial opportunities at Parc Bryn Bach as a 'leisure destination' attraction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Services	Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Services - continue to support the Centre of Excellence for Mental Health at Parc Bryn Bach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Communications	Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing the promotion of Bryn Bach Pak to attract new visitors to the area as a destination venue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
	Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the website and technology platform to enable online booking of activities in advance of arrival – to secure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

		engagement from customers when sought	
--	--	---------------------------------------	--

Delivery Plan – Live Entertainment, Theatre and Arts Development

Themes	Priority	Objectives	Outcomes
People	Increasing participation for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a co-ordinated approach to volunteering, ensuring it is more representative of the community including more students and those who are recently retired helping their transition into the third age. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An appropriately skilled volunteer workforce complimenting existing paid staff is in place to support delivery of the strategy.
Assets	Increasing participation for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to invest and develop facilities inclusively for all. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
	Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm, following review, the future governance and management arrangements for the Metropole Theatre and Arts Centre. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Services	Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Head for Arts' Programme development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Communications	Maintaining and building upon existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce a ' Metropole User Group' and utilise the wider Leisure Trust customer database to promote events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

This page is intentionally left blank

ANEURIN LEISURE TRUST – REVIEW OF SLAs 2019/2020

Service Level Agreements are in place between the Council and the Trust for the areas listed below. All are reviewed on an annual basis.

1. Accountancy (Including VAT Advice and Support – 7 days, Leasing / General Ledger Support – 2 Days, Grant Administration – 3 days)
2. Creditors
3. Legal Services
4. Procurement
5. Procurement
6. E-Purchasing
7. Information Governance
8. Print Room
9. Courier
10. Health & Safety
11. Payroll
12. Technical Services
13. ICT

This page is intentionally left blank

BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BROUGH COUNCIL AND ANUERIN LEISURE
TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP GROUP

1. BACKGROUND

By 2025 Blaenau Gwent aims to have established a strong reputation for collaborative working across a range of quality service delivery models that provide accessible leisure opportunities attracting high levels of participation to improve the happiness, mental health and physical well-being of residents and visitors alike.

The terms of reference for the Strategic Partnership Group have been developed from the Council's current Service Specification for Leisure and Sport, Outdoor Activity Centre's, Destination Venues, Libraries and Adult Community Learning.

The Operator shall commit to the philosophy and recognise the importance of working collaboratively with the Council in delivering the Services through the development of the governance structure which is focused around a commissioning approach with regular meetings between the Council and the Operator.

Overarching Service Priorities

All service priorities included within the Council's Leisure and Culture Strategy are set out below.

- a) Increasing participation for all;
- b) Improving physical and mental health and wellbeing;
- c) Developing effective collaboration with partners; and
- d) Maintaining and building upon the existing leisure and culture offer maximising opportunities

The Council's Delivery Themes

All service delivery should support the delivery of the Council's Leisure and Culture Strategy set out below.

1. **PEOPLE** – Providing service developments and innovation needed to meet the expectations of local people.
2. **ASSETS** – Managing assets and providing investment opportunities.
3. **SERVICES** – Developing services including supporting the Council's long-term aspirations.
4. **COMMUNICATION** – Providing progress against the Council's priorities and key objectives.

The Council's Key Objectives

The Council's key objectives as set out in its Leisure and Cultural Strategy are included in the table below.

1. The Council's Leisure and Culture Strategy covers a 10-year period 2019-2029, over the first five years the Council require the operator to support delivery of their key objectives:
2. Develop a financial sustainable plan for Leisure Services, in line with the requirements of the Council's medium-term financial strategy (MTFS);
3. Provide invest to save initiatives to reduce revenue implications across our leisure and culture services.
4. Initiate a fundamental review to modernise community library and learning provision.
5. Undertake a review of future options for the Sports Centre; and
6. Secure investment in sports and cultural facilities via available funding opportunities including the 21st Century Schools Programme.

2. AUTHORITY AND PURPOSE

The purpose of the Strategic Partnership Group is to support delivery of the Leisure and Culture Strategy 2019-2029 of a 'Better Place to Live and Work' with a focus but not limited to the following:

- Progress against the Operator's Business Plan.
- Progress by the Operator against Council Priorities and contribution towards Strategic Outcomes.
- Operator's Financial Performance.
- Joint service improvement opportunities.
- Variations to contract and commissioning opportunities.
- Other matters of a strategic nature considered appropriate for discussion by the Group.

3. MEMBERSHIP

Chair - The group to be chaired by the local authority, established by the parties within one month of contract commencement.

In addition to the Chair, the Strategic Partnership Group will comprise of the following:

Organisation	Designation
Council	Leader
Council	Portfolio Holder
Council	Managing Director
Council	Corporate Director of Education
Council	Council's Client Function – Lead Officer
Operator	Operator Chair
Operator	Vice Chair
Operator	Executive Director (1)
Operator	Executive Director (2)

Either the Operator or Local Authority, subject to the agreement of the other party, may also invite appropriate third parties to attend part of the Strategic Partnership meetings to help it understand an issue or decision.

4. FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

The Strategic Partnership Board will normally meet bi-annually or more frequently, as the Chair deems necessary, to fulfil the obligations and duties.

5. QUORUM

A minimum number of 50% of the partnership group members are required for decision-making purposes. The quorum must include either the Leader or Portfolio Holder of the Council and Chair or Vice Chair of the operator.

6. REPORTING TO COUNCIL'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEES AND EXECUTIVE CABINET

Progress reports will be provided to Education Scrutiny Committee and Executive on an agreed basis.

The Strategic Partnership Group will have sight of the reports and be able to provide feedback.

As a minimum the Strategic Partnership Group shall report to Council on an annual basis

7. REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Strategic Partnership Group will review its terms of reference and effectiveness annually, including a review of membership and implement any changes it considers necessary.

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 19

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 23.11.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 24.11.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **9th December 2020**

Report Subject: **Outcomes 2019-2020: Foundation Phase, Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr J Collins, Executive Member for Education**

Report Submitted by: **Lynn Phillips, Corporate Director of Education
Ed Pryce, Assistant Director EAS**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
01.1..20		24.11.20			03.11.20	09.12.20		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to inform the Executive Committee of the Welsh Government: School Performance Reporting Arrangements for 2019-2020 and provide an overview of national outcomes as context and provide anonymised local data where available.
- 1.2 **Outcomes are only available for key stage 4 in line with agreements between each LA and headteachers, made prior to the collection of the data, these should not be used for school accountability purposes.**

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 In response to the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, the Welsh Government cancelled all statutory data collections that would have been due to take place in Summer 2020. This was initially announced in the Minister for Education's written statements of 18 March 2020 and 3 July 2020 and enacted in the Relaxation of School Reporting Requirements (Wales) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020. The latest update is included as Appendix 1: Welsh Government: School Performance Reporting Arrangements Important Update (10 August 2020).
- 2.2 **Foundation Phase, Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3**
 - 2.2.1 The School Performance Information (Wales) Regulations 2011 has been amended to remove the duties on governing bodies and local authorities to provide data to local authorities and Welsh Ministers, respectively, on teacher assessment outcomes and authorised or unauthorised absence for the pupils registered at schools in the 2019/20 school year.
 - 2.2.2 This means that no end of phase / key stage data was submitted, therefore no data is available for this report. Many schools will have made their own internal

assessments of learners, but these will have been undertaken 'virtually' and there will have been no moderation processes, therefore even if submitted, would not be suitable for any form of meaningful analysis.

2.3 Key Stage 4

2.3.1 Outcomes this year should not be used for school accountability purposes, in line with agreements between each LA and their head teachers made prior to the collection of the data.

2.3.2 Due to the cancellation of summer 2020 GCSE, AS and A level examination, the Welsh Government will not be reporting on school performance measures for 2019/20 or providing All Wales Core Data Sets. Following the provision of this year's centre estimated grades by schools, the school performance information regulations have been disapplied to remove the requirements for the usual flows of performance data between head teachers, governing bodies, local authorities and the Welsh Government. This means that schools and governing bodies should not include school performance measures in any published report. It will not be appropriate to make year-on-year comparisons of this information or consider it as part of trend data in inspection and accountability activities.

2.3.3 The content of this report is intended to provide a contextual view of anonymised school outcomes, rather than analyse performance at Local Authority (LA) or individual level. It cannot contain any aggregated LA data, or individual school performance data, other than anonymised school level data for key stage 4.

2.3.4 It is important that the information below is used sensitively during these unprecedented times. The information should be used within the context of a wider range of information and a range of regional processes that the local authority will use to evaluate individual school performance.

3. Options for Recommendation

3.1 This report has been discussed by Education DMT, CLT and the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee prior to presenting to the Executive Committee.

3.2 **Option 1** – The Executive Committee review the performance information and offer comments for consideration by the Education Directorate.

3.3 **Option 2** - Accept the report as provided.

4. Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan

4.1 Blaenau Gwent Wellbeing Plan

One of the objectives in the Blaenau Gwent Wellbeing Plan aims for every child to have the best start in life. Through our Education provision we seek to ensure that provision is appropriate and able to meet the needs of children and young people so that their progress and performance is as good as it ought to be.

5. Implications Against Each Option

5.1 Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)

5.1.2 There are no direct financial implications for this report. Blaenau Gwent continues to make a financial contribution to the regional Education Achievement Service (EAS) arrangements of approximately £364,000 per annum.

5.1.3 As a part of the Council's arrangements for intervention in schools in line with the South East Wales Consortium (SEWC) framework, there are occasions when additional funding is required to support schools through the use of external agencies particularly, when an adverse inspection report is received. Any funding required is allocated from within current budgets within the Education Directorate portfolio.

5.2 Risk including Mitigating Actions

5.2.1 Risk is associated with underperformance and ineffective processes to improve performance and progress in identified schools. Failure to raise standards is identified as a key risk to the Council, both in terms of reputation and pupil life chances. This is reflected in the Education Directorate and EAS risk registers.

5.2.2 Mitigating actions include the routine monitoring of quantitative and qualitative information, regular quality assurance meetings between the Council and the EAS, regular quality assurance meetings within the Education Directorate and across teams, school inspection findings and school categorisation results.

5.2.3 In the light of the current Pandemic the established management of risk processes has had to respond to the context in which we found ourselves with business as usual activities being suspended from 24th March 2020.

5.2.4 However, with the commencement of the new academic year routine business processes are being re-established but naturally these will be kept under review as Wave 2 of the Pandemic progresses as learner and staff wellbeing is of paramount importance.

5.2.5 As such, holistic support packages are devised via regular intra Council services meetings between OD, finance, health and safety, education and school governor support services.

5.2.6 Through ongoing robust self-evaluation processes school level performance data is regularly analysed and evaluated to identify emerging trends or possible underperformance.

5.2.7 The quality of provision i.e. the quality teaching and learning in classrooms is monitored and supported via the EAS. The quality of school leadership is also supported extensively by the EAS via a range of programmes and school-to-school networks albeit in a virtual world.

5.3 **Legal**

This report provides information about present statutory, end of Phase and Key Stage school performance arrangements in the light of the Pandemic and as such is completely different to previous reports presented to this Committee.

5.4 **Human Resources**

It is acknowledged that the changes to the awarding of qualifications during 2019 -20 academic year had significant implications for centre assessment staff in awarding centre assessment grades as a result of the decision for the routine examinations not to take place. It is noted that this work occurred at a time when schools were re-purposed and were providing essential child care to key worker and vulnerable children at the height of Wave 1 of the Pandemic.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

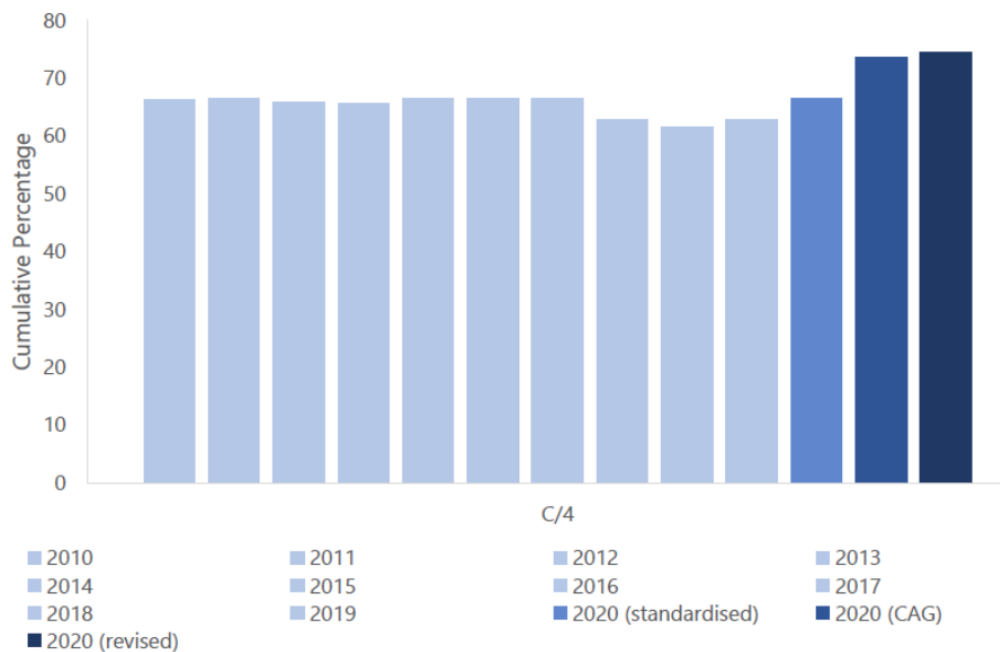
6.1.1 The WJEC data reports on overall GCSE / GCE A Level pass rates. It cannot report at individual pupil level, as schools do, as not all the data would be available. For example, some vocational qualifications, which would be included in each individual learner's 'points scores' for some measures, may not be accessible to the WJEC. For definitions of how each measure is calculated see Appendix 1 and subsection Appendix 2.

6.1.2 As a result of these variations it is not possible to directly compare like for like, year on year progress. What is clear however is that at key stage 4, there have been significant increases in the percentage of A*-C grades awarded. Despite not being able to directly compare, it is clear that within the national context this year, we would expect to see significant increases in individual school outcomes. It is not possible using outcomes alone to determine whether this represents sustainable improvement.

6.1.3 Qualifications Wales have provided an initial analysis of national outcomes Results for A Level, AS, GCSE and the Skills Challenge Certificate in Wales – Summer 2020. This has been included as Appendix 3, but a sample of changes for a selection of national indicators are included in the charts below.

6.1.4 Key Stage 4 – GCSE – Grade C and above

Figure 7.2: National GCSE summer cumulative C/4 results 2010-2020¹⁾⁽²⁾



Between 2010 and 2016 overall grades C and above remained stable at approximately 65%. Over the next 2 years this declined to approximately 61%, before increasing to approximately 75% in 2020.

6.1.5 Summary of Outcomes

Foundation Phase, Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3

As explained in the context section, no data has been submitted.

6.1.6 Key Stage 4

Outcomes on the 5 Welsh Government measures and 2 legacy measures was requested and 5A*-A was requested.

- The Capped 9 measure
- Literacy measure
- Numeracy measure
- Science measure
- Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate measure
- Percentage of learners achieved 5 A*-A GCSE

6.1.7 The reported outcomes are based on revised results, following the Welsh Government decision to award the best of 'Standardised Grade' and 'Centre Assessed Grade' for each individual learner.

6.1.8 Summary of LA Outcomes

The tables below provide an overview of performance for the schools in the LA, compared with regional lowest, median and highest for 2020 (anonymised and non-aggregated).

The first table is sorted from highest to lowest Capped 9 outcomes. Each row represents a single school.

School	Capped Point 9	Average points for best of Literature or first Language Welsh or English GCSE	Average points for best of Mathematics or Mathematics - Numeracy GCSE	Average points for best Science GCSE	Average points for Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate	L1 Threshold	5 A*-As
School 1	378	39	37	38	42	96	15
School 2	376	41	35	36	39	99	19
School 3	358	40	38	36	39	95	20
School 4	356	36	37	32	41	95	15
Region 2020							
Highest	422	46	47	46	48	100	41
Median	376	41	39	38	41	97	21
Lowest	318	35	34	30	31	87	10

6.1.9 The second table is sorted from highest to lowest Capped 9 outcomes for FSM pupils. Each row represents a single school.

School	Capped 9		Average points for best of Literature or first Language Welsh or English GCSE		Average points for best of Mathematics or Mathematics - Numeracy GCSE		Average points for best Science GCSE		Average points for Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate		L1 Threshold		5 A*-As	
	eFSM	Non	eFSM	Non	eFSM	Non	eFSM	Non	eFSM	Non	eFSM	Non	eFSM	Non
School 1	358	400	39	43	31	39	33	40	34	43	97	99	8	18
School 2	341	389	33	41	31	39	30	41	38	43	91	98	7	23
School 3	329	363	32	37	32	38	28	33	41	41	88	97	4	17
School 4	307	374	35	41	34	39	30	38	33	41	87	97	10	23
Region 2020														
Highest	395	426	44	47	43	47	42	46	44	49	100	100	48	42
Median	329	389	36	42	33	40	31	40	35	41	93	98	9	23
Lowest	272	331	28	36	26	37	23	33	27	30	50	31	0	8

6.2 Expected outcome for the public

The regional policy for monitoring, evaluation and intervention in schools through the categorisation process is derived from the National Categorisation Framework, but has been evolved through the engagement of a variety of stakeholders including schools and members of governing bodies. However, for 2020 /21 the categorisation process has been suspended and new strategies have been deployed to ensure appropriate support is in place to schools at this time and are in train.

A range of Council departments and external partners are involved in delivering programmes to support schools requiring improvement. Monitoring progress towards targets enables effective targeting of support.

6.3 Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)

The regional policy for monitoring, evaluation and intervention in schools through the categorisation process is derived from the National Categorisation Framework, but has been evolved through the engagement of a variety of stakeholders including schools and members of governing bodies. A range of Council departments and external partners are involved in delivering programmes to support schools requiring improvement. Monitoring progress towards targets enables effective targeting of support.

6.4 Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)

Analysis of aggregate school performance data is a key element in ensuring that schools are known well by the Council so that appropriate support and intervention can be directed towards areas of greatest need.

Monitoring of school performance facilitates support for schools to ensure that schools maintain high quality outcomes in the longer term. However, it is recognised that the performance this year is purely for information only.

6.5 Preventative focus

A key element of the Council's work is to monitor settings and ensure appropriate support to secure continuing high standards. Through effective monitoring and evaluation of school performance, early identification of emerging areas for improvement can be achieved with consequent early intervention to secure improvement.

The effectiveness of the Council's monitoring, evaluation and intervention programmes ensure that preventative action is taken early in order to minimise the escalation of concerns.

6.6 Collaboration / partnership working

The Council collaborates with neighbouring local authorities through the South East Wales Consortium for the provision of School Improvement services through the Education Achievement Service (EAS).

The Council also secures a range of pupil support services such as Hearing Impaired, Visually Impaired, Speech and Language, and Ethnic Minority support services through regional collaboration.

Within the Council, the school improvement and inclusion leadership teams ensure that there is a coordinated approach to supporting schools in the Education Directorate and across the Council as a whole.

6.7 **Integration (across service areas)**

Ensuring that schools deliver high quality education provision to secure high pupil outcomes relates directly to the priorities within the revised Corporate Improvement Plan so that children's and young people's learning and achievement levels are maximised, and Education Standards are raised particularly at Key Stage 4.

These overarching outcomes and objectives permeate the work of a range of Council departments and partners. Effective monitoring, support, evaluation and intervention are fundamental to the Council's wellbeing objectives

6.8 **EqIA**

As the 2020 examination arrangements were revised in the light of the Pandemic an EQIA has been completed for this report and no positive or negative impact has been identified.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

- 7.1 Monitoring of improvement pathways is an important mechanism for ensuring that Members of the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee and the Executive Committee although, it is accepted that the performance information within the report is for information only and not part of accountability arrangements.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 - 2 – Outcomes 2019-20: Foundation Phase, Key Stage 1, 2 and 3

Appendix 3 – Results for A Level, AS, GCSE and the Skills Challenge Certificate in Wales – Summer 2020

Report content for Members: Blaenau Gwent

Report Title: Outcomes 2019-2020: Foundation Phase, Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4

Introduction and Context

In response to the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, the Welsh Government cancelled all statutory data collections that would have been due to take place in Summer 2020. This was initially announced in the Minister for Education's written statements of 18 March 2020 and 3 July 2020 and enacted in the Relaxation of School Reporting Requirements (Wales) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020. The latest update is shown below. Welsh Government: School Performance Reporting Arrangements Important Update (10 August 2020).

Appendix 1: Welsh Government: School Performance Reporting Arrangements Important Update (10 August 2020)

<https://gov.wales/school-performance-reporting-arrangements-important-update-0>

As set out in Written Statements dated [18 March 2020](#) and [3 July 2020](#), the Minister for Education has announced changes to the publication of qualification awards data and performance measures due to coronavirus.

In addition, [The Relaxation of School Reporting Requirements \(Wales\) \(Coronavirus\) Regulations 2020](#) have been made to reduce burden on schools and local authorities for 2019/20.

What are the key points?

- We have suspended the calculation and publication of Key Stage 4 and legacy sixth form performance measures for the 2019 to 2020 and 2020 to 2021 academic years.
- Qualification awards data will not be used to report on attainment outcomes at a school, local authority or regional consortium level and must not be used to hold schools to account for their learners' outcomes.
- Post-16 performance measures have also been suspended for 2019/20. We will consider the best approach for 2020 to 2021, in view of the range of providers and different types of programmes that are affected in different ways. The sector will be consulted, before any firm decision is taken, in order to consider what would be useful to help their own monitoring and quality assurance processes.
- There will be a direct impact on the usual data releases provided by the Welsh Government, with some releases suspended for one or both years and/or still to be determined for 2020 to 2021. You can find a table below showing what information, with provisional timings, will be released by the Welsh Government. Where activities are marked to continue for 2020/21 reporting, this is the planning assumption at the time of publication, which could be subject to change if these are affected by further disruption to school operations.

- All schools and post-16 providers will continue to be required to undertake effective self-evaluation to support continuous improvement. Our evaluation, improvement and accountability arrangements require consideration of a broad range of information relevant to a school’s own context when undertaking self-evaluation and identifying improvement priorities. This will involve schools, with support from local authorities and regional consortia, using the learner level information they have on attainment and other outcomes to reflect on and improve their existing arrangements.
- The Relaxation of School Reporting Requirements (Wales) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020 came into force on 7 August 2020. These Regulations revoke one set of Regulations and amend a number of others, which place duties on headteachers, governing bodies and local authorities to produce pupil and school reports:

Regulations	Description of Regulations	Impact of Amending Regulations	Further details
The School Performance and Absence Targets (Wales) Regulations 2011	Require schools to set and publish targets which are agreed by local authorities.	Revoked	No longer required.
The Head Teachers’ Reports to Parents and Adult Pupils (Wales) Regulations 2011	Require headteachers to make a report available to all parents or adult pupils about the educational achievements of pupils, each school year.	Amended (to a “reasonable endeavours” basis)	Duties imposed on headteachers for reports relating to the 2019/20 school year are to be treated as discharged, if the headteacher has used reasonable endeavours to discharge the duty. The exception to “reasonable endeavours” is regulation 5(1) of the Reporting Regulations; the requirement to provide a school leaver’s report, which needs to remain an absolute duty, so that this cohort of learners are not disadvantaged this year.
The School Information (Wales) Regulations 2011	Require local authorities to publish a composite school prospectus and schools to publish their own individual prospectus, and	Amended	Provision made to exclude data on authorised and unauthorised absences in respect of pupils registered at the school in the 2019/20 school year from being published in any school prospectus.

	prescribes the school information that must be included		
The School Governors' Annual Reports (Wales) Regulations 2011	Require school governing bodies to produce an annual report, including information about school performance against published targets.	Amended	Modified the content of reports produced in relation to the 2019/20 academic year so that information may not be included in any school governors' report. The statutory duty for governing bodies to produce a report will remain. Information to be disapplied/excluded in relation to pupils registered at the school in the 2019/20 school year: *the most recent Summary of Secondary School Performance (SSSP); *the number of authorised and unauthorised absences in the school year; and *any information in relation to performance and absence targets, including improvements set by the governing body in respect of performance of learners, or for reducing the level of absence.
The School Performance Information (Wales) Regulations 2011	Provide for the reporting of teacher assessment and examination outcomes (from schools and governing bodies to local authorities and Welsh Ministers).	Amended	Removes the duties on governing bodies and local authorities to provide data to local authorities and Welsh Ministers, respectively, on teacher assessment outcomes and authorised or unauthorised absence for the pupils registered at schools in the 2019/20 school year.

Appendix 2: Definitions of the 5 Welsh Government Measures

The Capped 9 measure:

- Average of the scores for the best awards for all individual pupils in the cohort, capped at a specified volume of GCSEs or equivalent qualifications. In 2019, the interim measures version will remain capped at 9 GCSEs or equivalent.
- Three of the nine slots are for specific subjects and qualifications - one GCSE in size:

- The best grade from any of the literature or first language Welsh or English GCSEs.
- The best grade from either of the mathematics or mathematics – numeracy GCSEs.
- The best grade from a science GCSE (currently this is limited to awards in the WJEC suite of science GCSE qualifications: biology, chemistry, physics, science (double award) applied science (double award) and applied science (single award))
- For each learner, the remaining six slots will reflect the points attached to their best six qualifications other than those awards that are contributing towards the subject-specific slots. There is no limit to the range of vocational qualifications that can contribute, to these none-subject specific slots.
- The Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate qualification will count towards a non-subject-specific slot of the Capped 9 measure where it features in a pupil's best results.

The literacy measure:

- Average of the scores for all pupils in the cohort, taking the best grade from any of the literature or first language Welsh or English GCSEs awarded to a pupil.

The numeracy measure:

- Average of the scores for all pupils in the cohort, taking the best grade from either of the mathematics or mathematics – numeracy GCSEs awarded to a pupil.

The science measure:

- Average of the scores for all pupils in the cohort, taking the best grade from a science GCSE awarded to a learner (currently this is limited to awards in the WJEC suite of science GCSE qualifications available to learners: biology, chemistry, physics, science (double award) applied science (double award) and applied science (single award)).

The Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate measure:

- Performance measure calculating the average of the scores for the Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate awards for all pupils in the cohort, whether it is the Foundation (Level 1) or the National (Level 2) award.

Appendix 3: Results for A Level, AS, GCSE and the Skills Challenge Certificate in Wales – Summer 2020.

Provided as a separate .pdf document.

<https://qualificationswales.org/media/6483/gq-summer-overview-revised-4-september-eng.pdf>

This page is intentionally left blank

Results for
A level, AS, GCSE
and the Skills
Challenge Certificate
in Wales –
Summer 2020

Overview



Revised September 2020

Page 459

1. Contents

2. Introduction	3
3. Data.....	3
4. Definitions	4
5. A level.....	6
National results.....	6
Attainment gap by gender	9
Attainment gap by eligibility for free school meals (18-year-olds).....	11
Attainment gap by age	13
Attainment gap by special educational needs (SEN) provision (18-year-olds).....	15
6. AS.....	17
National results.....	17
Attainment gap by gender	19
Attainment gap by eligibility for free school meals (17-year-olds).....	21
Attainment gap by age	23
Attainment gap by special educational needs (SEN) provision (17-year-olds).....	25
7. GCSE	27
National results.....	27
Attainment gap by gender	31
Attainment gap by eligibility for free school meals (16-year-olds).....	33
Attainment gap by age	35
Attainment gap by special educational needs (SEN) provision (16-year-olds).....	37
Results by ethnic background (16-year-olds).....	39
8. Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate	43
National results.....	43
9. Key Stage 4 Skills Challenge Certificate.....	47
National results.....	47
10. Further analysis by ethnic background.....	52

2. Introduction

On 17 August Welsh Government [announced](#) that centre assessment grades would be awarded to learners for GCSE, AS, A level and Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate qualifications in summer 2020.

On 23 August we published an overview of revised provisional¹ results for A level, AS, GCSE and the Skills Challenge Certificate in Wales. These statistics were estimates based on the latest data available to us. This document has now been updated again with expanded analysis based on the latest data.

JCQ are due to publish final provisional results w/c 10 September.

Although final results this summer will be based on the centre assessment grades, it was also announced that:

- Standardised A level and AS grades already awarded to learners that were higher than centre assessment grades would stand. We have accounted for those grades in the revised results figures in this analysis and in the analysis published on 20 August.
- For A levels, any AS grade already awarded to learners would be given as the A level grade, if this was higher than either the centre assessment grade or the standardised grade for A level. In the analysis published on 20 August we were not able to account for these grades. This analysis does account for them.
- GCSE standardised grades will be awarded to learners where they exceed the centre assessment grade. This was accounted for in our analysis of 20 August and in this analysis. In this analysis, we have now included comparisons of revised results to the standardised grades that would originally have been published for GCSE on 20 August.

For all qualifications we have included comparisons based on what the results would have been if the centre assessment grades alone had been used to award grades to learners in summer 2020.

3. Data

Figures for grades in 2020 are estimated based on latest data submitted to Qualifications Wales by awarding bodies. The revised final results in this publication may be calculated using a slightly different subset of results compared to final JCQ published figures for 2020.

Attainment gaps are calculated as the cumulative percentage point difference in results between categories of learners at each grade. So, for example, gender attainment gaps are calculated as the female cumulative percentage results minus

¹ Results published in August are always provisional in that they are prior to reviews and appeals.

male cumulative percentage results. As the attainment gap statistics are calculated from estimated national results, these statistics may need revision once final national results are available. The attainment gap statistics in this report are reported on the basis of differences in grades between groups of learners.

National results from previous years and the original results published in 2020 for A level and AS are presented from published JCQ tables. For GCSE, the national results and gender attainment gap figures from previous years are from published JCQ tables.

Figures for analysis by eligibility for free school meals (FSM), special educational needs (SEN) provision and ethnic background are from the Welsh Examination Database and Pupil Level Annual School Census (WEDPLASC) data. These figures have been calculated using only centres that are common to both historical WEDPLASC data and 2020 awarding body data, so only maintained schools are included. The analyses by eligibility for free school meals, SEN provision and ethnic background have also been carried out only for the main entry cohort by age (16-year-olds for GCSE, 17-year-olds for AS and 18-year-olds for A level) and only for learners for whom there is available data to classify them. Due to limitations in the data available to us at this time for A level and AS, the attainment gaps by FSM and SEN status may be more subject to further revision. Attainment gaps by ethnic background have not been presented for A level and AS due to issues linked to small sample sizes. Analysis of this data will follow in a more detailed statistical publication focused on 2020 results and equalities impact.

4. Definitions

Results labelled as '2020 (revised)' are best estimates of final national results. These figures may be calculated using a slightly different subset of results compared to final JCQ published figures for 2020.

Results labelled as '2020 (standardised)' are the results that were calculated by the standardisation model. For A level, AS and the Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate, these are the calculated results released on 13 August. For GCSE and the Key Stage 4 Skills Challenge Certificate, these are the results that were due to be published on 23 August before the decision to base results on centre assessment grades.

Results labelled as '2020 (CAG)' are the results that would have been awarded if only centre assessment grades had been used.

For attainment gaps by SEN provision, learners with an SEN provision status of 'statemented', 'school action' or 'school action plus' are all included in the 'On SEN register' category.

Results by ethnic background are categorised into broad ethnic groups in line with Government Statistical Service advice². The “unknown or not stated” category refers only to learners for whom ethnicity data was available and where the available data lists the learner’s ethnic background as “Unknown or not stated”. Learners for whom we do not hold any data relating to ethnic background have not been included in the analysis.

² <https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/policy-store/ethnicity/#questions-wales->

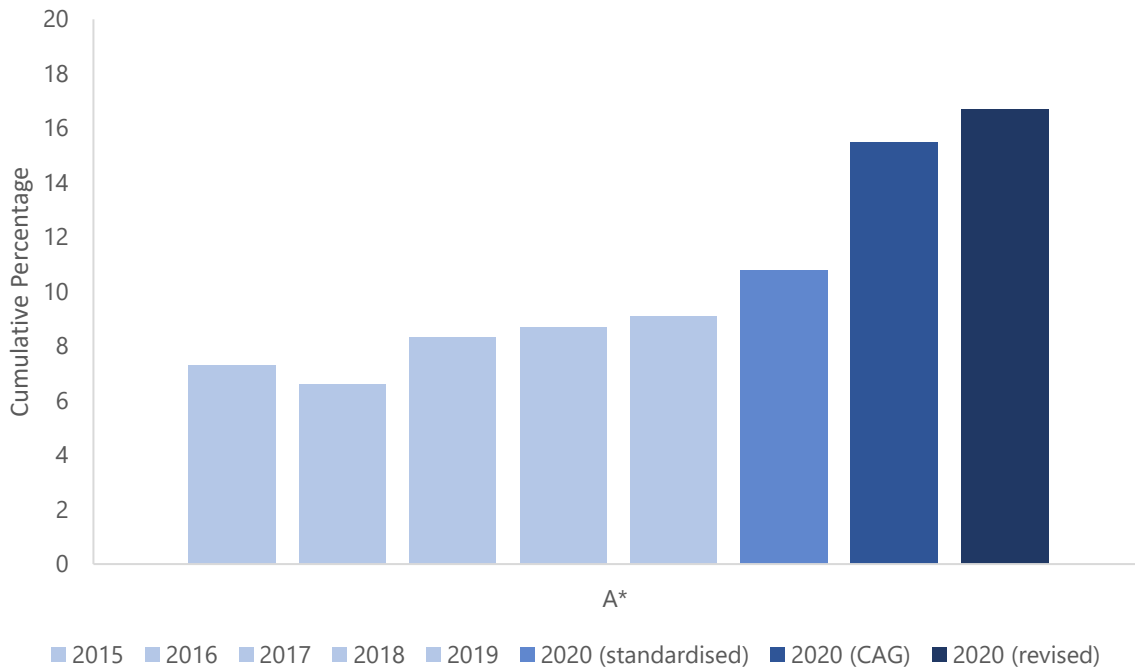
5. A level

National results

Table 5.1 shows that revised results are higher than the standardised A level grades, and also substantially higher than results between 2015 and 2019. The majority of this increase is due to the centre assessment grades.

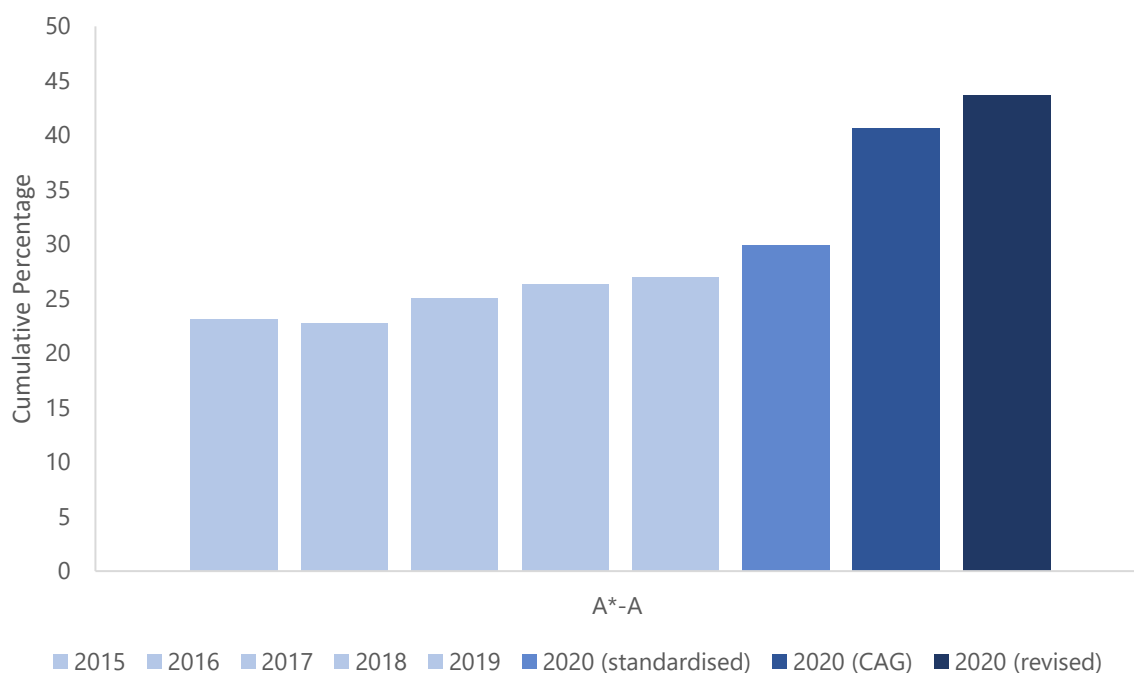
Figure 5.2 shows that well over 40% of learners will be awarded A* or A in 2020 in the revised results, whereas in 2019 the figure was 27% (which was the highest for the period 2015-2019 inclusive). The figure in the standardised grades was 29.9%.

Figure 5.1: National A level summer A* results 2015-2020



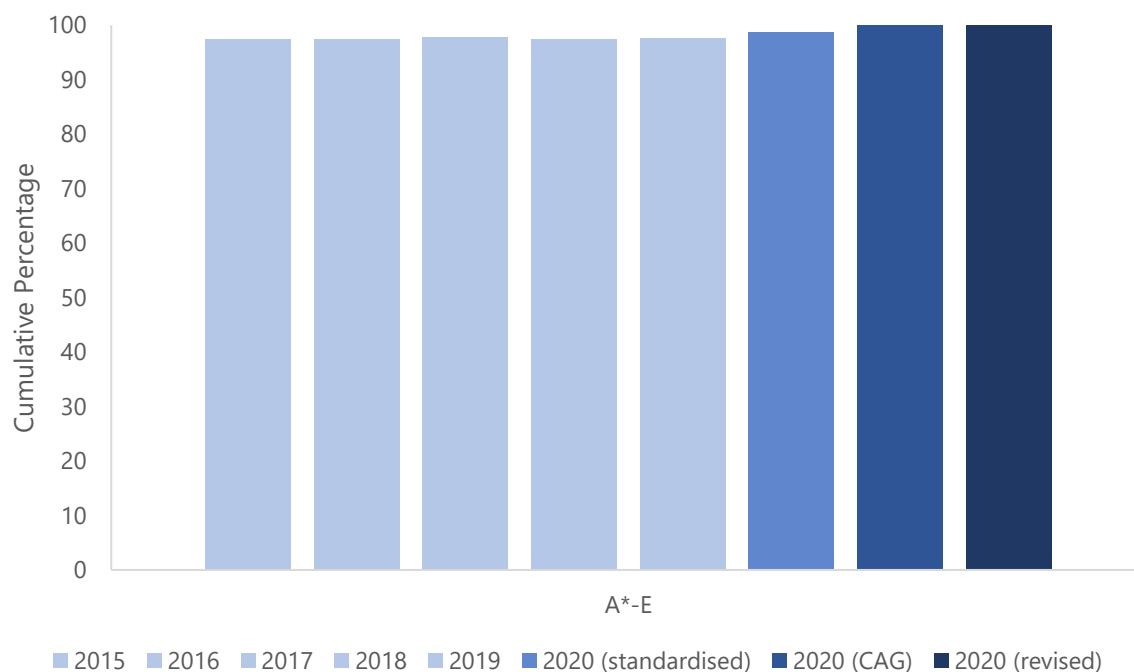
Source: 2015 to 2019 and 2020 (standardised): JCQ; 2020 (CAG) and 2020 (revised): awarding bodies

Figure 5.2: National A level summer cumulative A results 2015-2020



Source: 2015 to 2019 and 2020 (standardised): JCQ; 2020 (CAG) and 2020 (revised): awarding bodies

Figure 5.3: National A level summer cumulative E results 2015-2020



Source: 2015 to 2019 and 2020 (standardised): JCQ; 2020 (CAG) and 2020 (revised): awarding bodies

Table 5.1: A level Results 2015-2020 (cumulative percentage)

	A*	A*-A	A*-E	Number of grades
2020 (revised)⁽²⁾	16.7	43.7	99.9	30,510 ⁽¹⁾
2020 (CAG)⁽²⁾	15.5	40.6	99.9	30,350 ⁽³⁾
2020 (standardised)⁽²⁾	10.8	29.9	98.6	30,450
2019	9.1	27.0	97.6	31,485
2018	8.7	26.3	97.4	32,445
2017	8.3	25.0	97.7	33,295
2016	6.6	22.7	97.3	35,535
2015	7.3	23.1	97.3	36,035

Source: 2015 to 2020 (standardised): JCQ; 2020 (CAG) and 2020 (revised): awarding bodies

- (1) This figure may differ to previously published figures due to differing timing of data extracts.
- (2) Standardised results were those released on 13 August. CAG are the centre assessed grades. Revised are the higher of the centre assessment grade, standardised grade or AS grade based on data received from awarding bodies. Final published results may differ from revised estimates.
- (3) The number of centre assessment grades is lower than the final number of grades due to instances where the CAG had not been finalised at point the data was submitted, or where a CAG was not submitted but a grade could still be awarded based on prior unit attainment.

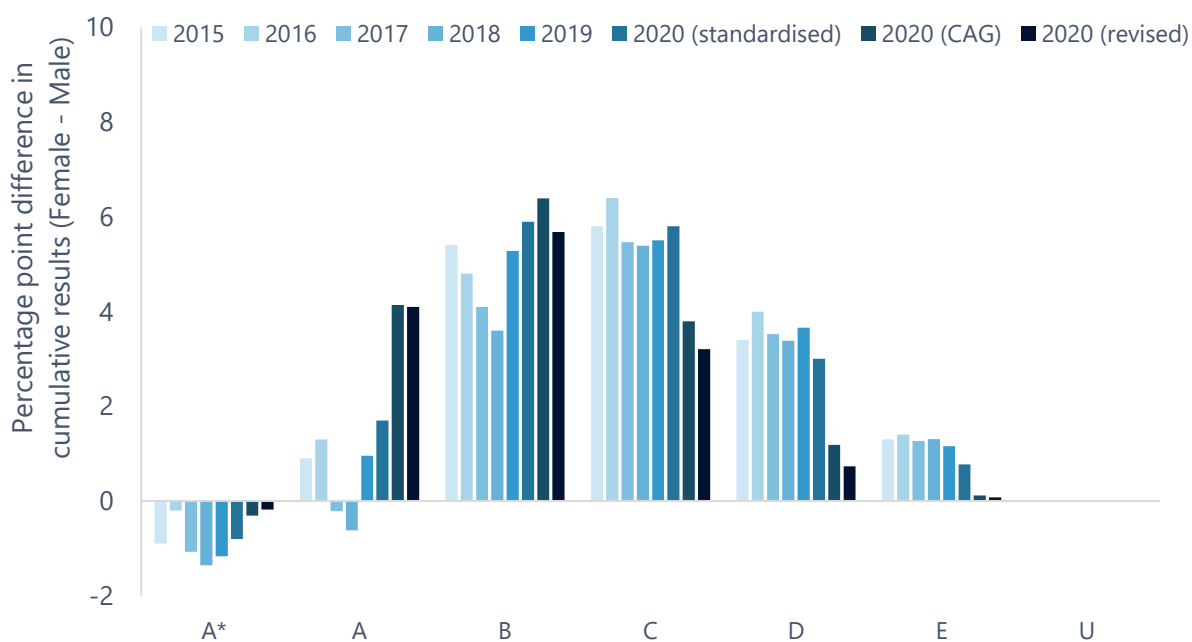
Attainment gap by gender

Figure 5.4 shows that attainment gaps by gender at cumulative A*-A are wider in revised results compared to the standardised A level grades. They are also wider than the attainment gaps in results between 2015 and 2019.

Attainment gaps by gender at cumulative A*, A*-C and A*-E are narrower.

Due to the overall increase in national results, both boys and girls have higher revised results in 2020 than in 2019. However, results for girls have increased by more than results for boys at the top end of the grade distribution.

Figure 5.4: A level attainment gap in cumulative results by gender



Source: 2015 to 2019 and 2020 (standardised): JCQ; 2020 (CAG) and 2020 (revised): awarding bodies

Table 5.2: A level cumulative percentage results by gender and percentage point attainment gaps

Year	Gender	Grades	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
2015	Girls	19,960	6.9	23.5	51.4	76.9	91.7	97.9	100.0
2015	Boys	16,075	7.8	22.6	46.0	71.1	88.3	96.6	100.0
2015	Gap (Girls - Boys)		-0.9	0.9	5.4	5.8	3.4	1.3	0.0
2016	Girls	20,030	6.5	23.3	50.2	76.6	91.8	97.9	100.0
2016	Boys	15,510	6.7	22.0	45.4	70.2	87.8	96.5	100.0
2016	Gap (Girls - Boys)		-0.2	1.3	4.8	6.4	4.0	1.4	0.0
2017	Girls	18,615	7.8	24.9	51.9	77.7	92.4	98.2	100.0
2017	Boys	14,675	8.9	25.1	47.8	72.3	88.9	97.0	100.0
2017	Gap (Girls - Boys)		-1.1	-0.2	4.1	5.5	3.5	1.3	0.0
2018	Girls	18,160	8.1	26.0	53.6	78.7	92.5	98.0	100.0
2018	Boys	14,285	9.4	26.6	50.0	73.3	89.1	96.7	100.0
2018	Gap (Girls - Boys)		-1.4	-0.6	3.6	5.4	3.4	1.3	0.0
2019	Girls	17,845	8.6	27.4	54.7	78.7	92.9	98.1	100.0
2019	Boys	13,640	9.8	26.5	49.4	73.2	89.2	96.9	100.0
2019	Gap (Girls - Boys)		-1.2	1.0	5.3	5.5	3.7	1.2	0.0
2020 (standardised)	Girls	17,100	10.5	30.7	58.7	82.3	94.8	99.0	100.0
2020 (standardised)	Boys	13,345	11.3	28.9	52.8	76.5	91.8	98.2	100.0
2020 (standardised)	Gap (Girls - Boys)		-0.8	1.7	5.9	5.8	3.0	0.8	0.0
2020 (CAG)	Girls	17,055	15.4	42.4	71.3	91.8	98.5	99.9	100.0
2020 (CAG)	Boys	13,295	15.7	38.3	64.9	88.0	97.3	99.8	100.0
2020 (CAG)	Gap (Girls - Boys)		-0.3	4.1	6.4	3.8	1.2	0.1	0.0
2020 (revised) ⁽¹⁾	Girls	17,130	16.6	45.5	74.5	93.9	99.2	100.0	100.0
2020 (revised) ⁽¹⁾	Boys	13,375	16.8	41.4	68.8	90.7	98.5	99.9	100.0
2020 (revised) ⁽¹⁾	Gap (Girls - Boys)		-0.2	4.1	5.7	3.2	0.7	0.1	0.0

Source: 2015 to 2020 (standardised): JCQ; 2020 (CAG) and 2020 (revised): awarding bodies

NB the attainment gap has been calculated from unrounded figures and therefore may not be exactly equal to the difference between the rounded figures.

(1) Revised are the higher of the centre assessment grade, standardised grade or AS grade based on data received from awarding bodies. Final published results may differ from revised estimates.

Attainment gap by eligibility for free school meals (18-year-olds)

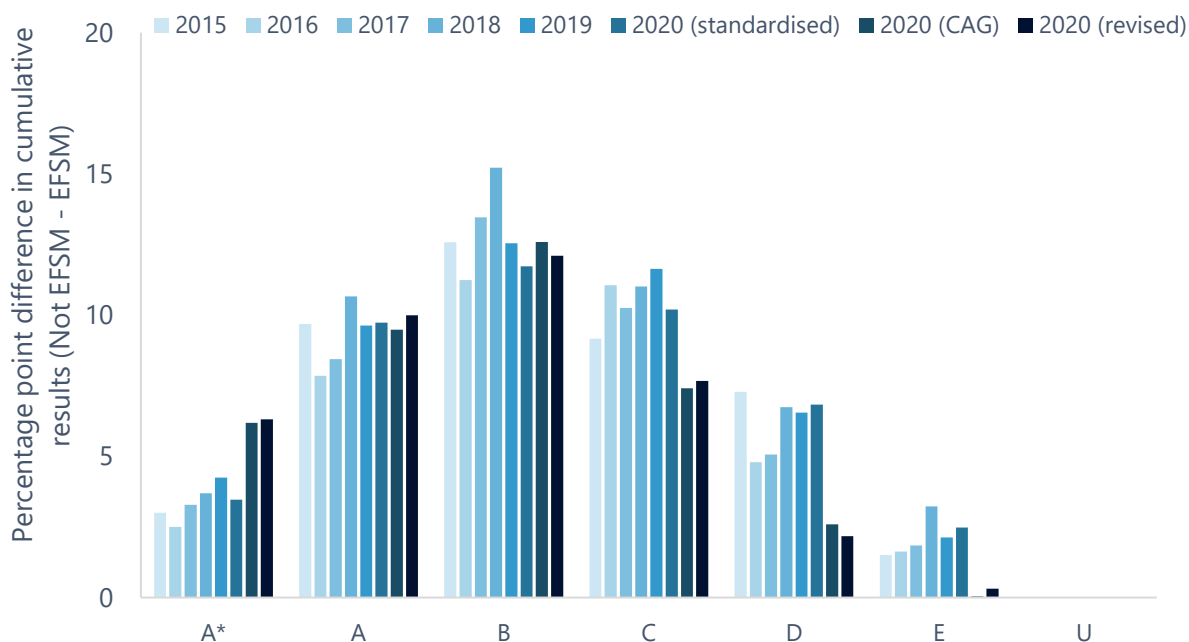
For 18-year-olds, the main A level entry cohort, attainment gaps by eligibility for free school meals at A* are higher for revised results compared to the standardised A level grades. The gap at A* is also wider than in results between 2015 and 2019.

Attainment gaps at cumulative A*-A are similar, whilst the gaps are narrower at cumulative grades A*-C and A*-E.

Due to the overall increase in national results, those eligible for free school meals and those not eligible have higher revised results in 2020 than in 2019. However, increases in A* grades are larger in the revised results for those who are not eligible for free school meals.

It is important to note that the free school meal eligibility data is not available for all learners and where it is available it may not be data from the current year.

Figure 5.5: A level attainment gap in cumulative results by eligibility for free school meals, 18-year-olds⁽¹⁾



Source: 2015 to 2019: WEDPLASC; 2020: awarding bodies

(1) Includes data only for those centres present in both the 2020 WJEC data and previous WEDPLASC data

Table 5.3: A level cumulative percentage results by eligibility for free school meals and percentage point attainment gaps, 18-year-olds

Year	FSM	Grades	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
2015	Eligible	805	3.5	12.7	36.6	65.6	83.4	96.0	100.0
2015	Non-eligible	20,875	6.5	22.3	49.2	74.8	90.7	97.5	100.0
2015	Gap (NotEFSM - EFSM)		3.0	9.7	12.6	9.2	7.3	1.5	0.0
2016	Eligible	885	3.4	14.0	36.8	63.1	85.3	95.7	100.0
2016	Non-eligible	20,710	5.9	21.9	48.1	74.1	90.1	97.3	100.0
2016	Gap (NotEFSM - EFSM)		2.5	7.9	11.2	11.1	4.8	1.6	0.0
2017	Eligible	920	3.6	14.8	35.6	64.3	85.5	95.9	100.0
2017	Non-eligible	19,750	6.9	23.2	49.0	74.6	90.6	97.7	100.0
2017	Gap (NotEFSM - EFSM)		3.3	8.4	13.5	10.3	5.1	1.8	0.0
2018	Eligible	1,010	4.1	14.5	35.8	64.6	84.1	94.4	100.0
2018	Non-eligible	18,760	7.8	25.1	51.1	75.6	90.8	97.6	100.0
2018	Gap (NotEFSM - EFSM)		3.7	10.7	15.2	11.0	6.7	3.2	0.0
2019	Eligible	780	4.2	16.0	39.0	64.1	84.5	95.5	100.0
2019	Non-eligible	18,450	8.5	25.7	51.6	75.7	91.0	97.6	100.0
2019	Gap (NotEFSM - EFSM)		4.2	9.6	12.5	11.6	6.5	2.1	0.0
2020 (standardised)	Eligible	865	5.3	16.6	41.4	67.7	85.9	95.9	100.0
2020 (standardised)	Non-eligible	17,810	8.6	26.1	53.1	77.9	92.7	98.4	100.0
2020 (standardised)	Gap (NotEFSM - EFSM)		3.3	9.6	11.6	10.1	6.8	2.5	0.0
2020 (CAG)	Eligible	865	7.5	29.6	55.6	83.2	95.6	99.9	100.0
2020 (CAG)	Non-eligible	17,780	13.7	39.1	68.1	90.6	98.2	99.9	100.0
2020 (CAG)	Gap (NotEFSM - EFSM)		6.2	9.5	12.6	7.4	2.6	0.0	0.0
2020 (revised) ⁽¹⁾	Eligible	870	8.6	31.8	59.0	84.9	96.8	99.7	100.0
2020 (revised) ⁽¹⁾	Non-eligible	17,835	14.9	41.8	71.1	92.6	98.9	100.0	100.0
2020 (revised) ⁽¹⁾	Gap (NotEFSM - EFSM)		6.3	10.0	12.1	7.7	2.2	0.3	0.0

Source: 2015 to 2019: WEDPLASC; 2020: awarding bodies

NB the attainment gap has been calculated from unrounded figures and therefore may not be exactly equal to the difference between the rounded figures.

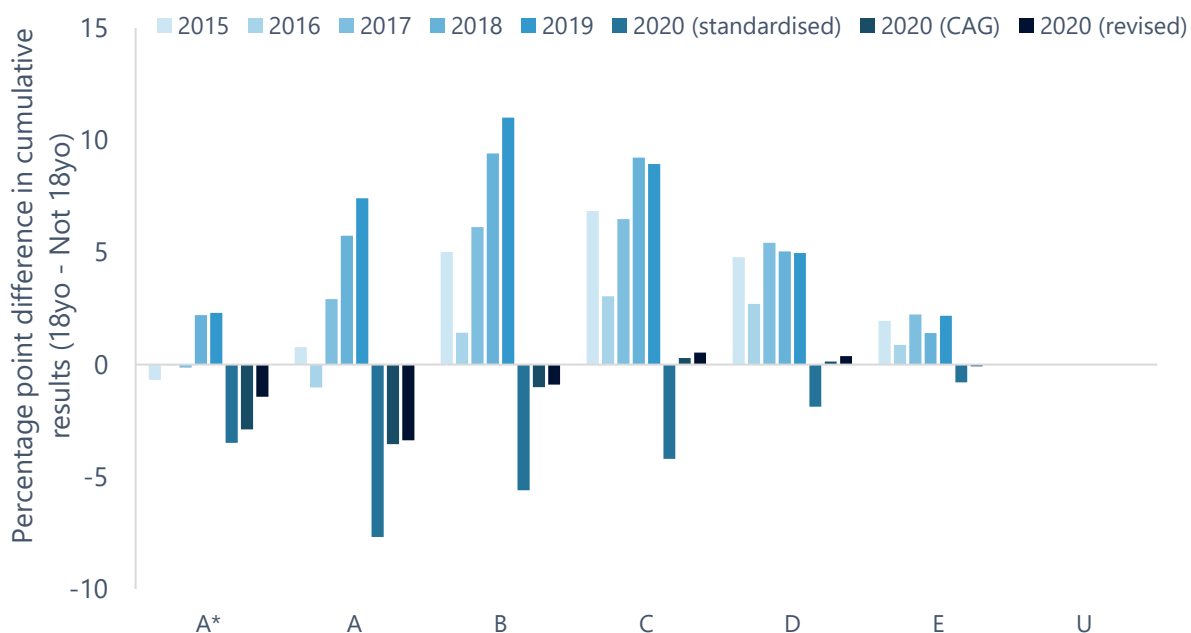
(1) Revised are the higher of the centre assessment grade, standardised grade or AS grade based on data received from awarding bodies. Final published results may differ from revised estimates.

Attainment gap by age

Figure 5.6 presents cumulative attainment gaps by age over time.

In recent years, 18-year-olds generally received higher A level outcomes than other learners. Revised 2020 outcomes show the attainment gap reversed at grades A* to C, so that non-18-year-olds receive better outcomes than 18-year-olds in 2020. This pattern was even more evident in the centre assessment grades and the standardised results published on the 13 August.

Figure 5.6: A level attainment gap in cumulative results by age⁽¹⁾



Source: 2015 to 2019: WEDPLASC; 2020: awarding bodies

(1) Includes data only for those centres present in both the 2020 awarding body data and previous WEDPLASC data

Table 5.4: A level cumulative percentage results by age and percentage point attainment gaps

Year	Age	Grades	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
2015	18yo	23,485	7.4	24.1	50.7	75.6	90.9	97.6	100.0
2015	Non18yo	2,235	8.0	23.3	45.7	68.8	86.1	95.7	100.0
2015	Gap (18yo - Non18yo)		-0.7	0.8	5.0	6.8	4.8	1.9	0.0
2016	18yo	23,320	6.6	23.4	49.5	74.8	90.4	97.4	100.0
2016	Non18yo	2,275	6.6	24.5	48.1	71.8	87.7	96.5	100.0
2016	Gap (18yo - Non18yo)		0.0	-1.0	1.4	3.0	2.7	0.9	0.0
2017	18yo	20,665	6.7	22.9	48.4	74.1	90.4	97.6	100.0
2017	Non18yo	1,370	6.9	20.0	42.3	67.6	84.9	95.4	100.0
2017	Gap (18yo - Non18yo)		-0.1	2.9	6.1	6.5	5.4	2.2	0.0
2018	18yo	19,770	7.6	24.6	50.3	75.0	90.5	97.4	100.0
2018	Non18yo	1,530	5.4	18.8	40.9	65.8	85.4	96.0	100.0
2018	Gap (18yo - Non18yo)		2.2	5.7	9.4	9.2	5.0	1.4	0.0
2019	18yo	19,230	8.3	25.3	51.1	75.2	90.7	97.6	100.0
2019	Non18yo	1,230	6.0	17.9	40.0	66.3	85.8	95.4	100.0
2019	Gap (18yo - Non18yo)		2.3	7.4	11.0	8.9	5.0	2.2	0.0
2020 (standardised)	18yo	20,425	9.8	28.0	54.5	78.5	92.8	98.4	100.0
2020 (standardised)	Non18yo	1,730	13.3	35.6	60.1	82.7	94.7	99.2	100.0
2020 (standardised)	Gap (18yo - Non18yo)		-3.5	-7.7	-5.6	-4.2	-1.9	-0.8	0.0
2020 (CAG)	18yo	20,390	14.8	40.6	69.1	90.8	98.2	99.9	100.0
2020 (CAG)	Non18yo	1,675	17.7	44.1	70.1	90.5	98.0	100.0	100.0
2020 (CAG)	Gap (18yo - Non18yo)		-2.9	-3.5	-1.0	0.3	0.1	-0.1	0.0
2020 (revised) ⁽¹⁾	18yo	20,455	16.0	43.1	71.8	92.6	98.9	100.0	100.0
2020 (revised) ⁽¹⁾	Non18yo	1,740	17.5	46.5	72.7	92.1	98.5	99.9	100.0
2020 (revised) ⁽¹⁾	Gap (18yo - Non18yo)		-1.4	-3.4	-0.9	0.5	0.4	0.0	0.0

Source: 2015 to 2019: WEDPLASC; 2020: awarding bodies

NB the attainment gap has been calculated from unrounded figures and therefore may not be exactly equal to the difference between the rounded figures

(1) Revised are the higher of the centre assessment grade, standardised grade or AS grade based on data received from awarding bodies. Final published results may differ from revised estimates.

Attainment gap by special educational needs (SEN) provision (18-year-olds)

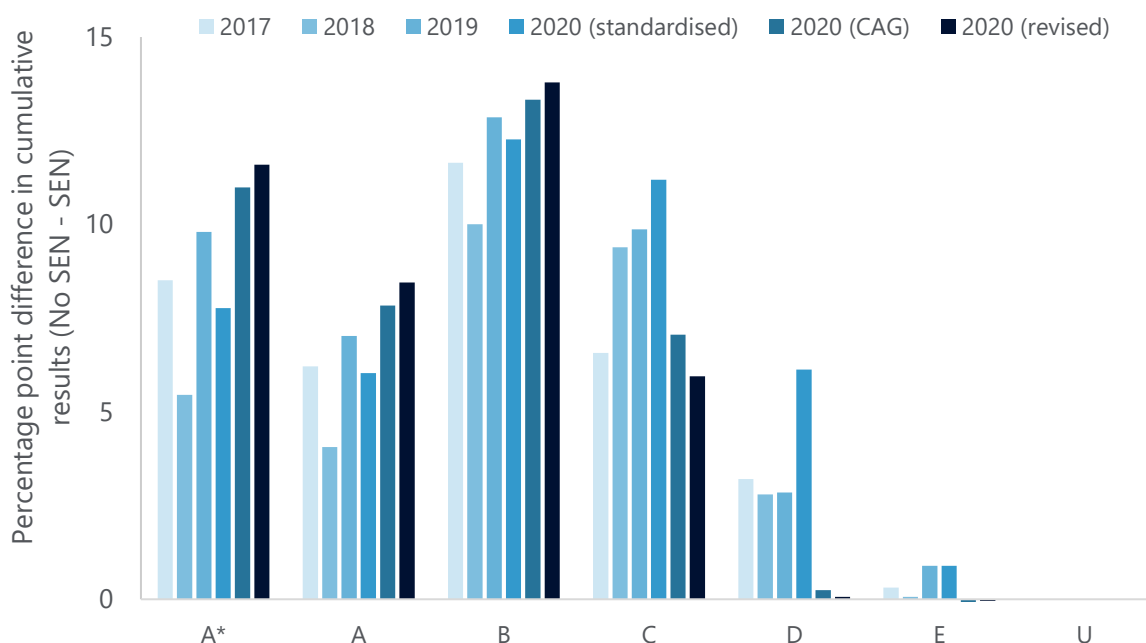
For 18-year-olds, who are the main A level entry cohort, attainment gaps by SEN provision at A* and A*-A are wider in revised results compared to results in recent years and the standardised results

The gaps are narrower at cumulative grades A*-C and A*-E.

Due to the overall increase in national results, learners with SEN provision and those without have higher revised results in 2020 than in 2019. However, increases in A* grades are larger in the revised results for those who have no SEN provision.

It is important to note that the SEN provision data is not available for all learners and where it is available it may not be data from the current year. SEN provision data is only available from 2017 onwards.

Figure 5.7: A level attainment gap in cumulative results by SEN provision, 18-year-olds⁽¹⁾



Source: 2017 to 2019: WEDPLASC; 2020: awarding bodies

(1) Includes data only for those centres present in both the 2020 WJEC data and previous WEDPLASC data

Table 5.5: A level cumulative percentage results by SEN provision and percentage point attainment gaps, 18-year-olds

Year	SEN provision	Grade s	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
2017	On SEN register	1,090	14.7	10.2	37.3	67.8	87.3	97.3	100.0
2017	No SEN	19,495	23.2	16.4	49.0	74.4	90.5	97.6	100.0
2017	Gap (NoSEN-SEN)		8.5	6.2	11.6	6.6	3.2	0.3	0.0
2018	On SEN register	1,100	19.5	13.2	40.9	66.2	87.8	97.4	100.0
2018	No SEN	18,600	24.9	17.3	50.9	75.5	90.6	97.4	100.0
2018	Gap (NoSEN-SEN)		5.5	4.1	10.0	9.4	2.8	0.1	0.0
2019	On SEN register	1,155	16.1	10.4	39.0	65.9	88.1	96.7	100.0
2019	No SEN	18,075	25.9	17.4	51.8	75.8	90.9	97.6	100.0
2019	Gap (NoSEN-SEN)		9.8	7.0	12.9	9.9	2.8	0.9	0.0
2020 (standardised)	On SEN register	1,070	18.4	11.5	41.0	66.9	86.6	97.5	100.0
2020 (standardised)	No SEN	17,580	26.2	17.6	53.3	78.0	92.7	98.4	100.0
2020 (standardised)	Gap (NoSEN-SEN)		7.8	6.0	12.3	11.2	6.1	0.9	0.0
2020 (CAG)	On SEN register	1,070	28.3	17.9	55.0	83.6	97.8	100.0	100.0
2020 (CAG)	No SEN	17,555	39.3	25.7	68.3	90.7	98.1	99.9	100.0
2020 (CAG)	Gap (NoSEN-SEN)		11.0	7.8	13.3	7.1	0.2	-0.1	0.0
2020 (revised) ⁽¹⁾	On SEN register	1,070	30.3	18.7	57.5	86.6	98.8	100.0	100.0
2020 (revised) ⁽¹⁾	No SEN	17,610	41.9	27.2	71.3	92.6	98.8	100.0	100.0
2020 (revised) ⁽¹⁾	Gap (NoSEN-SEN)		11.6	8.5	13.8	5.9	0.1	0.0	0.0

Source: 2015 to 2019: WEDPLASC; 2020: awarding bodies

NB the attainment gap has been calculated from unrounded figures and therefore may not be exactly equal to the difference between the rounded figures.

(1) Revised are the higher of the centre assessment grade, standardised grade or AS grade based on data received from awarding bodies. Final published results may differ from revised estimates.

6. AS

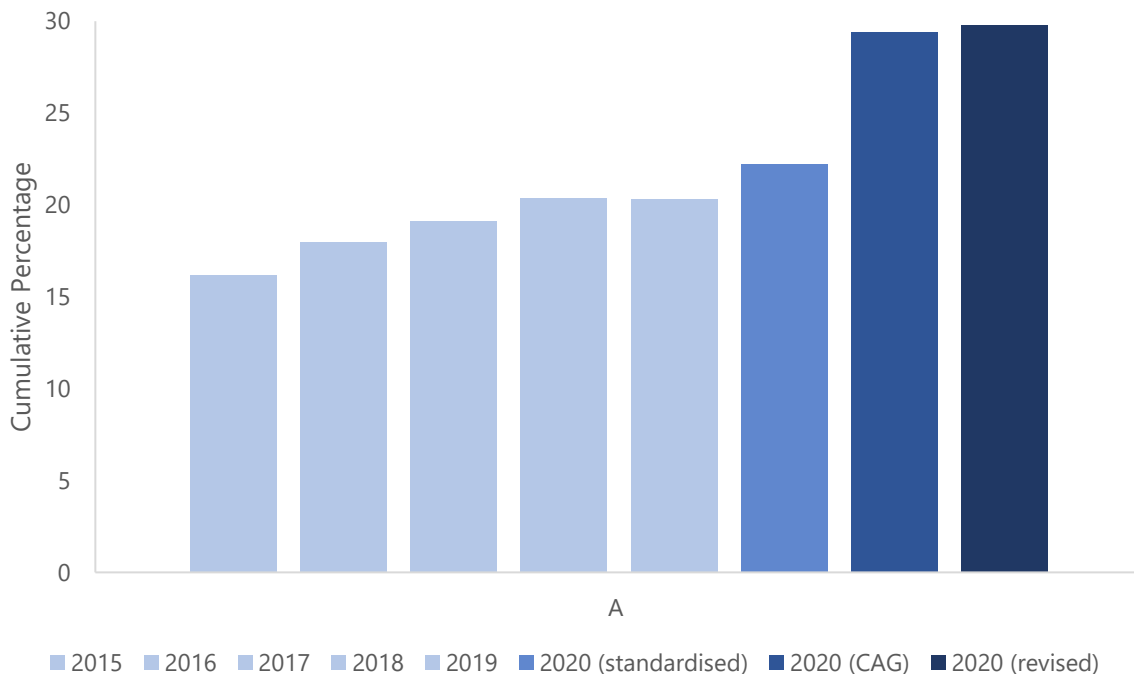
National results

Table 6.1 shows that revised AS results are substantially higher than the standardised grades, and also higher than in results between 2015 and 2019. Most of the increase in revised results is due to the centre assessment grades.

Around 30% of learners will be awarded grade A in the revised 2020 results, whereas the figure in the original published results was 22.2%. In 2019, the figure was 20.3%.

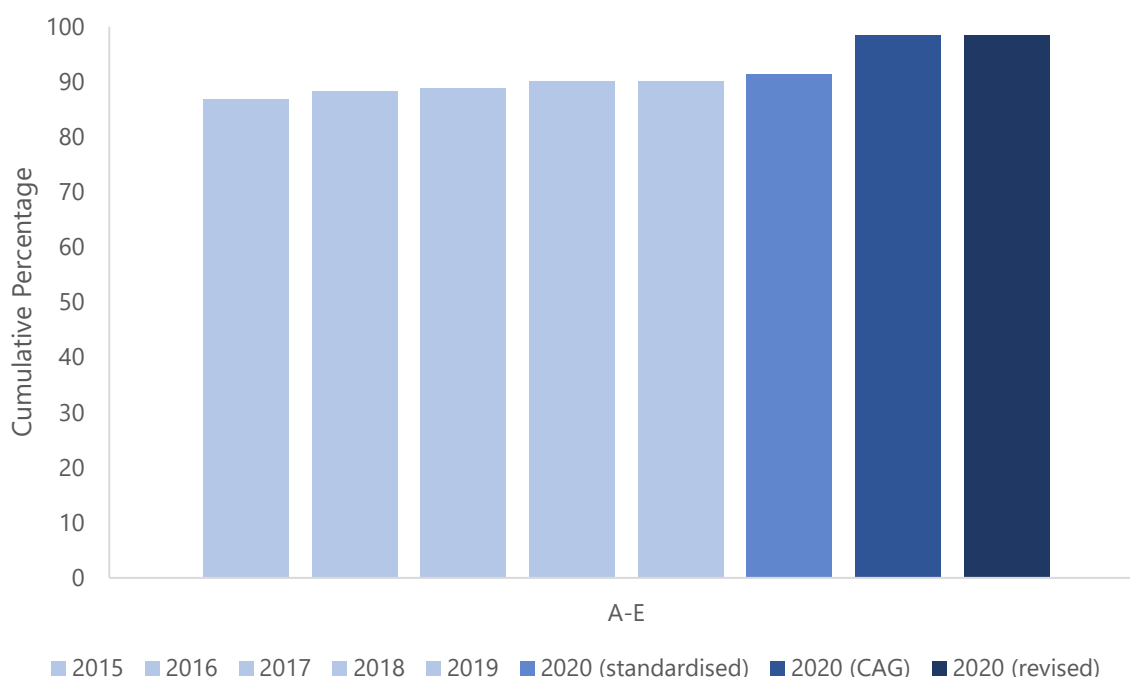
More than 98% of learners will be awarded A-E in the revised results, compared to 91.4% of learners in the original published results. In 2019, the figure was 90%.

Figure 6.1: National AS summer A results 2015-2020



Source: 2015 to 2019 and 2020 (standardised): JCQ; 2020 (CAG) and 2020 (revised): awarding bodies

Figure 6.2: National AS summer cumulative E results 2015-2020



Source: 2015 to 2019 and 2020 (standardised): JCQ; 2020 (CAG) and 2020 (revised): awarding bodies

Table 6.1: AS Results 2015-2020 (cumulative percentage)

	A	A-E	Number of grades
2020 (revised) ⁽²⁾	29.8	98.5	45,475 ⁽¹⁾
2020 (CAG) ⁽²⁾	29.4	98.4	43,940 ⁽³⁾
2020 (standardised) ⁽²⁾	22.2	91.4	44,435
2019	20.3	90.0	39,645
2018	20.4	90.0	42,915
2017	19.1	88.9	46,125
2016	18.0	88.3	49,145
2015	16.2	86.8	52,770

Source: 2015 to 2020 (published): JCQ; 2020 (CAG) and 2020 (revised): awarding bodies

- (1) This figure may differ to previously published figures due to differing timing of data extracts.
- (2) Published are the calculated results released on 13 August. CAG are the centre assessed grades. Revised are the higher of either the centre assessment grades, or calculated grade based on data received from awarding bodies. Final published results may differ from revised estimates.
- (3) The number of centre assessment grades is lower than the final number of grades due to instances where the CAG had not been finalised at point the data was submitted, or where a CAG was not submitted but a grade could still be awarded based on prior unit attainment.

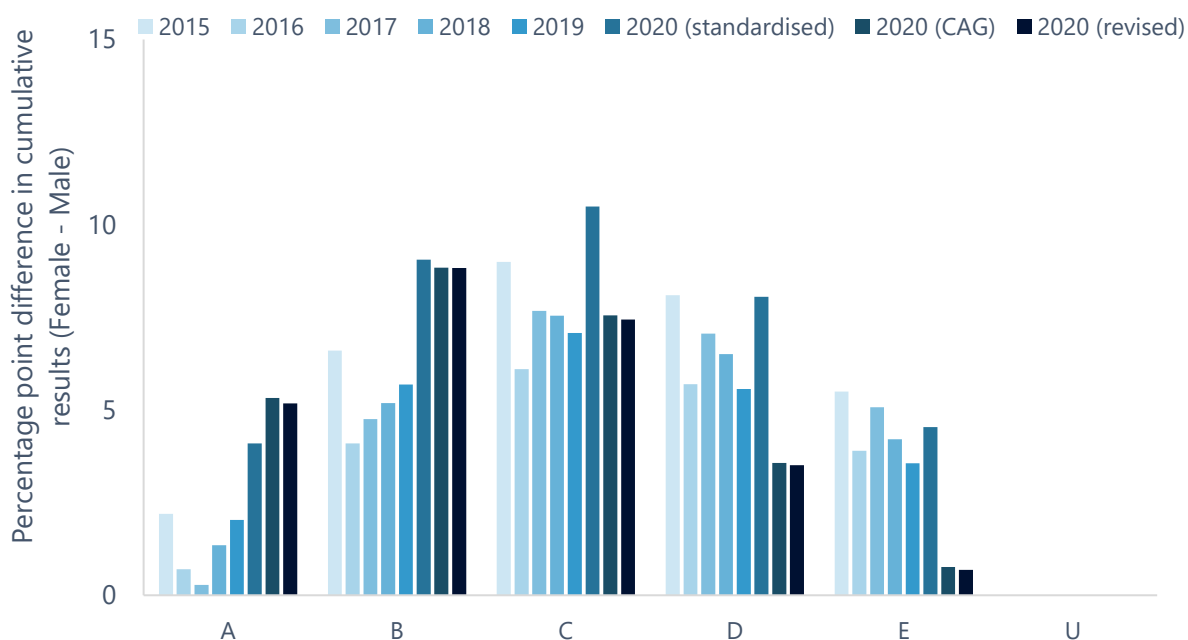
Attainment gap by gender

Attainment gaps by gender at cumulative grade A are wider in the revised AS results compared to standardised AS grades. They are also wider than the gaps evident in results between 2015 and 2019.

The gap is narrower at cumulative A – E. Attainment gaps at other grade thresholds are more similar.

Due to the overall increase in national results, both boys and girls have higher revised results in 2020 than in 2019. However, results for girls have increased by more than results for boys at grade A.

Figure 6.3: AS attainment gap in cumulative results by gender



Source: 2015 to 2019 and 2020 (standardised): JCQ; 2020 (CAG) and 2020 (revised): awarding bodies

Table 6.2: AS cumulative percentage results by gender and percentage point attainment gaps

Year	Gender	Grades	A	B	C	D	E	U
2015	Girls	29,120	17.2	38.5	61.5	78.6	89.3	100.0
2015	Boys	23,650	15.0	31.9	52.5	70.5	83.8	100.0
2015	Gap (Girls - Boys)		2.2	6.6	9.0	8.1	5.5	0.0
2016	Girls	27,035	18.3	38.9	61.6	79.0	90.0	100.0
2016	Boys	22,105	17.6	34.8	55.5	73.3	86.1	100.0
2016	Gap (Girls - Boys)		0.7	4.1	6.1	5.7	3.9	0.0
2017	Girls	25,585	19.3	40.6	63.5	80.6	91.1	100.0
2017	Boys	20,540	19.0	35.8	55.8	73.5	86.0	100.0
2017	Gap (Girls - Boys)		0.3	4.8	7.7	7.1	5.1	0.0
2018	Girls	24,045	21.0	42.4	65.2	82.0	91.9	100.0
2018	Boys	18,870	19.6	37.2	57.7	75.5	87.7	100.0
2018	Gap (Girls - Boys)		1.3	5.2	7.5	6.5	4.2	0.0
2019	Girls	22,295	21.2	42.9	65.1	81.5	91.6	100.0
2019	Boys	17,355	19.1	37.2	58.0	75.9	88.0	100.0
2019	Gap (Girls - Boys)		2.0	5.7	7.1	5.6	3.6	0.0
2020 (standardised)	Girls	25,675	23.8	47.1	70.2	85.2	93.4	100.0
2020 (standardised)	Boys	19,760	20.0	38.3	59.8	77.2	88.9	100.0
2020 (standardised)	Gap (Girls - Boys)		3.8	8.9	10.4	8.0	4.5	0.0
2020 (CAG)	Girls	24,810	31.8	59.9	84.1	94.5	98.7	100.0
2020 (CAG)	Boys	19,125	26.4	51.0	76.6	90.9	97.9	100.0
2020 (CAG)	Gap (Girls - Boys)		5.3	8.8	7.6	3.6	0.8	0.0
2020 (revised)	Girls	25,695	32.1	59.9	83.8	94.5	98.8	100.0
2020 (revised)	Boys	19,780	26.9	51.0	76.3	91.0	98.1	100.0
2020 (revised)	Gap (Girls - Boys)		5.2	8.8	7.4	3.5	0.7	0.0

Source: 2015 to 2019 and 2020 (standardised): JCQ; 2020 (CAG) and 2020 (revised): awarding bodies

NB the attainment gap has been calculated from unrounded figures and therefore may not be exactly equal to the difference between the rounded figures.

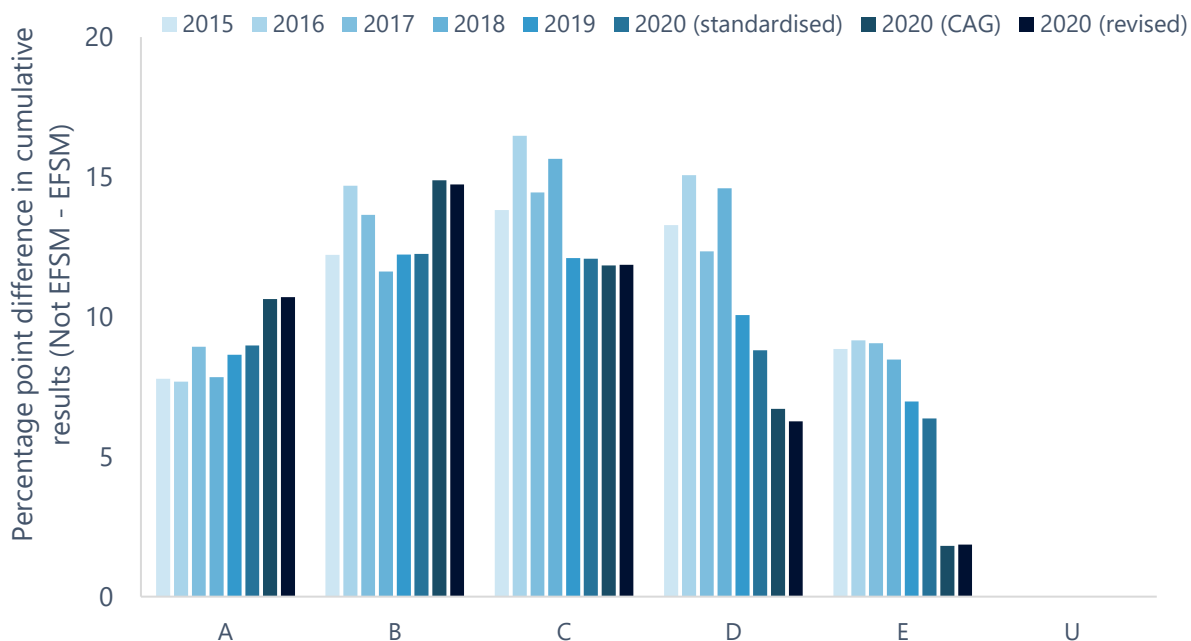
Attainment gap by eligibility for free school meals (17-year-olds)

For 17-year-olds, the main entry cohort for AS, attainment gaps by free school meal eligibility at cumulative grade A are wider in the revised results compared to the standardised AS grades and those seen in AS results between 2015 and 2019.

The gap is narrower at cumulative A – E.

Due to the overall increase in national results, both those eligible for free school meals and those not eligible have higher revised results in 2020 than in either the standardised grades for 2020 or results in 2019. However, the increases in A grades are larger in the revised results for those who are not eligible for free school meals.

Figure 6.4 AS attainment gap in cumulative results by eligibility for free school meals, 17-year-olds⁽¹⁾



Source: 2015 to 2019: WEDPLASC; 2020: awarding bodies

(1) Includes data only for those centres present in both the 2020 WJEC data and previous WEDPLASC data

Table 6.3: AS cumulative percentage results by eligibility for free school meals and percentage point attainment gaps, 17-year-olds ⁽¹⁾

Year	FSM	Grades	A	B	C	D	E	U
2015	Eligible	1,385	8.1	23.0	43.0	60.8	77.2	100.0
2015	Non-eligible	26,995	15.9	35.2	56.8	74.1	86.0	100.0
2015	Gap (NotEFSM - EFSM)		7.8	12.2	13.8	13.3	8.8	0.0
2016	Eligible	1,385	9.7	21.3	40.9	59.7	77.9	100.0
2016	Non-eligible	23,505	17.4	36.0	57.3	74.8	87.0	100.0
2016	Gap (NotEFSM - EFSM)		7.7	14.7	16.5	15.1	9.2	0.0
2017	Eligible	1,425	9.5	23.6	43.8	63.1	78.5	100.0
2017	Non-eligible	21,990	18.4	37.2	58.3	75.5	87.6	100.0
2017	Gap (NotEFSM - EFSM)		8.9	13.6	14.4	12.3	9.1	0.0
2018	Eligible	1,395	11.3	26.8	44.3	62.4	80.3	100.0
2018	Non-eligible	21,210	19.1	38.4	59.9	77.0	88.8	100.0
2018	Gap (NotEFSM - EFSM)		7.8	11.6	15.6	14.6	8.5	0.0
2019	Eligible	1,090	10.7	26.4	47.2	66.1	81.3	100.0
2019	Non-eligible	19,535	19.4	38.6	59.3	76.2	88.3	100.0
2019	Gap (NotEFSM - EFSM)		8.6	12.2	12.1	10.1	7.0	0.0
2020 (standardised)	Eligible	1,395	13.4	32.3	54.8	73.0	84.8	100.0
2020 (standardised)	Non-eligible	24,990	22.4	44.5	66.9	81.8	91.2	100.0
2020 (standardised)	Gap (NotEFSM - EFSM)		9.0	12.3	12.1	8.8	6.4	0.0
2020 (CAG)	Eligible	1,395	19.3	42.4	70.5	87.1	97.2	100.0
2020 (CAG)	Non-eligible	25,010	29.9	57.3	82.3	93.8	99.0	100.0
2020 (CAG)	Gap (NotEFSM - EFSM)		10.6	14.9	11.8	6.7	1.8	0.0
2020 (revised)	Eligible	1,395	20.1	43.3	70.9	87.9	97.3	100.0
2020 (revised)	Non-eligible	25,015	30.9	58.0	82.8	94.2	99.1	100.0
2020 (revised)	Gap (NotEFSM - EFSM)		10.7	14.7	11.9	6.3	1.9	0.0

Source: 2015 to 2019: WEDPLASC; 2020: awarding bodies

(1) This figure may differ to previously published figures due to differing timing of data extracts.

NB the attainment gap has been calculated from unrounded figures and therefore may not be exactly equal to the difference between the rounded figures.

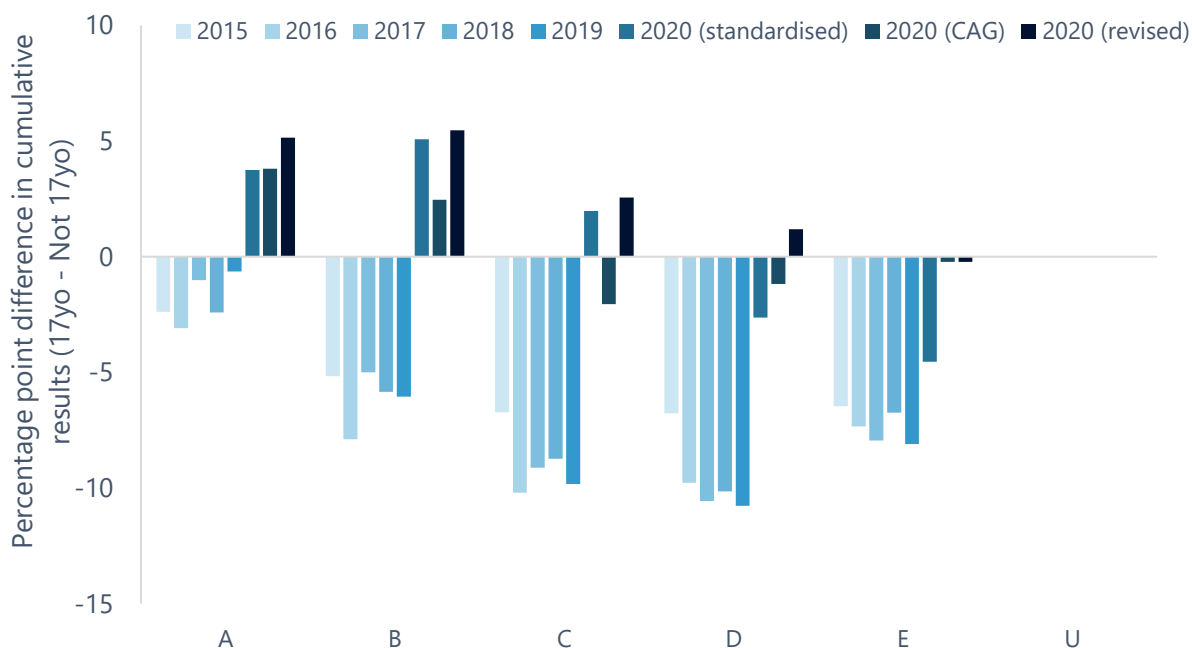
Attainment gap by age

Figure 6.5 presents cumulative attainment gaps by age over time.

Similar to the changing pattern of results by age at A level, at cumulative grades A, B and C, attainment gaps in 2020 (both published and revised) have shifted to show 17-year-olds achieving higher results than non-17-year-olds. In previous years the reverse was the case, with results for non-17-year-olds higher than those for 17-year-olds.

It is important to note that many non-17-year-olds entered for AS are 18-year-olds that were resitting AS units to improve their A level grade this summer. These candidates therefore should have received an A level grade as well as an AS grade.

Figure 6.5: AS attainment gap in cumulative results by age ⁽¹⁾



Source: 2015 to 2019: WEDPLASC; 2020: awarding bodies

(1) Includes data only for those centres present in both the 2020 awarding body data and previous WEDPLASC data

Table 6.4: AS cumulative percentage results by age and percentage point attainment gaps⁽¹⁾

Year	Age	Grades	A	B	C	D	E	U
2015	17yo	29,465	16.4	35.5	56.9	74.0	85.9	100.0
2015	Non17yo	7,635	18.8	40.7	63.7	80.8	92.4	100.0
2015	Gap (17yo - Non17yo)		-2.4	-5.2	-6.7	-6.8	-6.5	0.0
2016	17yo	25,475	17.7	35.9	57.0	74.3	86.7	100.0
2016	Non17yo	7,450	20.8	43.8	67.2	84.1	94.0	100.0
2016	Gap (17yo - Non17yo)		-3.1	-7.9	-10.2	-9.8	-7.3	0.0
2017	17yo	23,415	17.9	36.4	57.4	74.7	87.0	100.0
2017	Non17yo	6,270	18.9	41.4	66.5	85.3	95.0	100.0
2017	Gap (17yo - Non17yo)		-1.0	-5.0	-9.1	-10.6	-7.9	0.0
2018	17yo	22,605	18.6	37.7	58.9	76.1	88.3	100.0
2018	Non17yo	5,490	21.0	43.5	67.7	86.3	95.0	100.0
2018	Gap (17yo - Non17yo)		-2.4	-5.8	-8.7	-10.1	-6.7	0.0
2019	17yo	20,625	18.9	38.0	58.6	75.7	87.9	100.0
2019	Non17yo	5,130	19.6	44.1	68.4	86.4	96.0	100.0
2019	Gap (17yo - Non17yo)		-0.6	-6.1	-9.8	-10.8	-8.1	0.0
2020 (standardised)	17yo	27,225	22.7	44.6	66.8	81.7	91.0	100.0
2020 (standardised)	Non17yo	5,895	18.9	39.6	64.8	84.3	95.6	100.0
2020 (standardised)	Gap (17yo - Non17yo)		3.8	5.1	2.0	-2.6	-4.5	0.0
2020 (CAG)	17yo	27,250	30.1	57.2	82.0	93.6	99.0	100.0
2020 (CAG)	Non17yo	4,725	26.3	54.7	84.0	94.8	99.2	100.0
2020 (CAG)	Gap (17yo - Non17yo)		3.8	2.5	-2.0	-1.2	-0.2	0.0
2020 (revised)	17yo	27,255	31.0	57.9	82.4	93.9	99.1	100.0
2020 (revised)	Non17yo	5,905	25.9	52.4	79.9	92.8	99.3	100.0
2020 (revised)	Gap (17yo - Non17yo)		5.2	5.5	2.6	1.2	-0.2	0.0

Source: 2015 to 2019: WEDPLASC; 2020: awarding bodies

(1) This figure may differ to previously published figures due to differing timing of data extracts.

NB the attainment gap has been calculated from unrounded figures and therefore may not be exactly equal to the difference between the rounded figures.

Attainment gap by special educational needs (SEN) provision (17-year-olds)

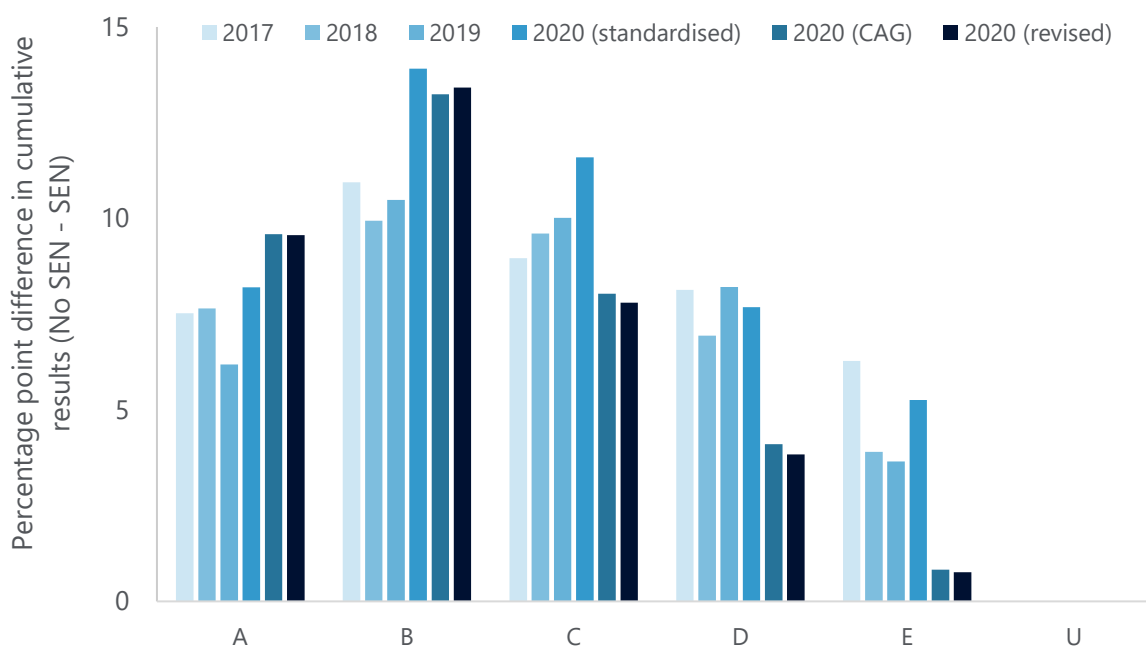
For 17-year-olds, the main entry cohort for AS, attainment gaps by SEN provision at cumulative grade A are wider in the revised results compared to the standardised AS grades and AS results between 2015 and 2019.

The gap is narrower at cumulative A – E.

Due to the overall increase in national results, both those with SEN provision and those without have higher revised results in 2020 than in either the original published grades for 2020 or 2019. However, the increases in A grades are larger in the revised results for those who have no SEN provision.

It is important to note that the SEN provision data is not available for all learners and where it is available it may not be data from the current year. SEN provision data is only available from 2017 onwards.

Figure 6.6: AS attainment gap in cumulative results by SEN provision, 17-year-olds⁽¹⁾



Source: 2017 to 2019: WEDPLASC; 2020: awarding bodies

(1) Includes data only for those centres present in both the 2020 WJEC data and previous WEDPLASC data

Table 6.5: AS cumulative percentage results by SEN provision and percentage point attainment gaps, 17-year-olds⁽¹⁾

Year	SEN provision	Grades	A	B	C	D	E	U
2017	On SEN register	1,410	10.8	26.1	48.9	67.0	81.1	100.0
2017	No SEN	21,910	18.3	37.1	57.9	75.2	87.4	100.0
2017	Gap (NoSEN-SEN)		7.5	10.9	9.0	8.1	6.3	0.0
2018	On SEN register	1,490	11.5	28.4	50.0	69.6	84.6	100.0
2018	No SEN	21,115	19.1	38.3	59.6	76.6	88.5	100.0
2018	Gap (NoSEN-SEN)		7.7	9.9	9.6	6.9	3.9	0.0
2019	On SEN register	1,355	13.1	28.2	49.3	68.0	84.5	100.0
2019	No SEN	19,270	19.3	38.7	59.3	76.2	88.1	100.0
2019	Gap (NoSEN-SEN)		6.2	10.5	10.0	8.2	3.7	0.0
2020 (standardised)	On SEN register	1,790	14.2	30.9	55.4	74.2	85.9	100.0
2020 (standardised)	No SEN	24,540	22.4	44.8	67.0	81.9	91.2	100.0
2020 (standardised)	Gap (NoSEN-SEN)		8.2	13.9	11.6	7.7	5.3	0.0
2020 (CAG)	On SEN register	1,795	20.4	44.2	74.2	89.6	98.2	100.0
2020 (CAG)	No SEN	24,560	30.0	57.4	82.2	93.7	99.0	100.0
2020 (CAG)	Gap (NoSEN-SEN)		9.6	13.2	8.0	4.1	0.8	0.0
2020 (revised)	On SEN register	1,795	21.4	44.7	74.8	90.2	98.3	100.0
2020 (revised)	No SEN	24,565	30.9	58.1	82.6	94.1	99.1	100.0
2020 (revised)	Gap (NoSEN-SEN)		9.6	13.4	7.8	3.8	0.8	0.0

Source: 2017 to 2019: WEDPLASC; 2020: awarding bodies

(1) This figure may differ to previously published figures due to differing timing of data extracts.

NB the attainment gap has been calculated from unrounded figures and therefore may not be exactly equal to the difference between the rounded figures.

7. GCSE

To match the methodology in the main JCQ tables as closely as possible, the figures in this section relate to grades awarded in the summer exam series only, i.e. outcomes exclude grades achieved in the November exam series.

National results

The figures used in this subsection use data for all full course single award GCSEs³, plus double award science⁴. Double award science grades are counted as two separate grades. Cumulative results are presented at A/7, C/4, G/1 as these figures include both A*-G and 9-1 GCSEs⁵. This is done to match the methodology of the JCQ main results tables as closely as possible.

Revised GCSE results are substantially higher than results between 2015 and 2019 and the 2020 standardised results.

More than a quarter of grades were awarded at A/7 or better in the revised 2020 results, whereas the figure in 2019 (Table 7.2) was 18.4%.

Just under three-quarters of grades were awarded at C/4 or better in the revised results, compared to 62.8% of grades in 2019.

Table 7.1: GCSE Results summer 2020 (cumulative percentage) (all ages)⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾

	A/7	C/4	G/1
2020 (revised)	25.9	74.5	99.6
2020 (CAG)	24.6	73.7	99.5
2020 (standardised)	20.6	66.5	97.9

Source: awarding bodies

- (1) The data includes results for GCSEs graded A*-G designed for Wales as well as GCSEs graded 9-1 designed for England.
- (2) Includes full course and double award science (which is double counted) GCSE, but excluding short courses

³ Short course GCSEs are reported separately to full course GCSEs by JCQ.

⁴ Both double science grades are counted, to reflect the size of the double award qualification.

⁵ A*-G GCSEs are designed and approved against criteria specific to Wales. These qualifications are only offered by WJEC. GCSEs that are graded on a 9-1 scale are designed against criteria specified elsewhere. These are taken in Wales in subjects in which there is no A*-G GCSE or in independent schools.

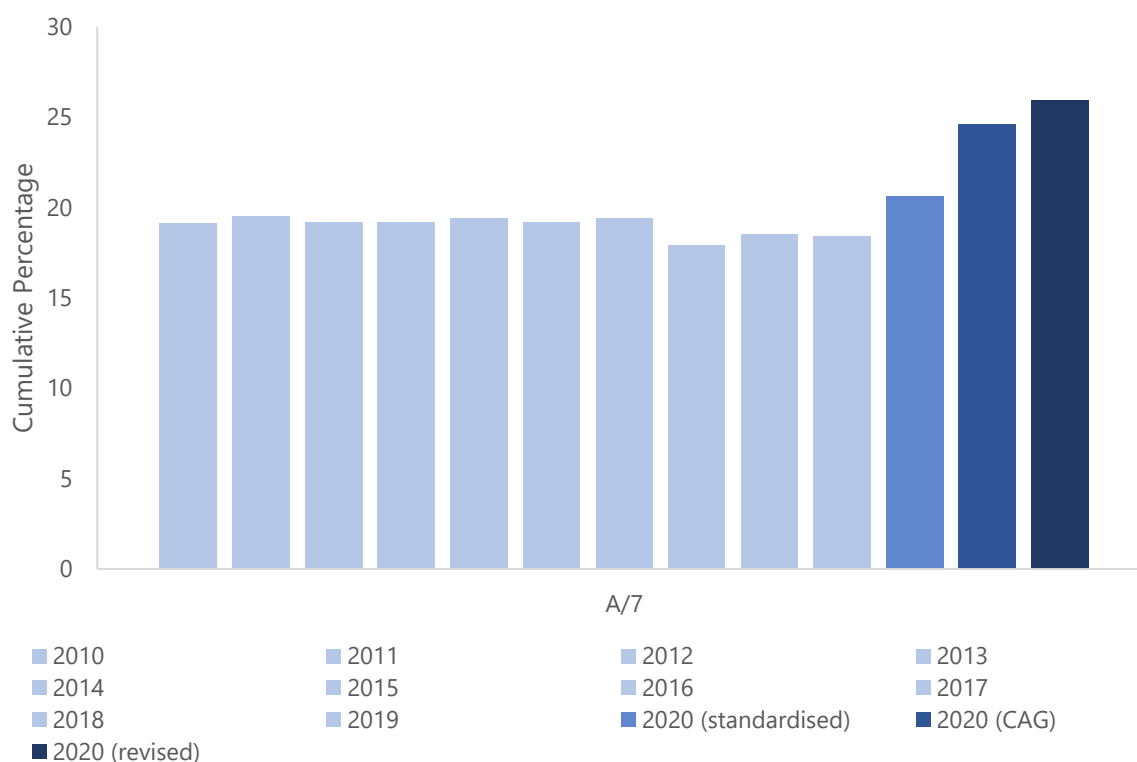
Table 7.2: GCSE Results summer 2015-2019 (cumulative percentage) (all ages)⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾

	A/7	C/4	G/1
2019	18.4	62.8	97.2
2018	18.5	61.6	96.4
2017	17.9	62.8	96.9
2016	19.4	66.6	98.7
2015	19.2	66.6	98.7

Source: JCQ

- (1) The data includes results for GCSEs graded A*-G designed for Wales as well as GCSEs graded 9-1 designed for England.
- (2) Includes full course and double award science (which is double counted) GCSE, but excluding short courses

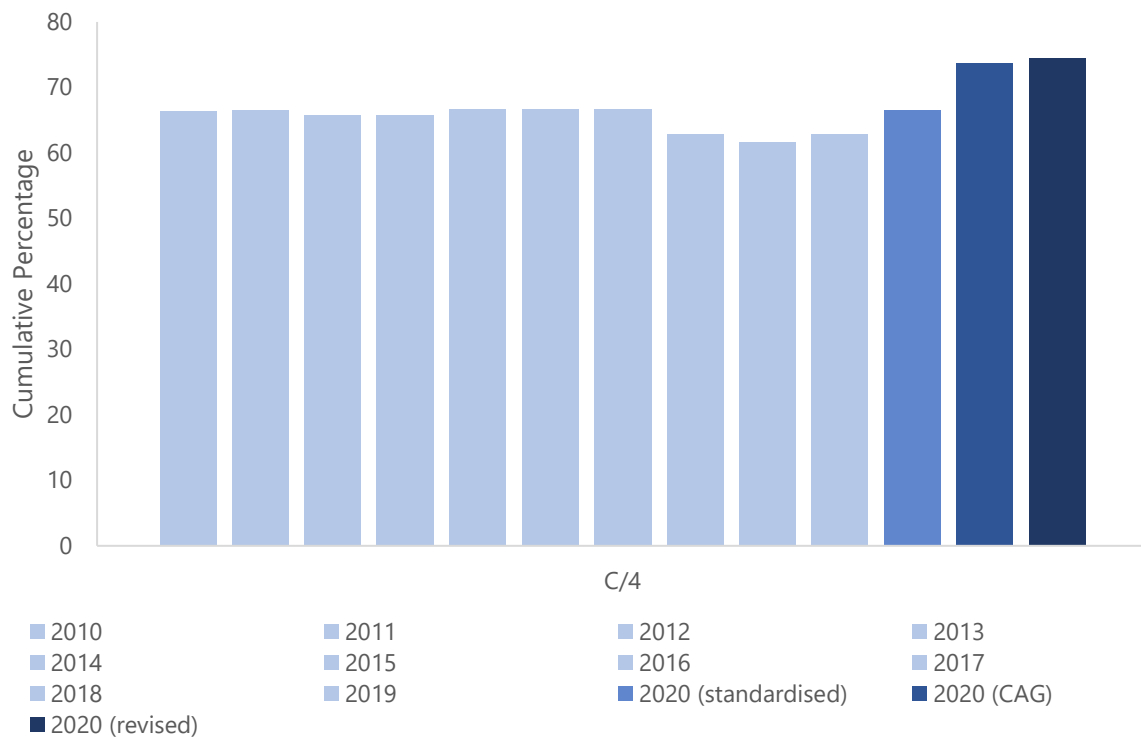
Figure 7.1: National GCSE summer cumulative A/7 results 2010-2020⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾



Source: 2010-2019 JCQ, 2020 awarding bodies

- (1) The data includes results for GCSEs graded A*-G designed for Wales as well as GCSEs graded 9-1 designed for England.
- (2) Includes full course and double award science (which is double counted) GCSE, but excluding short courses

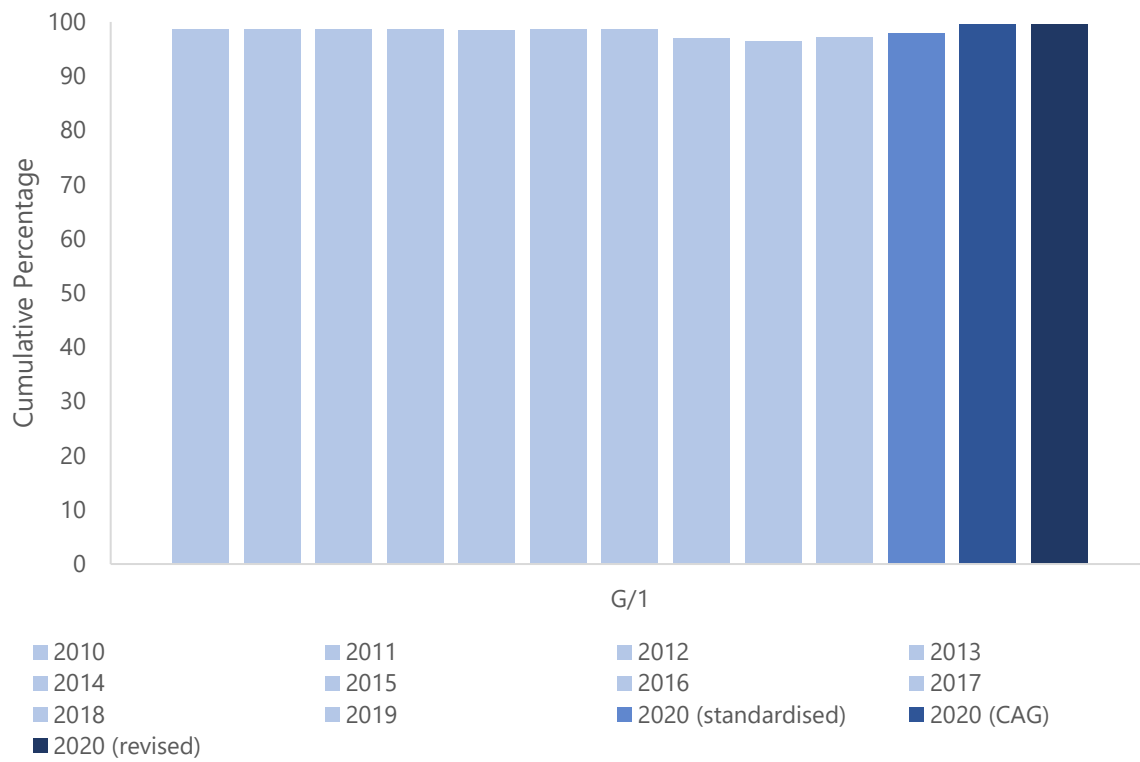
Figure 7.2: National GCSE summer cumulative C/4 results 2010-2020¹⁾⁽²⁾



Source: 2010-2019 JCQ, 2020 awarding bodies

- (1) The data includes results for GCSEs graded A*-G designed for Wales as well as GCSEs graded 9-1 designed for England.
- (2) Includes full course and double award science (which is double counted) GCSE, but excluding short courses

Figure 7.3: National GCSE summer cumulative G/1 results 2010-2020⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾



Source: 2010-2019 JCQ, 2020 awarding bodies

- (1) The data includes results for GCSEs graded A*-G designed for Wales as well as GCSEs graded 9-1 designed for England.
- (2) Includes full course and double award science (which is double counted) GCSE, but excluding short courses

The figures used in the following subsections on GCSE attainment gaps use data for all full course single award GCSEs, plus double award science. Double award science grades are counted as two separate grades. Short courses are excluded. This analysis includes both A*-G and 9-1 GCSEs and reports at selected matched grade thresholds, which is why cumulative results are presented at grades A/7, C/4, G/1. This is done to match the methodology of the JCQ main results tables as closely as possible.

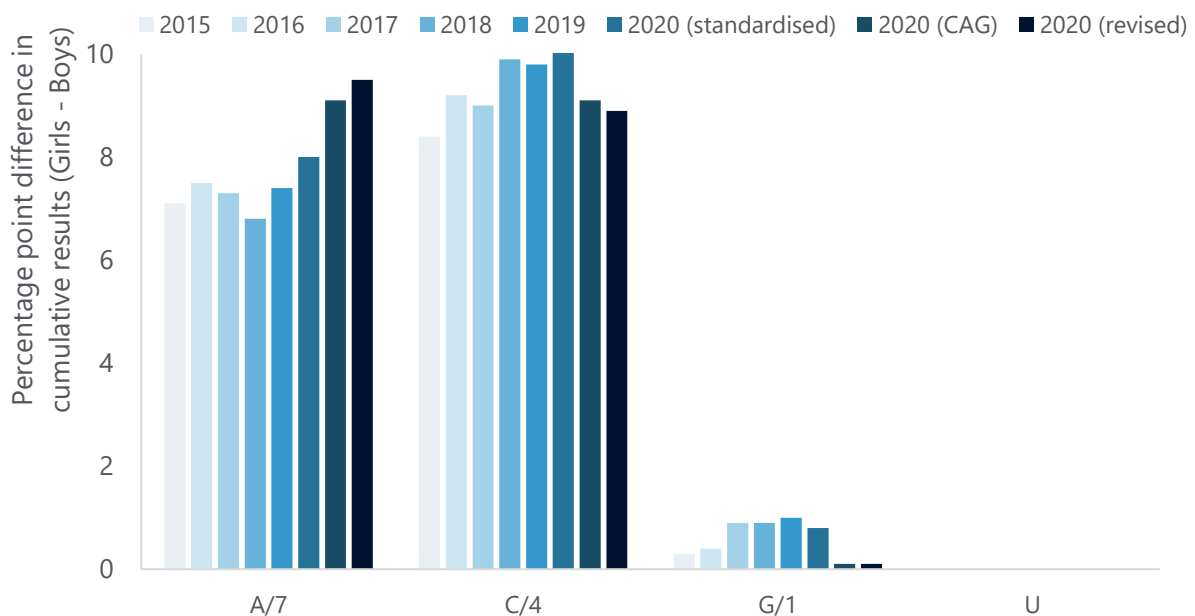
Attainment gap by gender

Figure 7.4 presents cumulative attainment gaps by gender over time. The 2020 revised results, centre assessment grades and standardised grades are compared to results from 2015 through to 2019.

The gender gap has widened in favour of girls at grade A/7 in the revised 2020 results compared to results between 2015 and 2019 and the standardised grades.

The gender attainment gap at G/1 is narrower than in recent years as nearly all learners of both genders are achieving at least G/1. The gap at C/4 is comparable to recent years.

Figure 7.4: GCSE attainment gap in cumulative results by gender at key grades⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾



Source: 2015-2019 JCQ, 2020 awarding bodies

- (1) The data includes results for GCSEs graded A*-G designed for Wales as well as GCSEs graded 9-1 designed for England.
- (2) Includes full course and double award science (which is double counted) GCSE, but excluding short courses

Table 7.3: GCSE summer cumulative percentage results by gender at key grades and percentage point attainment gaps⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾

Year	Girls				Boys				Gap (Girls – Boys)			
	A/7	C/4	G/1	U	A/7	C/4	G/1	U	A/7	C/4	G/1	U
2010	22.0	70.0	98.9	100.0	16.2	62.6	98.6	100.0	5.8	7.4	0.3	0.0
2011	22.5	70.3	98.9	100.0	16.3	62.5	98.6	100.0	6.2	7.8	0.3	0.0
2012	22.1	69.8	99.0	100.0	16.3	61.8	98.6	100.0	5.8	8.0	0.4	0.0
2013	22.8	70.1	98.9	100.0	15.4	61.1	98.5	100.0	7.4	9.0	0.4	0.0
2014	23.1	71.0	98.8	100.0	15.5	61.9	98.3	100.0	7.6	9.1	0.5	0.0
2015	22.6	70.7	98.8	100.0	15.5	62.3	98.5	100.0	7.1	8.4	0.3	0.0
2016	23.0	71.0	98.9	100.0	15.5	61.8	98.5	100.0	7.5	9.2	0.4	0.0
2017	21.5	67.3	97.3	100.0	14.2	58.3	96.4	100.0	7.3	9.0	0.9	0.0
2018	21.9	66.5	96.8	100.0	15.1	56.6	95.9	100.0	6.8	9.9	0.9	0.0
2019	22.0	67.6	97.7	100.0	14.6	57.8	96.7	100.0	7.4	9.8	1.0	0.0
2020 (standardised)	24.6	71.5	98.3	100.0	16.6	61.4	97.5	100.0	8.0	10.1	0.8	0.0
2020 (CAG)	29.1	78.1	99.6	100.0	20.0	69.1	99.4	100.0	9.1	9.1	0.1	0.0
2020 (revised)	30.6	78.9	99.6	100.0	21.1	70.0	99.5	100.0	9.5	8.9	0.1	0.0

Source: 2010-2019 JCQ, 2020 awarding bodies

(1) The data includes results for GCSEs graded A*-G designed for Wales as well as GCSEs graded 9-1 designed for England.

(2) Includes full course and double award science (which is double counted) GCSE, but excluding short courses

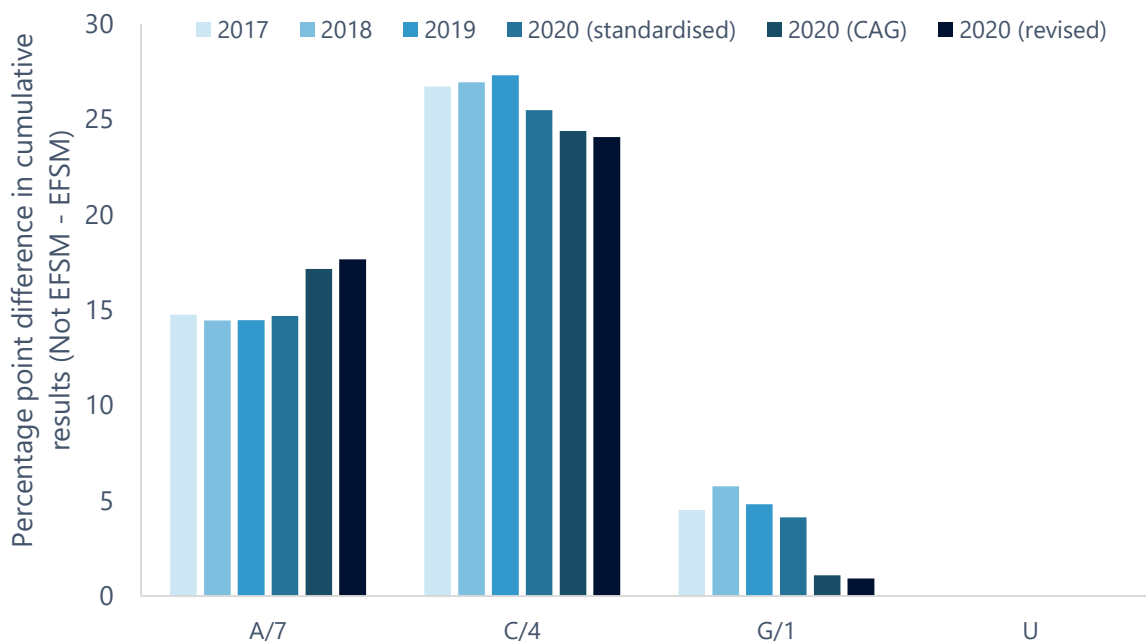
Attainment gap by eligibility for free school meals (16-year-olds)

As 2020 data for free school meal eligibility is only available for WJEC learners, the analysis for 2020 in this section relates only to WJEC qualifications. To ensure a valid comparison, the analysis only includes data for centres which are present in both the 2020 WJEC data and the 2016/17-2018/19 WEDPLASC data.

The attainment gap by free school meal eligibility at cumulative grade A/7 are wider in the revised GCSE results compared to attainment gaps in results in recent years and the standardised grades. The gap is narrower at cumulative C/4 and G/1.

Due to the overall increase in national results, those eligible for free school meals and those not eligible have higher revised results in 2020 than in 2019. However, increases in A/7 grades are larger in the revised results for those who are not eligible for free school meals, which increases the attainment gap at that grade threshold.

Figure 7.5: GCSE attainment gap in cumulative results by eligibility for free school meals at key grades, 16-year-olds⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾⁽³⁾



Source: 2017-2019 WEDPLASC, 2020 awarding bodies

- (1) The data includes results for GCSEs graded A*-G designed for Wales as well as GCSEs graded 9-1 designed for England.
- (2) Includes full course and double award science (which is double counted) GCSE, but excluding short courses.
- (3) Includes data only for those centres present in the 2020 WJEC data and previous WEDPLASC data.

Table 7.4: GCSE cumulative percentage results by eligibility for free school meals and percentage point attainment gaps, 16-year-olds ⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾⁽³⁾

Year	EFSM	Grades	A/7	C/4	G/1	U
2017	EFSM	31,895	7.2	44.1	93.5	100.00
2017	NotEFSM	194,345	22.0	70.8	98.1	100.00
2017	Gap (NotEFSM-EFSM)		14.8	26.7	4.5	0.00
2018	EFSM	35,530	6.9	41.5	91.8	100.00
2018	NotEFSM	198,715	21.3	68.5	97.5	100.00
2018	Gap (NotEFSM-EFSM)		14.4	26.9	5.7	0.00
2019	EFSM	32,995	6.6	41.6	93.3	100.00
2019	NotEFSM	220,535	21.1	68.9	98.1	100.00
2019	Gap (NotEFSM-EFSM)		14.5	27.3	4.8	0.00
2020 (standardised)	EFSM	35,610	8.0	45.8	94.6	100.00
2020 (standardised)	NotEFSM	224,205	22.7	71.2	98.7	100.00
2020 (standardised)	Gap (NotEFSM-EFSM)		14.7	25.5	4.1	0.00
2020 (CAG)	EFSM	35,610	10.3	53.9	98.7	100.00
2020 (CAG)	NotEFSM	224,205	27.5	78.3	99.7	100.00
2020 (CAG)	Gap (NotEFSM-EFSM)		17.2	24.4	1.1	0.00
2020 (revised)R	EFSM	35,610	11.0	54.9	98.9	100.00
2020 (revised)R	NotEFSM	224,205	28.7	79.0	99.8	100.00
2020 (revised)R	Gap (NotEFSM-EFSM)		17.7	24.1	0.9	0.00

Source: 2017-2019 WEDPLASC, 2020 WJEC

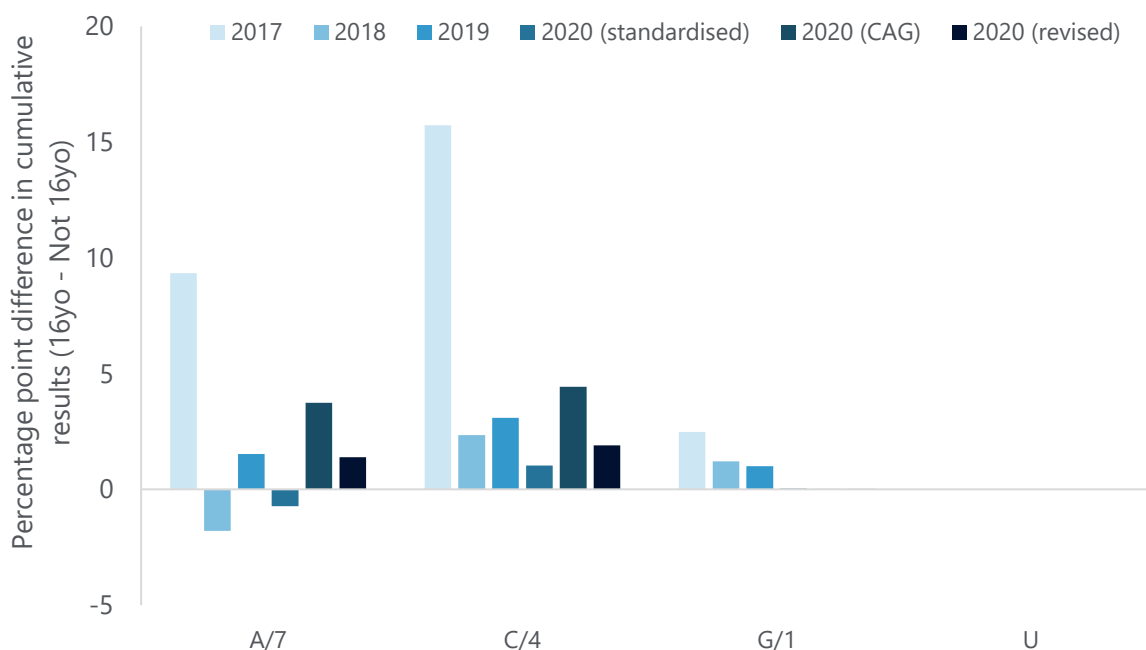
- (1) The data includes results for GCSEs graded A*-G designed for Wales as well as GCSEs graded 9-1 designed for England.
- (2) Includes full course and double award science (which is double counted) GCSE, but excluding short courses
- (3) Includes data only for those centres present in the 2020 WJEC data and previous WEDPLASC data

Attainment gap by age

Figure 7.6 presents cumulative attainment gaps by age over time. Standardised, CAG and revised 2020 results are compared to results in 2017, 2018 and 2019.

The attainment gap between 16yo and non-16yo is similar in revised results in 2020 compared to 2019 at grade A/7 and grade C/4 but has narrowed at grade G/1.

Figure 7.6: GCSE attainment gap in cumulative results by age at key grades⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾



Source: 2017-2019 WEDPLASC, 2020 awarding bodies

- (1) The data includes results for GCSEs graded A*-G designed for Wales as well as GCSEs graded 9-1 designed for England.
- (2) Includes full course and double award science (which is double counted) GCSE, but excluding short courses
- (3) Includes data only for those centres present in the 2020 awarding body data and previous WEDPLASC data

Table 7.5: GCSE summer cumulative percentage results by age and percentage point attainment gaps at key grades⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾⁽³⁾

Year	Age	Grades	A/7	C/4	G/1	U
2017	16yo	226,320	19.9	67.1	97.4	100.0
2017	Not16yo	50,515	10.5	51.3	94.9	100.0
2017	Gap (16yo-Not16yo)		9.3	15.7	2.5	0.0
2018	16yo	234,310	19.1	64.4	96.6	100.0
2018	Not16yo	14,720	20.9	62.0	95.4	100.0
2018	Gap (16yo-Not16yo)		-1.8	2.3	1.2	0.0
2019	16yo	254,080	19.2	65.2	97.4	100.0
2019	Not16yo	17,310	17.6	62.1	96.4	100.0
2019	Gap (16yo-Not16yo)		1.5	3.1	1.0	0.0
2020 (standardised)	16yo	261,765	20.6	67.5	98.0	100.0
2020 (standardised)	Not16yo	19,365	21.3	66.5	98.0	100.0
2020 (standardised)	Gap (16yo-Not16yo)		-0.7	1.0	0.0	0.0
2020 (CAG)	16yo	261,765	25.1	74.8	99.6	100.0
2020 (CAG)	Not16yo	19,365	21.3	70.3	99.5	100.0
2020 (CAG)	Gap (16yo-Not16yo)		3.7	4.4	0.0	0.0
2020 (revised)	16yo	261,765	26.2	75.5	99.6	100.0
2020 (revised)	Not16yo	19,365	24.8	73.6	99.6	100.0
2020 (revised)	Gap (16yo-Not16yo)		1.4	1.9	0.0	0.0

Source: 2017-2019 WEDPLASC, 2020 awarding bodies

- (1) The data includes results for GCSEs graded A*-G designed for Wales as well as GCSEs graded 9-1 designed for England.
- (2) Includes full course and double award science (which is double counted) GCSE, but excluding short courses
- (3) Includes data only for those centres present in the 2020 awarding body data and previous WEDPLASC data

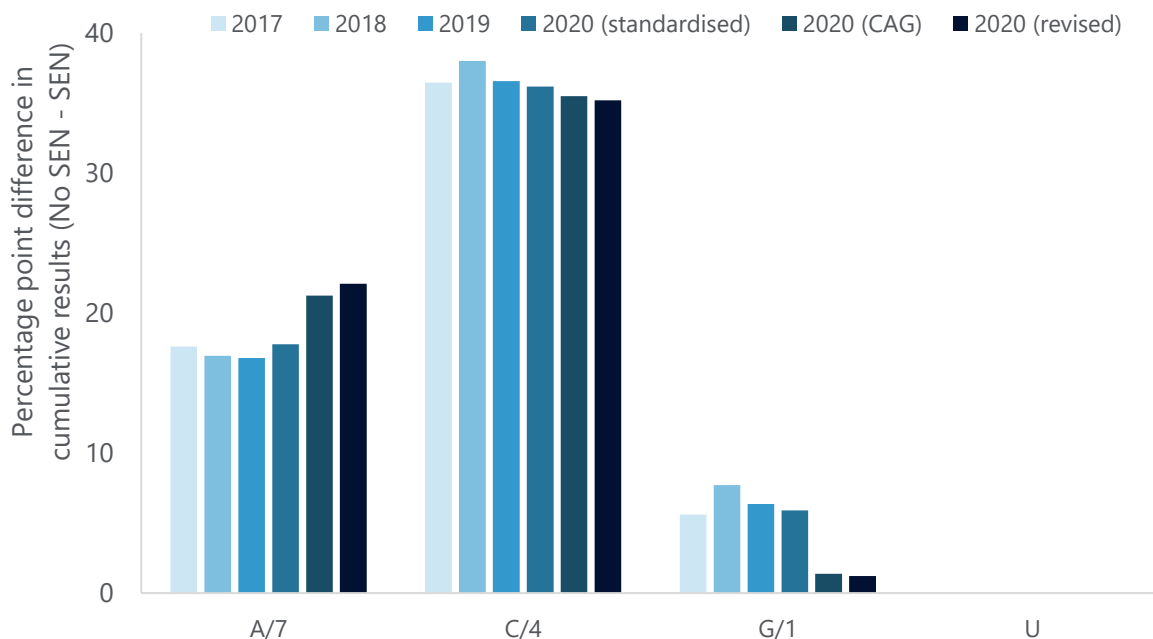
Attainment gap by special educational needs (SEN) provision (16-year-olds)

Data for 2020 relating to SEN provision is only available for learners taking WJEC qualifications. To ensure a valid comparison the analysis is done using only data for centres which are present in both the 2020 WJEC data and the 2016/17-2018/19 Welsh Government attainment data.

Attainment gaps by SEN provision at cumulative grade A/7 are wider in the 2020 CAG and revised GCSE results compared to attainment gaps in results in recent years. The gap is narrower at cumulative C/4 and G/1.

Due to the overall increase in national results, both those with and without SEN provision have higher revised results in 2020 than in 2019. However, percentage point increases in A/7 grades are larger in the revised results for those who are not eligible for free school meals, which increases the attainment gap at that grade threshold.

Figure 7.7: GCSE attainment gap in cumulative results by SEN provision at key grades, 16-year-olds⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾⁽³⁾⁽⁴⁾



Source: 2017-2019 WEDPLASC, 2020 awarding bodies

- (1) The data includes results for GCSEs graded A*-G designed for Wales as well as GCSEs graded 9-1 designed for England.
- (2) Includes full course and double award science (which is double counted) GCSE, but excluding short courses.
- (3) Includes data only for those centres present in the 2020 WJEC data and previous WEDPLASC data.

Table 7.6: GCSE summer cumulative percentage results by SEN provision and percentage point attainment gaps at key grades, 16-year-olds ⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾⁽³⁾

Year	SEN	Grades	A7	C4	G1	U
2017	On SEN register	40,800	5.5	37.3	92.8	100.0
2017	No SEN	185,075	23.1	73.7	98.4	100.0
2017	Gap (NoSEN-SEN)		17.6	36.5	5.6	0.0
2018	On SEN register	45,715	5.2	33.4	90.4	100.0
2018	No SEN	191,495	22.1	71.4	98.2	100.0
2018	Gap (NoSEN-SEN)		17.0	38.0	7.7	0.0
2019	On SEN register	49,440	5.4	35.5	92.3	100.0
2019	No SEN	207,240	22.2	72.0	98.6	100.0
2019	Gap (NoSEN-SEN)		16.8	36.6	6.4	0.0
2020 (standardised)	On SEN register	49,845	6.1	37.9	93.2	100.0
2020 (standardised)	No SEN	215,100	23.8	74.1	99.1	100.0
2020 (standardised)	Gap (NoSEN-SEN)		17.8	36.2	5.9	0.0
2020 (CAG)	On SEN register	49,845	7.7	45.8	98.4	100.0
2020 (CAG)	No SEN	215,100	28.9	81.3	99.8	100.0
2020 (CAG)	Gap (NoSEN-SEN)		21.2	35.5	1.4	0.0
2020 (revised)	On SEN register	49,845	8.1	46.7	98.6	100.0
2020 (revised)	No SEN	215,100	30.2	81.9	99.9	100.0
2020 (revised)	Gap (NoSEN-SEN)		22.1	35.2	1.2	0.0

Source: 2017-2019 WEDPLASC, 2020 awarding bodies

- (1) The data includes results for GCSEs graded A*-G designed for Wales as well as GCSEs graded 9-1 designed for England.
- (2) Includes full course and double award science (which is double counted) GCSE, but excluding short courses
- (3) Includes data only for those centres present in the 2020 WJEC data and previous WEDPLASC data

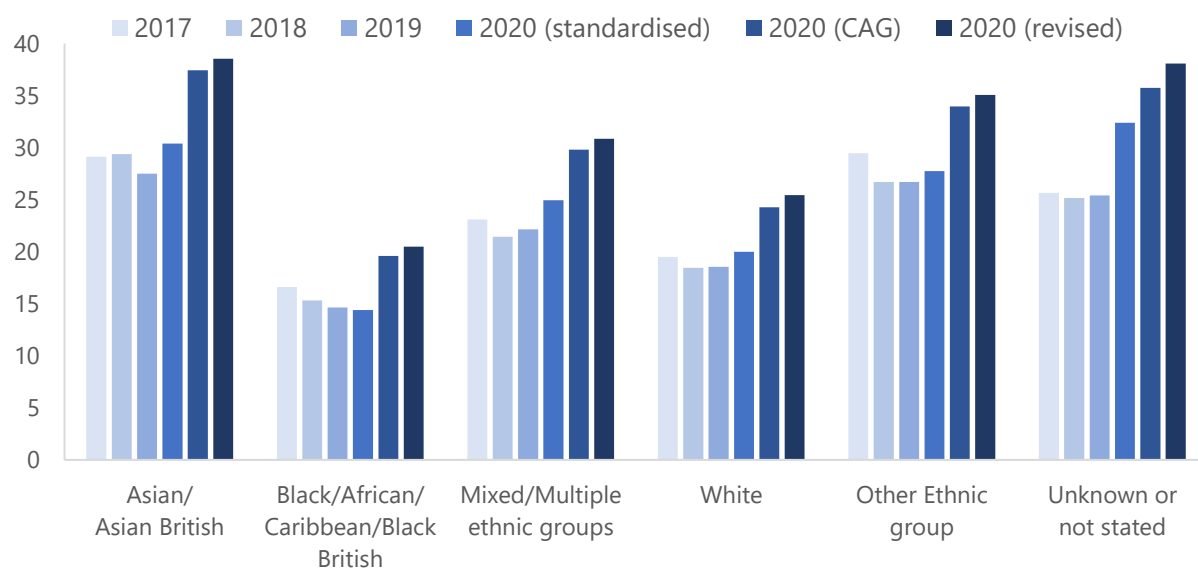
Results by ethnic background (16-year-olds)

Data for 2020 relating to ethnic background is only available for learners taking WJEC qualifications. To improve the validity of the comparison, analysis is done using only data for centres which are present in both the 2020 WJEC data and the 2016/17-2018/19 Welsh Government attainment data.

Due to small sample sizes, ethnic background data has been aggregated into broader ethnic groups, categorised as per Government Statistical Service guidance⁶. Interpretation of changes in percentages needs to be treated with particular caution because of the small number of learners and centres underlying the grades for a number of the ethnic categories. Changes in percentages may reflect small changes in the absolute number of grades and learners.

Figure 7.8 shows that, at cumulative A/7 revised results are higher for every group compared to 2019 largely due to the centre assessment grades. The standardised results were also higher with the exception of the Black/African/Caribbean/Black British category where results were stable compared to 2019. A similar pattern is evident at cumulative C/4, except that standardised results are higher for each group compared to 2019 at that threshold.

Figure 7.8: GCSE summer cumulative results at A/7 by ethnic background, 16-year-olds⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾⁽³⁾

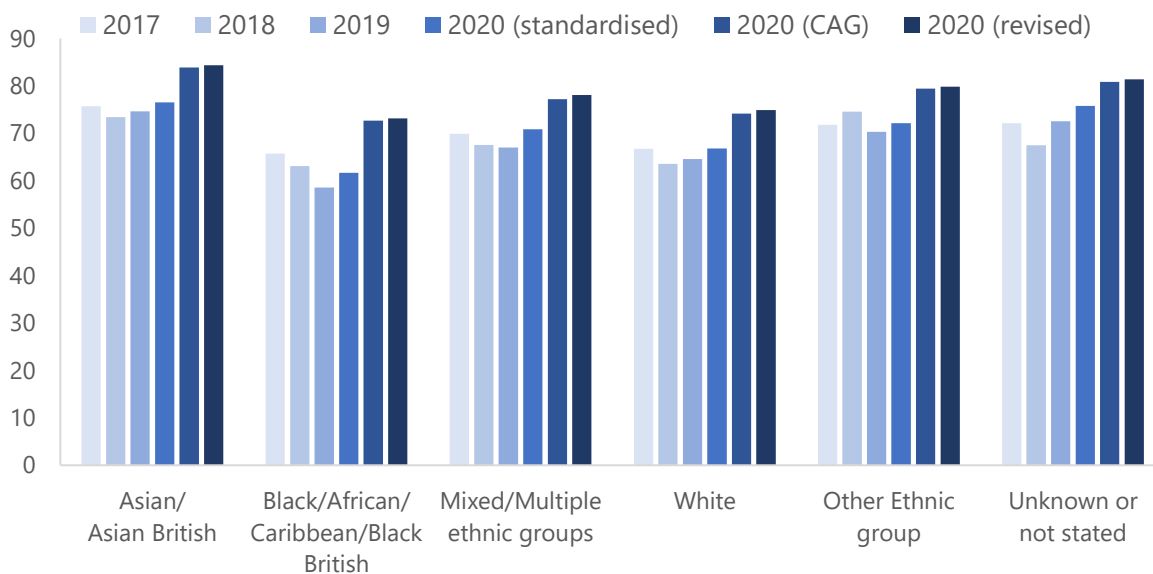


Source: 2017-2019 WEDPLASC, 2020 awarding bodies

- (1) The data includes results for GCSEs graded A*-G designed for Wales as well as GCSEs graded 9-1 designed for England.
- (2) Includes full course and double award science (which is double counted) GCSE, but excluding short courses.
- (3) Includes data only for those centres present in the 2020 WJEC data and previous Welsh Government data.

⁶ <https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/policy-store/ethnicity/#wales->

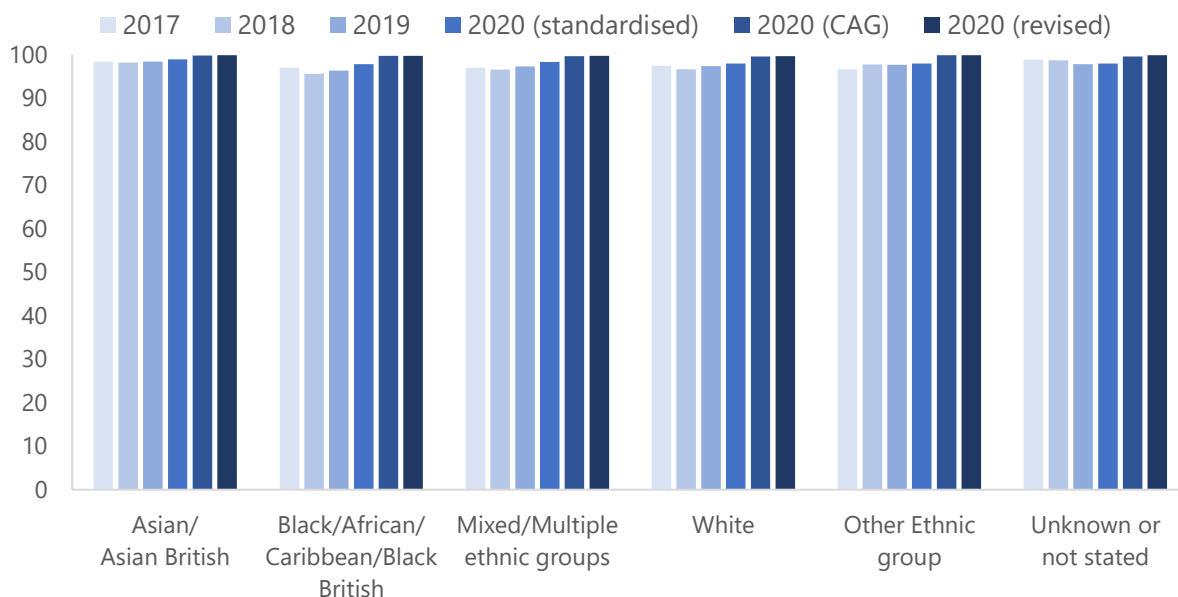
Figure 7.9: GCSE summer cumulative results at C/4 by ethnic background, 16-year-olds (1)(2)(3)



Source: 2017-2019 WEDPLASC, 2020 awarding bodies

- (1) The data includes results for GCSEs graded A*-G designed for Wales as well as GCSEs graded 9-1 designed for England.
- (2) Includes full course and double award science (which is double counted) GCSE, but excluding short courses.
- (3) Includes data only for those centres present in the 2020 WJEC data and previous Welsh Government data.

Figure 7.10: GCSE summer cumulative results at G/1 by ethnic background, 16-year-olds (1)(2)(3)



Source: 2017-2019 WEDPLASC, 2020 awarding bodies

- (1) The data includes results for GCSEs graded A*-G designed for Wales as well as GCSEs graded 9-1 designed for England.
- (2) Includes full course and double award science (which is double counted) GCSE, but excluding short courses.
- (3) Includes data only for those centres present in the 2020 WJEC data and previous Welsh Government data.

Table 7.7: GCSE summer cumulative results by ethnic background at key grades, 16-year-olds⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾⁽³⁾

Year	Ethnic background	Grades	Learners	A7	C4	G1	U
2017	Asian/Asian British	5,065	635	29.1	75.7	98.4	100.0
2017	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	1,725	230	16.6	65.7	97.0	100.0
2017	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups	4,870	640	23.1	69.9	97.0	100.0
2017	White	210,465	27,900	19.5	66.8	97.4	100.0
2017	Other Ethnic group	2,340	305	29.5	71.8	96.6	100.0
2017	Unknown or not stated	1,410	175	25.7	72.1	98.9	100.0
2018	Asian/Asian British	5,445	640	29.4	73.4	98.2	100.0
2018	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	2,050	240	15.3	63.1	95.6	100.0
2018	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups	5,520	665	21.4	67.6	96.5	100.0
2018	White	220,485	26,900	18.5	63.6	96.6	100.0
2018	Other Ethnic group	2,705	315	26.7	74.6	97.7	100.0
2018	Unknown or not stated	1,005	120	25.1	67.5	98.7	100.0
2019	Asian/Asian British	6,555	730	27.5	74.6	98.4	100.0
2019	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	2,190	245	14.6	58.6	96.4	100.0
2019	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups	6,980	790	22.1	67.0	97.3	100.0
2019	White	236,470	27,345	18.5	64.6	97.4	100.0
2019	Other Ethnic group	3,160	350	26.7	70.3	97.7	100.0
2019	Unknown or not stated	1,320	150	25.4	72.5	97.8	100.0
2020 (standardised)	Asian/Asian British	6,635	725	30.4	76.5	98.9	100.0
2020 (standardised)	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	2,225	265	14.4	61.7	97.8	100.0
2020 (standardised)	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups	7,170	800	25.0	70.9	98.4	100.0

2020 (standardised)	White	244,190	27,825	20.0	66.8	98.0	100.0
2020 (standardised)	Other Ethnic group	3,395	390	27.7	72.1	97.9	100.0
2020 (standardised)	Unknown or not stated	1,335	150	32.4	75.8	98.0	100.0
2020 (CAG)	Asian/Asian British	6,635	725	37.4	83.9	99.8	100.0
2020 (CAG)	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	2,225	265	19.6	72.7	99.7	100.0
2020 (CAG)	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups	7,170	800	29.8	77.2	99.7	100.0
2020 (CAG)	White	244,190	27,825	24.3	74.2	99.6	100.0
2020 (CAG)	Other Ethnic group	3,395	390	34.0	79.4	99.9	100.0
2020 (CAG)	Unknown or not stated	1,335	150	35.8	80.9	99.6	100.0
2020 (revised)	Asian/Asian British	6,635	725	38.5	84.4	99.8	100.0
2020 (revised)	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	2,225	265	20.5	73.2	99.7	100.0
2020 (revised)	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups	7,170	800	30.8	78.1	99.7	100.0
2020 (revised)	White	244,190	27,825	25.4	74.9	99.6	100.0
2020 (revised)	Other Ethnic group	3,395	390	35.1	79.8	99.9	100.0
2020 (revised)	Unknown or not stated	1,335	150	38.1	81.4	99.9	100.0

Source: 2017-2019 WEDPLASC, 2020 WJEC

- (1) The data includes results for GCSEs graded A*-G designed for Wales as well as GCSEs graded 9-1 designed for England.
- (2) Includes full course and double award science (which is double counted) GCSE, but excluding short courses.
- (3) Includes data only for those centres present in the 2020 WJEC data and previous WEDPLASC data.

8. Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate

The Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate is equivalent in size and demand to an A level. It uses the same grading scale and carries the same UCAS tariff points.

National results

Table 8.1 shows that the revised Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate grades are higher than those published on Thursday 13 August 2020, and also substantially higher than results between 2017 and 2019.

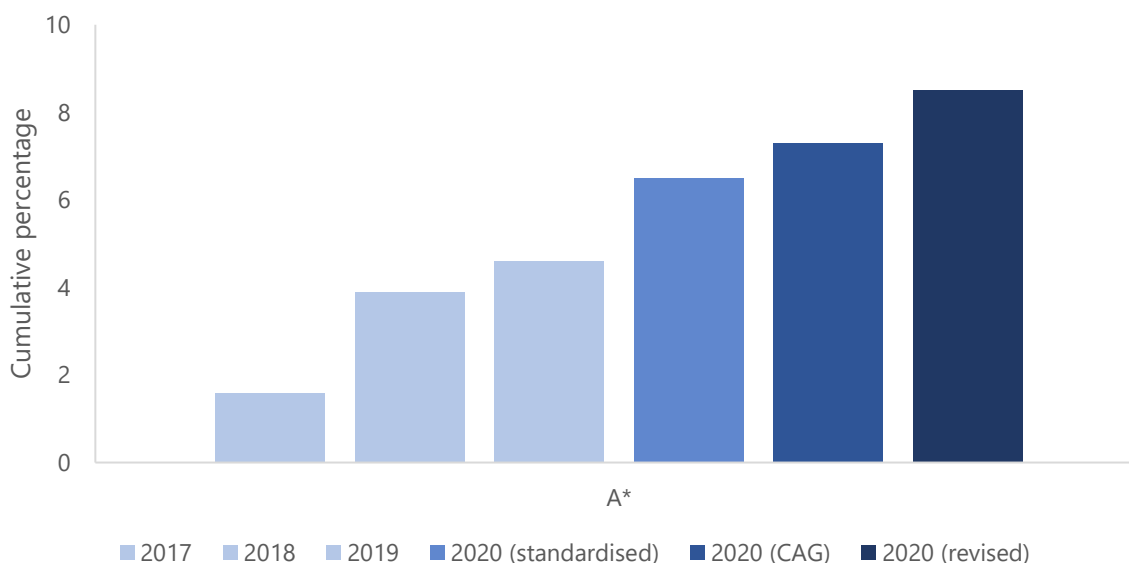
Table 8.1: Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate Revised Provisional Results 2017 - 2020 (cumulative percentage) ⁽¹⁾

	A*	A*-A	A*-E	Number of grades
2020 (revised)⁽²⁾	8.5	28.8	99.6	11,795
2020 (CAG)⁽²⁾	7.3	27.9	99.4	11,485
2020 (standardised)⁽²⁾	6.5	22.7	98.0	11,795
2019	4.6	21.7	97.8	11,880
2018	3.9	21.5	97.7	12,015
2017	1.5	14.6	94.0	11,120

Source: WJEC

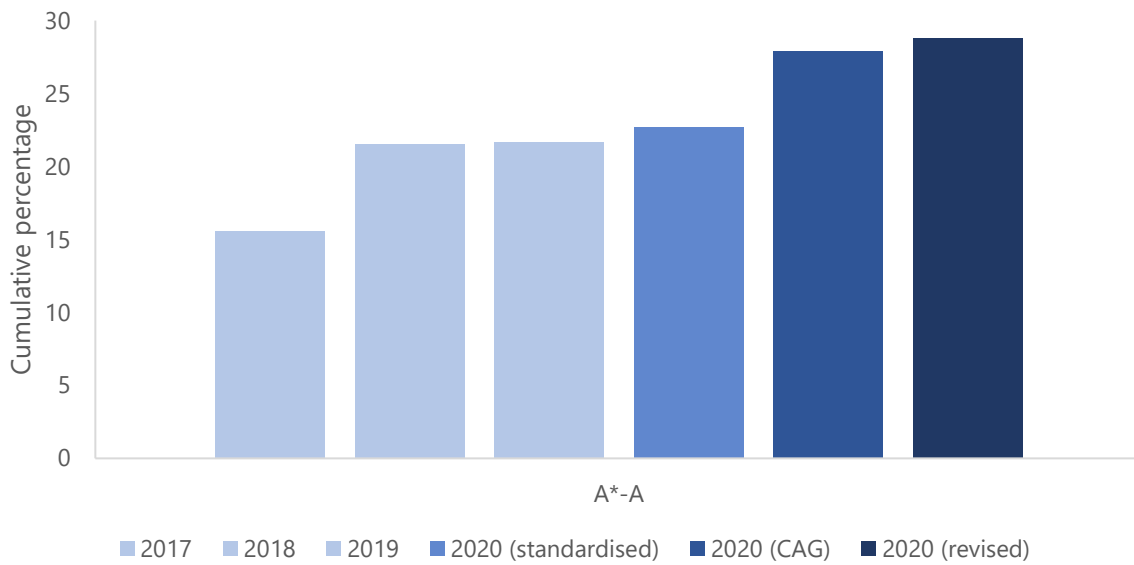
- (1) The provisional figures for 2017 – 2019 are used to provide a valid comparison to the 2020 figures which are provisional
- (2) Published are the calculated results released on 13 August. Revised are results published by WJEC on 20 August 2020.

Figure 8.1: Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate summer A* results 2017-2020



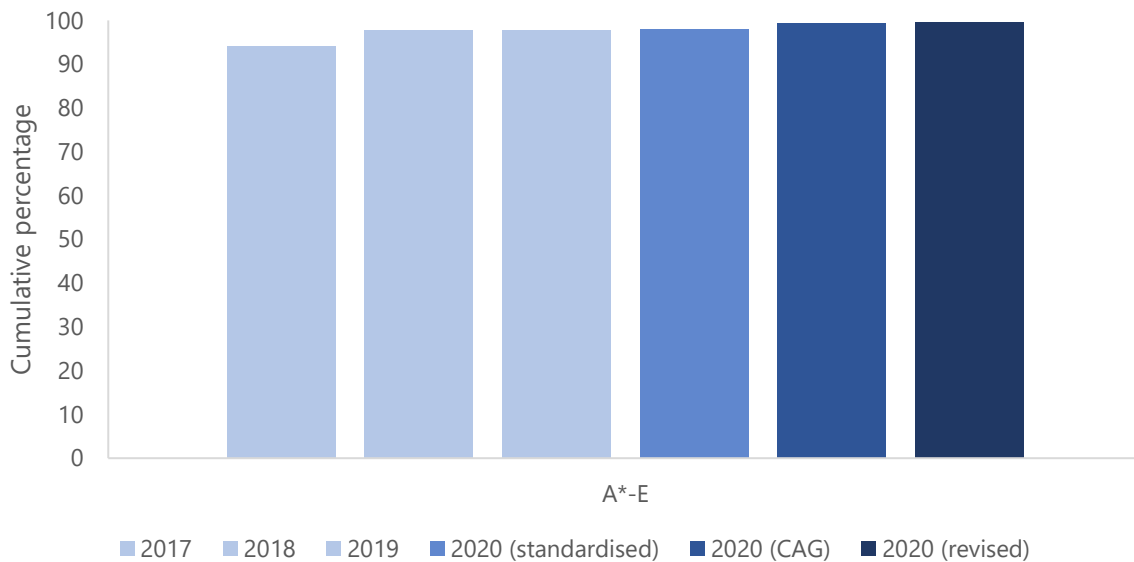
Source: WJEC

Figure 8.2: Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate summer A*-A results 2017-2020



Source: WJEC

Figure 8.3: Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate summer A*-E results 2017-2020

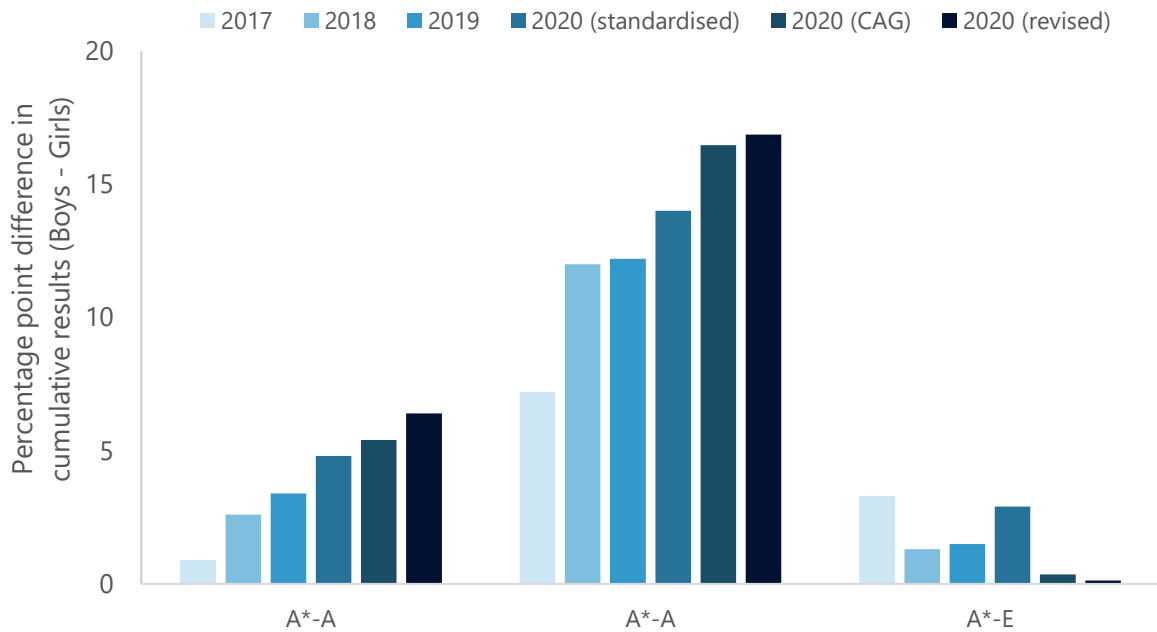


Source: WJEC

Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate by gender

The gender gaps have widened at A* and A*-A in the revised results, whereas the gender attainment gap at A*-E is narrower than it was previously.

Figure 8.4: Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate cumulative gender attainment gaps⁽¹⁾



Source: WJEC

(1) The 2020 figures are provisional figures. All other figures are final results as these are the only results by gender available.

Table 8.2: Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate Results gender attainment gaps 2017 – 2019 (cumulative percentage)⁽¹⁾

Year	Gender	A*	A*-A	A*-E
2017	Girls	2.0	18.8	95.5
2017	Boys	1.1	11.6	92.2
2017	Gap (Girls - Boys)	0.9	7.2	3.3
2018	Girls	5.0	26.8	98.3
2018	Boys	2.4	14.8	97.0
2018	Gap (Girls - Boys)	2.6	12.0	1.3
2019	Girls	6.1	27.0	98.5
2019	Boys	2.7	14.8	97.0
2019	Gap (Girls - Boys)	3.4	12.2	1.5
2020 (standardised)	Girls	8.6	28.9	93.9
2020 (standardised)	Boys	3.8	14.9	96.8
2020 (standardised)	Gap (Girls - Boys)	4.8	14.0	2.9
2020 (CAG)	Girls	9.7	35.1	99.6
2020 (CAG)	Boys	4.3	18.7	99.2
2020 (CAG)	Gap (Girls – Boys)	5.4	16.5	0.4
2020 (revised)	Girls	11.4	36.2	99.6
2020 (revised)	Boys	5.0	19.3	99.5
2020 (revised)	Gap (Girls - Boys)	6.4	16.9	0.1

Source: WJEC

(1) The 2020 figures are provisional figures. All other figures are final results as these are the only results by gender available.

9. Key Stage 4 Skills Challenge Certificate

The Key Stage 4 Skills Challenge Certificate is a level 1 / 2 qualification taken alongside GCSEs in schools.

National results

Tables 9.1 and 9.2 show that the revised calculated Key Stage 4 Skills Challenge Certificate grades are higher than results between 2017 and 2019.

Table 9.1: Key Stage 4 Skills Challenge Certificate Revised Provisional Results 2020 (cumulative percentage)

	A*	A*-A	A*-C	A*-Pass	Numbers Sat
2020 (revised)	5.7	19.9	89.1	99.5	28,200
2020 (CAG)	5.3	19.2	87.6	99.2	27,350
2020 (standardised)	3.4	14.4	84.2	98.9	28,190

Source: WJEC

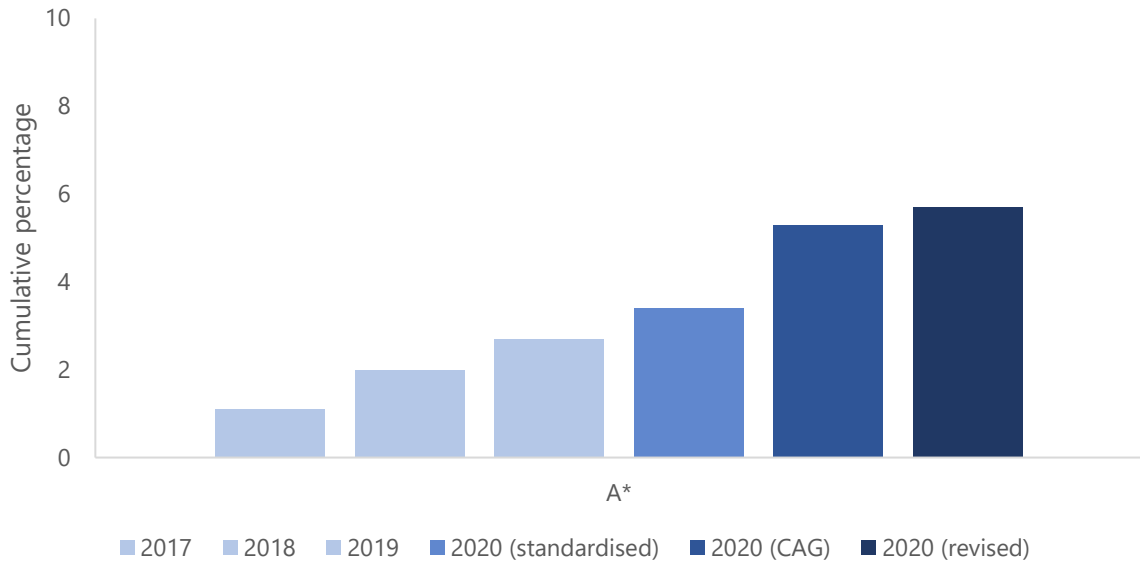
Table 9.2: Key Stage 4 Skills Challenge Certificate Provisional Results 2017 – 2019 (cumulative percentage)⁽¹⁾

	A*	A*-A	A*-C	A*-Pass	Numbers Sat
2019	2.7	14.0	83.9	98.5	27,345
2018	2.0	10.7	82.8	98.0	26,935
2017	1.1	7.0	67.5	92.7	21,755

Source: WJEC

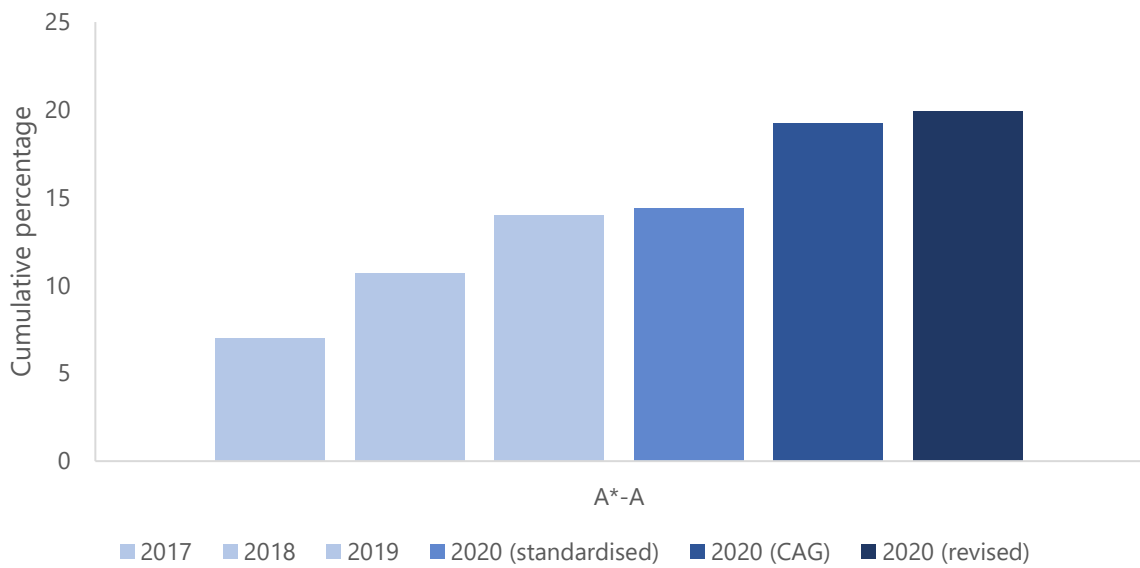
(1) The provisional figures are used to provide a valid comparison to the 2020 figures which are provisional

Figure 9.1: Key Stage 4 Skills Challenge Certificate summer A* results 2017-2020



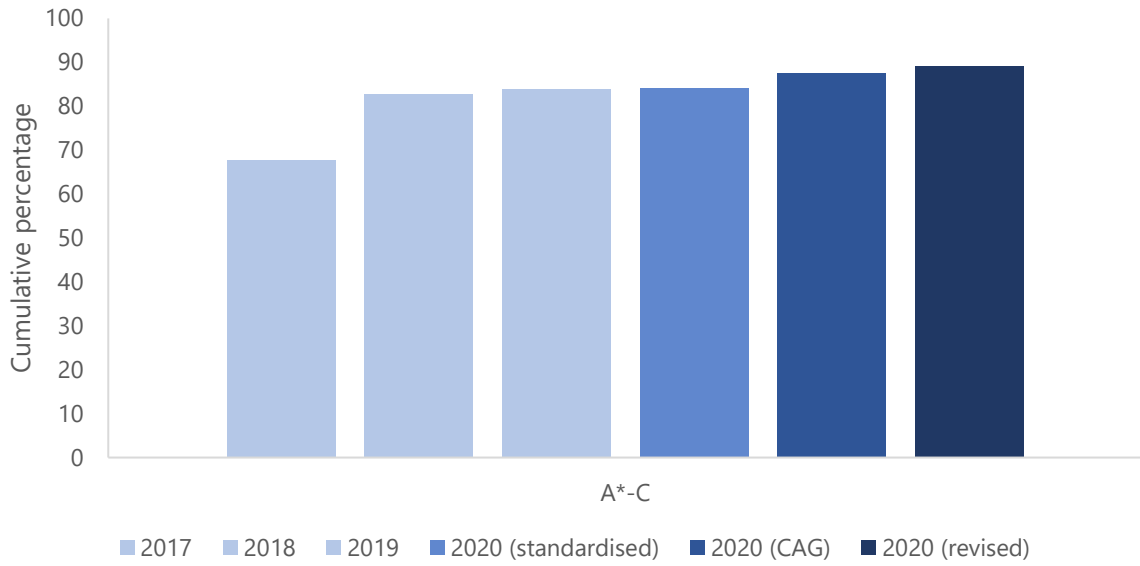
Source: WJEC

Figure 9.2: Key Stage 4 Skills Challenge Certificate summer A*-A results 2017-2020



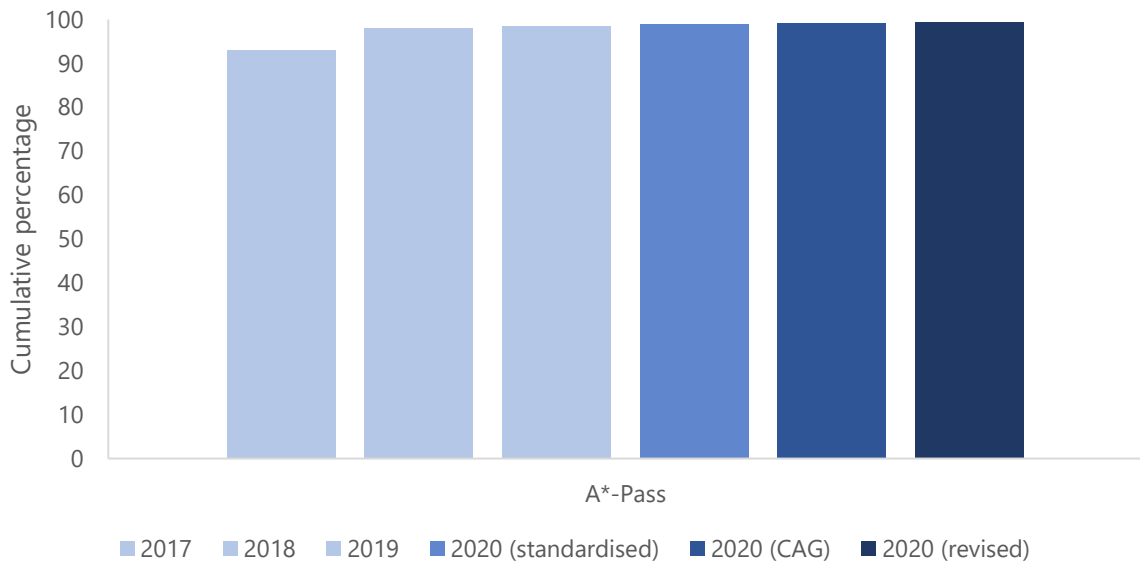
Source: WJEC

Figure 9.3: Key Stage 4 Skills Challenge Certificate summer A*-C results 2017-2020



Source: WJEC

Figure 9.4: Key Stage 4 Skills Challenge Certificate summer A*-Pass results 2017-2020

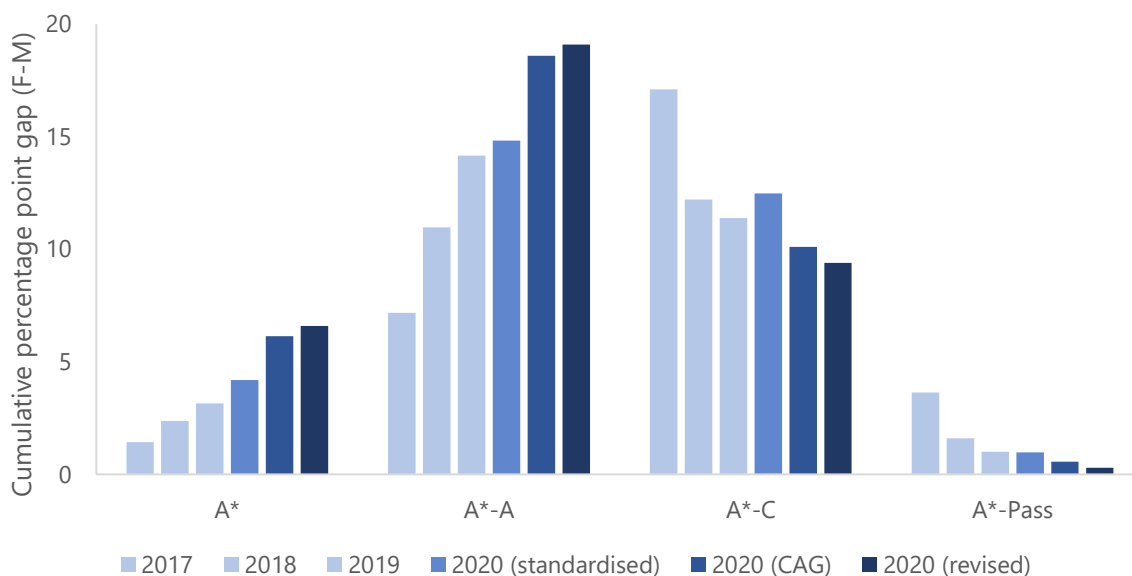


Source: WJEC

Key Stage 4 Skills Challenge Certificate by gender

The gender gaps have widened at A* and A*-A in the revised results but narrowed at A*-C, and A*-Pass in comparison to previous years.

Figure 9.5: Key Stage 4 Skills Challenge Certificate cumulative gender attainment gaps⁽¹⁾



Source: WJEC

(1) The 2020 figures are provisional figures. All other figures are final results as these are the only results by gender available.

Table 9.3: Key Stage 4 Skills Challenge Certificate Results gender attainment gaps 2017 – 2019 (cumulative percentage)⁽¹⁾

Year	Gender	A*	A*-A	A*-C	A*-Pass
2017	Girls	1.8	10.6	76.2	94.7
2017	Boys	0.4	3.4	59.1	91.1
2017	Gap (Girls - Boys)	1.4	7.2	17.1	3.6
2018	Girls	3.2	16.2	88.9	98.8
2018	Boys	0.8	5.2	76.7	97.2
2018	Gap (Girls - Boys)	2.4	11.0	12.2	1.6
2019	Girls	4.3	21.0	89.5	99.0
2019	Boys	1.1	6.9	78.2	98.0
2019	Gap (Girls - Boys)	3.1	14.1	11.3	1.0
2020 (standardised)	Girls	5.5	21.9	90.5	99.4
2020 (standardised)	Boys	1.3	7.1	78.0	98.4
2020 (standardised)	Gap (Girls - Boys)	4.2	14.8	12.5	1.0
2020 (CAG)	Girls	8.4	28.6	92.7	99.4
2020 (CAG)	Boys	2.3	10.0	82.6	98.9
2020 (CAG)	Gap (Girls – Boys)	6.1	18.6	10.1	0.6
2020 (revised)	Girls	9.0	29.6	93.8	99.7
2020 (revised)	Boys	2.4	10.5	84.4	99.4
2020 (revised)	Gap (Girls – Boys)	6.6	19.1	9.4	0.3

Source: WJEC

(1) The 2020 figures are provisional figures. All other figures are final results as these are the only results by gender available.

10. Further analysis by ethnic background

It was not possible to include analysis of the attainment gap by ethnic background for AS and A level as in most ethnic background groups the number of learners is insufficient to support a robust initial analysis (see Tables 10.1 to 10.4). Analysis by ethnic background will require a more careful approach to account better for small sample sizes and confounding factors. We will build this into the more detailed equalities analysis of this summer's results that we will publish.

Table 10.1: Number of grades in available AS data by ethnic background⁽¹⁾ of the learner

Ethnic background	2017	2018	2019	2020
Asian/Asian British	905	890	790	1,020
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	200	220	190	245
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups	640	670	635	830
White	21,090	20,350	18,510	23,680
Other Ethnic group	345	305	365	405
Unknown or not stated	140	170	135	175

Source: Welsh Government

(1) Categorised as per Government Statistical Service advice (<https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/policy-store/ethnicity/#wales->).

Table 10.2: Number of learners in available AS data by ethnic background⁽¹⁾

Ethnic background	2017	2018	2019	2020
Asian/Asian British	345	320	300	365
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	85	85	80	95
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups	235	245	245	295
White	8,240	8,040	7,395	8,905
Other Ethnic group	130	120	140	145
Unknown or not stated	50	65	55	65

Source: Welsh Government

(1) Categorised as per Government Statistical Service advice (<https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/policy-store/ethnicity/#wales->).

Table 10.3: Number of grades in available A level data by ethnic background⁽¹⁾ of the learner

Ethnic background	2017	2018	2019	2020
Asian/Asian British	610	640	650	650
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	160	130	150	145
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups	475	505	525	530
White	19,010	18,020	17,415	16,970
Other Ethnic group	210	290	245	265
Unknown or not stated	120	115	245	115

Source: Welsh Government

(1) Categorized as per Government Statistical Service advice
<https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/policy-store/ethnicity/#wales->.

Table 10.4: Number of learners in available A level data by ethnic background⁽¹⁾

Ethnic background	2017	2018	2019	2020
Asian/Asian British	250	265	250	265
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	65	65	65	70
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups	190	200	215	220
White	8,040	7,585	7,305	7,185
Other Ethnic group	90	115	105	110
Unknown or not stated	50	45	95	50

Source: Welsh Government

(1) Categorized as per Government Statistical Service advice
<https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/policy-store/ethnicity/#wales->.

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 20

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 23.11.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 24.11.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **9th December 2020**

Report Subject: **Blaenau Gwent Education Services DRAFT Self – Evaluation Findings**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Joanne Collins, Executive Member for Education**

Report Submitted by: **Lynn Phillips, Corporate Director of Education**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
✓	✓	24.11.20			15.09.20	09.12.20		

1. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of the report is to provide the Executive Committee with an opportunity to contribute to the findings of ongoing self-evaluation processes undertaken within the Education Directorate, across the Council and with key partners.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 Blaenau Gwent Education Services are committed to self-review and self-improvement and view these processes as being fundamental to securing ongoing improvement in outcomes, quality and effectiveness. The Education Directorate has adopted a standardised approach for self-evaluation (SE) that is now embedded into the day to day practice. This has been reviewed to align with Estyn's new inspection framework for Local Government Education Services (LGES). This report looks at the emerging findings against the inspection framework for Local Government Education Services (LGES), which will inform evaluations of progress against the key improvement priorities set out in business improvement plans.
- 2.2 The report provides a high-level narrative and the Education Directorate's Self-Evaluation Policy (appendix 1), which sets out the arrangements for effective self-evaluation. The findings from the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) are reflected as actions for improvement in the Directorate's Business Plans at Directorate, Service and Team level. Effective self-evaluation means that the Directorate remains focussed on improving the right things.
- 2.3 A comprehensive data set of school performance, coupled with evaluations of impact and effectiveness of Council based and brokered support feeds into the overall evaluation. It should be noted, however, that self-evaluation is an on-going process and the SER will need to be updated to reflect the 2019-20 provisional KS4 and Post 16 results during the Autumn term 2020.

2.4 A comprehensive self-evaluation process helps identify those areas where progress has been made and where further improvement is required. Emerging findings, via ongoing self-evaluation is captured every Autumn and Spring time as well as via quarterly performance and finance reporting mechanisms. This report details the high-level findings only and these are shown in the Summary SER attached as appendix 2. Moreover, it is the high-level points only, which are presented in the narrative in this report shown under Section 6.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 This report has been approved by Education DMT, CLT and Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee prior to submission to The Executive Committee. The Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee requested that reducing the performance gap between genders be included as an area for development and this report has been reflected to include this,

3.2 **Option 1:** to accept the report as presented.

Option 2: to reject the report as presented.

This report provides the Committee with important and statutory performance monitoring information, as well as opportunity to identify where progress has been made and where further improvement is required.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 **Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

One of the objectives in the Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan aims for every child to have the best start in life. Through effective self-evaluation and improvement planning processes, we seek to ensure that provision is appropriate and able to meet the needs of children and young people, so that their progress and performance is as good as it ought to be.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

5.1.1 The Council allocates approximately £42.8 million (2019/20) to schools via the Individual Schools Budget (ISB) to provide high quality education and to improve pupil outcomes. The Council's total gross budgeted expenditure per pupil for 2019/20 was £6,372 which is the 4th highest in Wales and £515 above the Welsh average of £5,857.

5.1.2 For 2019/20 the funding delegated to schools was 85.7% which is above the all Wales average and ranked 1st when compared to the family of schools, (Local Authority Budgeted Expenditure on Schools 2019/20). The Education Directorate has an improving position on a 'value for money' basis, in that

performance and school categorisation has improved significantly and the overall central funding has reduced, in line with public sector austerity measures.

- 5.1.3 The Council commissions the Education Achievement Service (EAS) to deliver the statutory functions of school improvement. The annual financial costs being circa £364,000. Schools categorisation profile has improved over the last 5 years against a backdrop of decreasing financial contributions to the EAS: this therefore, effectively represents good value for money. The Education Directorate holds the EAS to account for the impact and effectiveness of their work in schools in Blaenau Gwent.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

- 5.2.1 Risk is associated with weak self-evaluation that fails to accurately identify those areas where good progress has been made and where further improvement is needed. Strong self-evaluation helps services target resources at greatest need and hence bring about improvement precisely where it is needed.
- 5.2.2 Risk is associated with underperformance and ineffective processes to improve performance and progress in identified schools. Failure to raise standards is identified as a key risk to the Council, both in terms of reputation and pupil life chances. This is reflected in the Education Directorate and EAS risk registers.
- 5.2.3 Mitigating actions include:
- strong self-evaluation processes, which accurately identify those areas which need to improve the most;
 - the routine monitoring of quantitative and qualitative information, regular quality assurance meetings between the Council and the EAS, regular quality assurance meetings within the Education Directorate and across teams, school inspection findings and school categorisation results; and,
 - the progress schools make towards targets is also monitored on a termly basis. School safeguarding processes are also closely monitored.
- 5.2.4 Holistic support packages are devised via regular cross service meetings between OD, Finance, Health and Safety, Education and School Governor Support Services. School level performance data is regularly analysed and evaluated to identify emerging trends.
- 5.2.5 The quality of provision i.e. the quality teaching and learning in classrooms is monitored and supported via the EAS. The quality of school leadership is also supported extensively by the EAS via a range of programmes and school-to-school networks.

5.3 **Legal**

This report provides information about statutory, end of Key Stage school performance underpinned by processes set out the School Standards and Organisation Act Wales (2013) support strategic and operational activity to improve pupil outcomes.

5.4 **Human Resources**

None for this report.

6. **Performance Information**

6.1 **Performance**

Areas where good progress has been made:

- School inspection and school categorisation profile has improved significantly with no primary schools in follow up and excellent practice identified in a number of schools;
- GCSE L2 English and Capped 9 improved;
- GCSE A*/A grades improved in English and Maths;
- Post 16 A-level A*-C and A*-E grades were greater than all-Wales means;
- Value-added progress in English and Maths, reading and numeracy for our 7 and 11 year olds have improved;
- The Youth Service exceeded that of the all-Wales means for reach and accredited learning outcomes;
- Primary persistent absenteeism reduced to below that of the all-Wales means;
- The School Based Counselling Service provides good support;
- Permanent exclusions reduced;
- Strong progress through the 21st Century schools programme;
- The Headteacher induction and support programme was very well received by aspiring and new Headteachers;
- The staff wellbeing survey was good; and
- The Council and EAS are evidencing improving value for money.

6.2 **Areas where further improvement is required:**

- Higher levels of language acquisition in our very young children in the early years;
- Improved attainment of eFSM pupils and particularly our more able pupils in the early years and throughout education;
- Improve school attendance;
- Progress between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, particularly in English, Maths and Science;
- Further improving provision for pupils with additional learning needs;
- Continuing the work with two schools in an Estyn category; and
- Reduce school exclusions and support parents/carers who opt to Elective Home Educate (EHE).
- Reduce the gender gap

The Council will continue to work with partners across the Council, for example, Children's Services, Regeneration, Legal, Finance and Organisational Development to focus the work on improving pupil outcomes

and supporting school leaders. The Council will also continue to work with the Education Achievement Service (EAS) to support our school leaders to improve pupil outcomes and wellbeing. There are changes that it is anticipated be introduced to the reporting and accountability framework for academic year 2020-20 linked to the COVID-19 emergency response, particularly a relaxation in the requirements for School and Council performance reporting arrangements.

6.3 Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)

The Directorate's self-evaluation processes are aligned with LGES and the regional policy for monitoring, supporting, evaluation and intervention in schools through the categorisation process is derived from the National Categorisation Framework. The categorisation process will be suspended in academic year 2020-21.

6.4 *Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)*

Analysis of individual school performance data is a key element in ensuring that schools are known well by the Council so that appropriate support and intervention can be directed towards areas of greatest need. Effective self-evaluation processes ensure that resources are targeted at greatest need and secure improvement in longer term.

6.5 *Preventative focus*

Through effective self-evaluation processes, support and monitoring of school performance, early identification of emerging areas for improvement can be identified with consequent early intervention to secure improvement. The effectiveness of the Council's monitoring, support, evaluation and intervention programmes ensure that preventative action is taken early in order to minimise the escalation of concerns.

6.6 *Collaboration / partnership working*

The Council collaborates with neighbouring local authorities through the South East Wales Consortium for the provision of school improvement services from the Education Achievement Service (EAS) and a range of pupil support services for specific groups such as visually and hearing impaired learners.

6.7 *Integration (across service areas)*

Effective monitoring, support, evaluation and intervention are fundamental to the Council's wellbeing objectives.

6.8 *EqIA (screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)*

There is no requirement for EQIA assessment since there only a limited change of policy or practice. However, implementation of the Council's monitoring, support, evaluation and intervention practice in schools has a positive impact on children and young people and on staff within a particular school. By improving the quality of education, standards and wellbeing are improved for all children and young people.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

- 7.1 Monitoring of the emerging findings of self-evaluation is an important mechanism for ensuring that Members of Executive are sufficiently informed to enable them to make informed decisions regarding the quality of education provision and hence pupil outcomes and wellbeing. There are well-established processes in place to ensure that business plans are considerate of emerging findings for improvement.

Background Documents / Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 – Self-Evaluation Policy
- Appendix 2 - High Level Summary

Blaenau Gwent County Council

EDUCATION DIRECTORATE

SELF EVALUATION POLICY

September 2020

1. Introduction

Blaenau Gwent Education Services are committed to self-review and self-improvement and view these processes as being fundamental to securing ongoing improvement in outcomes, quality and effectiveness.

The Education Directorate has adopted a standard approach for self-evaluation (SE) that is now embedded into the day to day practice. This has been reviewed to align with Estyn's new inspection framework for Local Government Education Services (LGES).

Self-evaluation activities are undertaken throughout the year and the self-evaluation report (SER) for LGES is updated in October and March of every academic year. Updates are aligned to data release dates from Welsh Government and other time points when data and information becomes available.

At the heart of self-evaluation process are four key questions:

- How well are we doing?
- How do we know?
- What do we need to do to improve further?
- How are we going to do it?

The established self-evaluation processes allows both the Council and the Education Directorate to take a critical reflective look at practice, performance and effectiveness. In this way, the Council is corporately able to ensure that its work remains focused on those areas that require improvement and is aligned to the provisions set out in the LGES framework and is aligned to our statutory obligations. The Education Directorate endeavours to ensure that all our children and young people and our educational establishments are well supported to achieve and make good progress in all learning settings across the school estate and partners e.g. Coleg Gwent and the Post 16 Learning Zone.

2. Who should be involved?

All relevant stakeholders should be involved in evaluating the Council's Education Services to ensure its continued effectiveness. To achieve this, a range of approaches are used to ensure that any barriers to participation and engagement

are minimised and where possible removed. Moving forward, this will be verified on an annual basis with additional quality assurance processes undertaken to further secure the engagement of stakeholders in this key process. To support this process, a summary SER has been developed at the end of the self-evaluation cycle. The document will highlight the key areas of progress and areas for further improvement and can be used for elected members, schools and wider stakeholders.

The summary SER document is to be distributed to the key stakeholders to ensure that they understand the organisational context and are able to recognise their important contribution to facilitate further improvement. Going forward, this will be managed through core business activities that are aligned to business as usual activities, where officers will provide greater context e.g. breakfast meetings, member briefing sessions, open evenings, parents and other corporate road show events.

For consistency, the following grading question is used in order to assess the response to the question and is used to inform the judgement as to how well the Education Directorate takes account the view of stakeholders in its improvement planning and the services it offers.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
----------------	-------	----------	-------------------	------------

3. What should be involved?

Self-evaluation will involve:

- Asking deep and searching questions about outcomes and progress, quality of provision and effectiveness of leadership and management;
- Using a range of performance data to inform and guide reflections, including that of matched data to inform judgements about progress for specific groups of learners;
- Using other information such as the Corporate Improvement Plan and family benchmarking data relevant to the particular context;
- Using ongoing reflections and enquiry into practice;
- Considering the needs of children and young people (and the various groups) in context; and,
- Using evidence from a range of sources to inform and support self-evaluation, both qualitative and quantitative.

Officers and commissioned services use a FADE approach to support the collection of this information with individual FADE requirements being set out in a FADE Register. The FADE Register also acts as a deployment list for officers and stakeholders. Deployment of FADEs is kept under review by the Education Directorate's Management Team. The Corporate Director oversees the process and

the compilation of the final SER. To complement this policy a SE Toolkit has been devised comprising aides to support the SE processes.

The toolkit is updated on an annual basis in the summer term based upon the learning from the previous self-evaluation cycle.

4. Why have self-evaluation processes?

- To provide an evidence base upon which to arrive at judgements about pupil outcomes and progress, quality of provision and the effectiveness of leadership and management of Education Services and its future improvement journey;
- To reflect on what has been done to consistently deepen understanding;
- To recognise and celebrate good practice, and where appropriate, use this to support others in line with the Vision for Education and our agreed approach to a school-led, school to school methodology;
- To ensure that stakeholders understand the context of the organisation and the contribution that they can make to further facilitate improvement; and
- To improve the performance, impact and effectiveness of Education Services and its constituent parts, including commissioned services to further enable officers and schools to make informed decisions for our children and young people.

The SE process is a cyclical one and the high level activities are summarised below, however, it should be noted that the COVID-19 response will have an impact on some aspects of self-evaluation work in 2020-21 academic year, such as suspending school categorisation:

Date	What
April to August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provisional Teacher Assessment analysis • Performance analysis (school LA vulnerable learners and ALN) • Categorisation review • Self-evaluation toolkit updated • FADES completed in line with the register for last academic year • Improvement tracker for year ahead developed • Emerging findings are reflected as actions in Directorate’s business plans
September to March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All business plans completed on a quarterly basis. • Heads of Service challenge sessions via Wider Corporate Leadership Team (WCLT). • Categorisation confirmed.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning from current self-evaluation process to inform next process.
--	---

MER: Monitoring (gathering the evidence), Evaluation (arriving at judgments) and Review (making changes as a result) are fundamental components to the improvement process and hence self-evaluation (SE). Findings from SE underpin all business, service and team plans.

There are a range of approaches in place to support this which include:

- Regular reporting to Scrutiny and Executive Committee meetings and Full Council.
- Regular reporting to the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT).
- Termly Estyn monitoring meetings with the Local Authority Link Inspector (LALI) meetings.
- Regular reporting to Directorate Management Team (DMT) meetings.
- Individual – evaluation of the effectiveness and the performance of Heads of Service through peer challenge sessions and the quality assurance FADEs and the resultant business improvement plans.
- Departmental – through team meetings, processes to hold the EAS to account such as regular EAS/ other commissioned service quality assurance meetings, DMT, FADE approach, Directorate business plan
- Monitoring by specific officer groups e.g. ALN QA, School Admission Forum, Budget Forum, JCC, HT meetings etc.
- Headteachers – engagement with Headteachers occurs throughout the year and evaluated as part of the agreed approach to self-evaluation. This work is further supplemented by a two yearly questionnaire of the assessment of the quality of the services offered by education, which coupled with the level of buy back of SLA services offered to schools which are arranged on a 3 yearly basis provide an overview of the level of satisfaction. Engagement on the draft summary SER takes place at cluster level and is facilitated by Education DMT representatives in the latter part of the autumn term. This work is concluded with the final SER presented to Headteachers for final comment in the spring term.

5. Summary

The purpose of self-evaluation is to secure ongoing improvement across services, particularly to enhance wellbeing and progress in pupil outcomes. Self-evaluation is not done in isolation and will be influenced by stakeholders with a key interest and ability to support the implementation of any identified agreed action.

The provision of high quality and tailored education services, which both support and challenge learners is a complex process frequently requiring highly effective

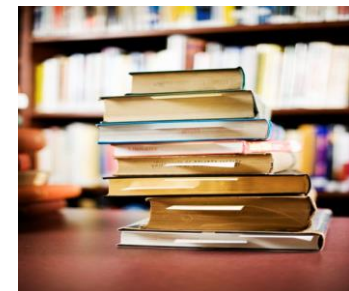
partnership and collaborative working and the involvement of stakeholders being a fundamental aspect to the Council's now mature approach to SE. The Self-Evaluation Policy is considerate of these complex arrangements and seeks to simplify and share the understanding, process and purpose of effective self-evaluation so that ongoing improvement is secured.

This policy is under review in September 2020 and features in the Council's Scrutiny/Executive forward work programmes. The implementation of this policy will be monitored via regular DMT meetings, through performance coaching sessions with relevant officers and by elected members via the forward work programme.

This page is intentionally left blank



Education Directorate Self-Evaluation Summary Report Date: Summer 2020



Contents:

Context		
Blaenau Gwent School and Local Authority - Context		2

Executive Summary		3
--------------------------	--	----------

Inspection Area 1 – Outcomes		
1.1 Standards and Progress Overall	Areas where good progress has been made and how we know	4
	Areas for improvement and how we are going to do it	6
1.2 Standards and Progress of Specific Groups	Areas where good progress has been made and how we know	7
	Areas for improvement and how we are going to do it	9
1.3 Well-being and Attitudes to Learning	Areas where good progress has been made and how we know	10
	Areas for improvement and how we are going to do it	10

Inspection Area 2 – Education Services		
2.1 Support for school improvement	Areas where good progress has been made and how we know	11
	Areas for improvement and how we are going to do it	12
2.2 Support for Vulnerable Learners	Areas where good progress has been made and how we know	12
	Areas for improvement and how we are going to do it	13
2.3 Support for Other Services	Areas where good progress has been made and how we know	14
	Areas for improvement and how we are going to do it	15

Inspection Area 3 – Leadership and Management		
3.1 Quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Areas where good progress has been made and how we know	15
	Areas for improvement and how we are going to do it	16
3.2 Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Areas where good progress has been made and how we know	16
	Areas for improvement and how we are going to do it	16
3.3 Professional learning	Areas where good progress has been made and how we know	17
	Areas for improvement and how we are going to do it	17
3.4 Safeguarding	Areas where good progress has been made and how we know	17
	Areas for improvement and how we are going to do it	18
3.5 Use of Resources	Areas where good progress has been made and how we know	18
	Areas for improvement and how we are going to do it	19

Blaenau Gwent - Context

Blaenau Gwent has 25 schools and their status is detailed below:

- 2 are Maintained 3-16 Learning Communities,
- 1 Foundation Comprehensive,
- 1 Maintained Comprehensive,
- 1 x Maintained 3-18 Special School,
- 1 x Maintained 3-16 SEBD Special School; and,
- 19 Primaries (of which 4 are voluntary aided / faith schools)

There are currently circa 9,000+ pupils on roll across all Blaenau Gwent schools. The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) captures the extent of deprivation as a proportion of residents living in each lower super output area (LSOA). The eight considerations of the WIMD are: income; employment; health; education, skills and training; geographical access to services; housing; physical environment; and community safety. Blaenau Gwent has the highest percentage of its LSOAs areas in the most deprived areas across Wales at 10%, for income (19.1%), education (27.7%), and community safety (23.4%).

The proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals in Blaenau Gwent was almost 30% during 2010-16 and the highest of all LAs in Wales by a significant margin. The proportions declined during 2016-19, but BG remained the 2nd highest in Wales for all LA schools and highest for secondary schools during 2018-19. Given the evidential relationship between pupil performance and deprivation (using eFSM as a proxy indicator), pupil outcomes in BG would be expected to be among the lowest in Wales. However, within Blaenau Gwent we have high ambitions for all of our learners and our socio-economic standing is a challenge that we are working to overcome to the benefit of all of our children and young people.

Overall, the 2019 WIMD figures and high eFSM eligibility reflect very high levels of deprivation within the authority. They also indicate the significant consideration required to improve educational outcomes to levels within other similar LAs and to consistently match the all-Wales averages. 2018-19 performance figures show that Blaenau Gwent has achieved parity, and indeed, out-performed some LAs in a number of measures confirming the progress being made within its schools.

The 2020 KS4 and Post 16 KS5 provisional results will be included in the Summary SER during the Autumn term to inform the on-going self-evaluation process, however, there is recognition the outcomes were awarded via the Centre Assessment Grades (CAGs) and/or the awarding examination body's assessed grade.

Executive Summary:

This Executive Summary is a high-level analysis of key strategic areas of progress, and importantly, aspects of work identified for improvement across the Estyn Local Government Education Services (LGES) framework. There are clearly more details in the Main Self-Evaluation Report (SER), however, the Executive Summary provides a high-level synopsis to enable the Education Directorate, the Council and key partners to understand and focus on critical strands of work to continue to improve outcomes for children and young people across the County Borough. The information detailed in this document regularly features in the self-evaluation reports presented to Scrutiny and Executive Committees. The Council will continue to work with partners across the Council, for example, Children's Services, Regeneration, Legal, Finance and Organisational Development to focus the work on improving pupil outcomes and supporting school leaders. The Council will also continue to work with partners, such as the Education Achievement Service (EAS) to support our school leaders to improve pupil outcomes and wellbeing. There are changes that will be introduced to the reporting and accountability framework for academic year 2020-20 linked to the COVID-19 emergency response, particularly a relaxation in the requirements for School and Council performance reporting arrangements. Clearly, the Education Directorate will need to remain focussed on self-evaluation procedures, as outlined in the review of the SE Policy 2020, particularly an analysis of the provisional KS4 and Post 16 results during the Autumn term 2020.

Blaenau Gwent's Education Services are committed to self-review and self-improvement and view these processes as being fundamental to securing ongoing improvement in outcomes, quality and effectiveness. The Education Directorate has adopted a standardised approach for self-evaluation (SE) that is now embedded into the day to day practice. This has been reviewed to align with Estyn's new inspection framework for Local Government Education Services (LGES). This Summary SER looks at the emerging findings against the inspection framework for Local Government Education Services (LGES), which will inform evaluations of progress against the key improvement priorities set out in business and improvement plans.

Key Strategic Areas of Progress

Areas where good progress has been made:

School inspection and school categorisation profile has improved significantly with no primary schools in follow up and excellent practice identified in a number of schools;

- GCSE L2 English and Capped 9 improved;
- GCSE A*/A grades improved in English and Maths;
- Post 16 A-level A*-C and A*-E grades were greater than all-Wales means;
- Value-added progress in English and Maths, reading and numeracy for our 7 and 11 year olds have improved;
- The Youth Service exceeded that of the all-Wales means for reach and accredited learning outcomes;

- Primary persistent absenteeism reduced to below that of the all-Wales means;
- The School Based Counselling Service provides good support;
- Permanent exclusions reduced;
- Strong progress through the 21st Century schools programme;
- The Headteacher induction and support programme was very well received by aspiring and new Headteachers;
- The staff wellbeing survey was good; and
- The Council and EAS are evidencing improving value for money.

Key Strategic Areas for Improvement

Areas where further improvement is required:

- Higher levels of language acquisition in our very young children in the early years;
- Improved attainment of eFSM pupils and particularly our more able pupils in the early years and throughout education;
- Improve school attendance;
- Reducing the gender gap between boys and girls;
- Progress between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, particularly in English, Maths and Science;
- Further improving provision for pupils with additional learning needs;
- Continuing the work with two schools in an Estyn category; and,
- Reduce school exclusions and support parents/carers who opt to Elective Home Educate (EHE).

1.1 Standards and Progress Overall - Areas where good progress has been made and how we know

Foundation Phase

- Almost two-thirds of schools improved LLCE results in 2019, while a similar proportion of schools exceeded their targets in MD.

Key Stage 2

- LA-level FP-KS2 value-added progress in:
 - NC maths was above the national figure.
 - Language was a little higher than expected in 2019.
 - Progress in reading was seen in about two-thirds of mainstream schools (about half in 2019) and numeracy reasoning was better than expected in most schools.

- The majority of schools had similar or higher L4+ results compared to their 2019 targets.
- School categorisation and inspection outcomes have improved in recent years.

Key Stage 3

- Two out of four schools improved L5+ English outcomes & three schools improved their L5+ oracy & writing results in 2019.
- L6+ outcomes improved for English 2017-19 and particularly for 2019.
- Three of the four schools improved L6+ outcomes in English and Welsh 2nd language during 2019 and three schools improved their reading & writing results.
- At LA-level literacy outcomes (oracy, reading & writing) all improved in 2019 with modest improvements made in MFL & PE.
- LA-level KS2-3 value-added progress in reading improved from the previous year
- LA-level progress in numeracy reasoning was also better than expected and twice that for reading.
- 3 of the 4 mainstream secondary schools maintained or improved progress for NC English

Key Stage 4

- Capped 9 points score improved in 2019 and achieved the LA target
- The proportion of learners gaining A*/A grades improved in both English and maths in 2019.
- The LA-level Welsh Bacc result was higher than expected in relation to the LA's eFSM entitlement.
- Higher than expected ranking in relation to eFSM except for numeracy & science. This was particularly so for the Skills Challenge Certificate result which ranked 7th out of the 22 Welsh LAs.
- The proportion of learners attaining A*-C grades in Welsh 1st language increased in 2019 with an improving trend during the last 2 years. 17% of the Welsh-medium cohort attained A*/A grades in Welsh 1st language.
- Abertillery improved outcomes in all but one performance indicator in 2019.
- The proportion of learners gaining A*/A grades in maths improved in every mainstream school in 2019 and in 3 out of 4 mainstream schools for English & capped 9 points scores.

Post-16

- At A level and AS level, the proportions of learners attaining A*-C and A*-E grades were a higher than the all-Wales means in 2019.
- For vocational courses, attainment rates in 2019 were similar to or higher than in the previous year except for L3.
- Entry level learners were 100% successful.

Youth Service

- In 2018/19, 2,010 (17%) of 11-25 year olds were registered as Reach and supported by the Youth Service (Wales 16%). Of these, 301 (15%) gained 456 nationally recognised accreditations.
- In addition, the Youth Service recorded 7,298 anonymous contacts during 2018-19 through the 11-18 Counselling Service, C Card, detached youth work, outreach and out of school activities and events, 1,000 more than previous year.
- Current data indicates 1.69% of learners being NEET. The all Wales figure has not yet been published.

1.1 Standards and Progress Overall - Areas for improvement and how we are going to do it

Areas identified for Improvement and Action Required

Foundation Phase

- BG and national averages at LO4+ and LO5+ fell for all performance indicators during the last 2 years with the fall being greater for BG in 2019, increasing the performance gap.
- LO6+ differences between BG and national means in 2019 were greatest for PSD.
- A majority of schools attained lower than target results in 2019 indicating inaccuracy and unreliability within school target setting procedures.
- **There is a need to develop value-added procedures for Reception Year to Y2 in order to determine the progress made by pupils within the Foundation Phase.**

Key Stage 2

- Welsh and Welsh 2nd language outcomes fell to a greater extent in 2019 with the latter having a declining trend during the last 2 years.
- L4+ writing outcomes fell more noticeably in 2019.
- Underperforming schools (for NC assessments) the same as in previous years and these continue to be of concern with regard to pupils' learning and standards achieved.
- FP-KS2 value-added progress in NC language moved below the national figure.
- **A minority of schools had inconsistencies between NC and national test progress scores. This questions the accuracy and reliability of assessment procedures within these centres.**

Key Stage 3

- L5+ outcomes fell in 2019, particularly for maths, science art, history and geography. All results were lower than the 2019 national means and particularly so for MFL and history. These falls reflect those observed within Wales as a whole. There is a concern regarding assessment reliability at two of the four LA schools.
- A majority of schools had results below their 2019 targets at both L5+ & L6+. Results also indicate target setting as generally unreliable in schools at KS3 (as in previous years).
- LA-level KS2-3 value-added progress in NC English and maths fell considerably in 2019 and was well below the national figure in both subjects. Progress in NC maths was barely adequate and was unsatisfactory in NC English.
- A significant proportion of pupils regressed more than 10 SAS points in both reading and numeracy reasoning during 2016-19. An inordinate number of these pupils were from one centre.
- Some schools had inconsistencies between NC and national test progress scores. This questions the accuracy and reliability of assessment procedures within these centres.

Key Stage 4

- Results for the new National Measures and in relation to the LA's eFSM entitlement were all lower than the national means.
- The proportion of learners gaining L2+ and 5 A*/A grades in 2019 was below the LA targets and fell by about 2%, well below the national mean.
- L2 maths & numeracy outcomes fell in 3 out of the 4 mainstream schools in 2019.
- Learner outcomes for Tredegar fell in over one-half of performance indicators in 2019.
- KS3-4 value-added progress
 - declined for both English and maths in nearly all schools during 2017-19 compared with previous years.
 - for maths was much weaker than for English in all mainstream schools.
- Too many pupils failed to progress (or even regressed) in English and particularly in maths in KS4 during 2017-19. On average, pupils at Abertillery and Brynmawr made no progress or regressed in maths during 2017-19.
- For WG modelled estimates, all residuals were negative except for the Welsh Bacc Skills Challenge result.
- Welsh 2nd language full-course results fell for all grade indicators in 2019 (as was the case nationally) and were lower than the all-Wales figures for higher grade levels.
- The proportion of pupils achieving no qualifications doubled to 2.4% in 2019 and was over twice as high as the all-Wales average.

Post 16

- The proportion of learners attaining higher level grades (A*/A) at both A and AS level has increased in 2019, although is still below the Wales benchmark level so is an area for further improvement.
- There has been a small dip in vocational success rates in 2018-2019 and there is room for improvement at L2 courses, which is currently at 80% completion rate. Success rates across the board, however, remain relatively strong.
- Embed process initiated in October 2019 where Coleg Gwent provides monthly updates on retention rates and specific learner withdrawals.

Risk Considerations

- The risk of failure to continue to make progress on raising educational standards features in the Corporate Risk Register (CRR) and risk mitigation is monitored by Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and Elected Members via Scrutiny and the Executive Committees.

1.2 Standards and Progress of Specific Groups - Areas where good progress has been made and how we know

Foundation Phase

- All LO6+ gender differences were lower than the all-Wales means and particularly so for LLCE.
- Almost one-third of statemented pupils attained LO5+ in LLCE and MD. Both results were higher than the 2018 national means.

Key Stage 2

- L4+gender differences were lower than the all-Wales means.

- Mean progress scores for boys & girls (as NC levels) were higher than expected during KS2. On average, boys had lower FP outcomes in 2015 but made similar NC progress to girls during KS2.
- Boys made greater progress in both reading and numeracy reasoning during 2015-19.
- Mean progress scores (as NC levels) for eFSM & non eFSM pupils were similar to or higher than expected.
- Over one-half of ethnic minority pupils attained L5 in both English and maths. The mean NC levels were higher than for the whole Y6 cohort in 2019 and national test scores in both reading and numeracy reasoning were also higher.
- All but one LAC progressed at least 2 NC levels for language during KS2 and all but 2 did so in maths during 2019.
- The mean NC progress rates for LAC during 2015-19 were similar to those for the whole cohort in both subject areas.

Key Stage 3

- L6+ gender differences were lower than the all-Wales means in each core subject, lower than the previous year for most non-core subjects and lower than the national means for about one-half of non-core subjects. L6+ English results also improved in 2019 with a consequent narrowing of the performance gap compared with national outcomes.
- On average, boys made greater progress in numeracy reasoning than girls during KS3 and so reversed the gender gap.
- eFSM and non-Efsm – 2019:
 - differences were lower than the national averages at both L5+ and L6+
 - eFSM pupils made greater progress at reading and numeracy, narrowing the performance gap
 - Mean progress scores in reading and numeracy reasoning were better than expected
- Statemented pupils made, on average, very good progress in reading & numeracy reasoning throughout 2016-19.
- All but 2 of the 16 ethnic minority pupils with matched NC results attained L5 or better in English and maths in 2019. Over two-thirds of EM pupils attained L6 or better in both subjects.
- 2 pupils reached L7 in English and 5 did so in maths.
- The mean progress rates for LAC in reading and numeracy reasoning during 2016-19 were notably higher than the whole cohort.

Key Stage 4

- KS3-4 progress for eFSM pupils during 2017-19 was similar to or better than that for non-eFSM pupils.
- MAT pupils made far more progress than the Y11 cohort as a whole in both English language / literacy and in maths / numeracy during 2017-19.
- The proportions of SEN pupils attaining A*-C and A*-G grades in English language and maths was relatively high, much improved compared to previous year and generally similar to those for non-SEN pupils.
- Ethnic minority pupils had similar outcomes and average progress rates to non-EM pupils in English language.
- In English language / literature and in maths / numeracy compared to the whole Y11 cohort:
 - Young offenders generally had higher outcomes
 - LAC had similar outcomes
 - Low attenders had similar or higher outcomes

1.2 Standards and Progress of Specific Groups - Areas for improvement and how we are going to do it

Areas identified for improvement and Required Action

Foundation Phase:

- Boys' outcomes continue to be below those of girls in each main performance indicator. However, girls' higher level (LO6+) results have fallen noticeably more than for boys during the last 2 years.
- eFSM pupils had lower outcomes than non-eFSM pupils in nearly all performance indicators in 2019 and the differences generally increased during 2017-19.
- Except for LLCW (attributable to just one Welsh medium school in BG), LO6+ outcomes were lower than for Wales as a whole during the last 4 years.
- BG pupils on SA and SA+ had lower outcomes than those seen nationally (in 2018)

Key Stage 2

- Boys' outcomes continue to be below those of girls in each main performance indicator. While L5+ gender gaps closed in 2019, this was due to girls' results falling more than for boys.
- eFSM pupils had lower outcomes than non-eFSM pupils in all performance indicators in 2019. The differences were higher than the national means for most indicators and increased during 2017-19.
- eFSM pupils made less progress than non-eFSM pupils during KS2.
- About 6% fewer BG pupils attained L5+ in English and about 7% fewer in maths compared to Wales in 2019.
- Only one BG pupil was recorded as attaining L6+ (in English) in 2019.
- About 4% fewer BG pupils attained SAS >115 in reading and about 7% fewer in numeracy reasoning compared to Wales in 2019.
- The proportions of pupils attaining L4 or better in language fell for all SEN groups in 2019. All outcomes were below the 2018 national means.
- SA and SA+ pupils had considerably lower reading scores than non-SEN pupils in 2015 and, on average, made much less progress during KS2.
- SA pupils had considerably lower numeracy reasoning scores than non-SEN pupils in 2015 and, on average, regressed in in this skill area during KS2.

Key Stage 3

- Boys' outcomes continue to be below those of girls in a majority of performance indicators. While L5+ & L6+ gender gaps closed in 2019, this was predominantly due to girls' results falling more than for boys.
- Boys' mean NC progress scores were lower than for the girls in both English & maths.
- Boys made less NC progress than girls in both subjects during KS3 and so widened the gender gap.
- eFSM pupils had lower outcomes than non-eFSM pupils in all performance indicators in 2019 (but the differences were lower than the national means).

- eFSM pupils made less progress than non-eFSM pupils during KS3 and so widened the performance gap.
- L6+ outcomes in maths & particularly science fell during the last 3 years and decreased a little more than that observed nationally
- About 10% fewer BG pupils attained L6+ in English and in maths compared to Wales in 2019.
- About 7% fewer BG pupils attained L7+ in English and about 12% fewer in maths compared to Wales in 2019.
- Except for statemented pupils, SEN results were lower than the 2018 national means.
- On average, SEN pupils made less NC progress than non-SEN pupils during KS3 and particularly so for SA+ pupils in maths.
- On average, SA and SA+ pupils made much less progress in reading and numeracy reasoning than non-SEN pupils during KS3.
- NC and national test scores of young offenders were much lower than mainstream averages. Progress rates were also lower than for mainstream pupils. A significant proportion of YOs failed to progress in either NC English or NC maths during KS3.
- Both NC and national test outcomes were, on average, lower for LAC than for other mainstream pupils

Key Stage 4

- Boys' outcomes continue to be below those of girls in each main performance indicator. Where the performance gaps between boys and girls narrowed, it was usually due to a fall in girls' outcomes rather than an improvement in those for boys.
- The proportion of pupils attaining 5 A*/A grades fell by about 2% in 2019 and was well below the national mean.
- KS3-4 progress rates for boys and girls in English language / literacy during 2017-19 were just about adequate while those for maths / numeracy were unsatisfactory. The weak progress in maths was a main contributing factor to low school and LA performance at GCSE.
- River Centre pupils had lower outcomes and average progress rates in English language / literature and in maths / numeracy compared to the whole Y11 cohort.
- Ethnic Minority pupils had lower outcomes and KS3-4 progression rates in maths / numeracy than in language. This suggest that support for language development is generally effective at KS4 but that EM pupils may find more difficulty in transposing their language skills within a mathematical context.

Risk Considerations

- The risk of failure to continue to make progress on raising educational standards features in the Corporate Risk Register (CRR) and risk mitigation is monitored by Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and Elected Members via Scrutiny and the Executive Committees.

1.3 Well-being and Attitudes to Learning - Areas where good progress has been made and how we know

- Standards of wellbeing and attitudes to learning are good in most primary and secondary schools. High proportions of both primary pupils and their parents expressed positive views about their children's wellbeing in schools.
- All pre-schools and schools participate in effective Healthy School programmes with exemplar work being recognised nationally and there are effective sport and physical activity programmes e.g. swimming programmes with high levels of achievement for learners in place. The proportions of CYP attending sports centres and enjoying PE in school on a weekly basis is higher than the national averages.

- An effective 11-18 counselling service in place for with very positive feedback from attendees, with an extended service for 18-25 year olds.
- BG is one of only a very few Councils to have a fully compliant 3rd School Sport Survey to inform more targeted work.
- 3 out of 4 BG secondary schools exceeded the WG modelled figures for attendance in 2018-19.
- Relatively low rate of fixed-term exclusions compared with other LAs in Wales.
- Improving procedures for tracking Children Missing Education (CME).
- An improving trend of increased opportunities for *pupil voice* in BG schools and greater learner participation in decision-making.
- Accredited outcomes for registered young people with the Youth Services are strong and above the Welsh mean.

1.3 Well-being and Attitudes to Learning - Areas for improvement and how we are going to do it

Attendance and persistent absenteeism - Primary:

- To improve primary school attendance in BG from 94.3% to equate at least to the all-Wales mean of 94.5%
- To reduce primary unauthorised absence in BG from 1.4% to that of the all-Wales means which is 1.3%
- To work to reduce PA in the primary sector to well below that of the all-Wales means i.e. Wales= 1.7%, BG=1.6%

Attendance and persistent absenteeism - Secondary:

- To improve secondary school attendance from 92.9% to 93.8% (all-Wales means)
- To reduce unauthorised absence in the secondary sector in BG from 2.2% to below that of the all-Wales means (1.6%)
- To reduce persistent absenteeism in the secondary sector in BG from 4.1% to below that of the all-Wales means (also currently 4.1%)
- To continue to reduce the numbers of pupils excluded in primary and secondary sectors.
- To continue to improve pupil behaviour in one school in particular and staff response to pupil concerns
- To further enhance pupil voice activities to inform self-evaluation planning activities

Risk Considerations

- The risk is that school attendance has an impact on pupil progression and learning, particularly in light of the COVID-19 emergency.

2.1 Support for school improvement - Areas where good progress has been made and how we know

- The LA has improved and detailed knowledge of individual, class and school performance particularly in relation to value-added progress.
- Improved coordination of support to schools via good partnership working between the LA and EAS
- Improved School Categorisation and School Inspection profile over the last 3 years.
- Good outcomes / progress for identified vulnerable groups in recent years.
- The Council is swift in its use of statutory powers which are kept under review

- The process for the appointment of LA Governors is now well established and there is evidence of improved governance in a majority of schools.

2.1 Support for school improvement - Areas for improvement and how we are going to do it

- Partnership work between BG Inclusion Services and EAS Challenge Advisers needs to continue.
- Support to improve early language acquisition and general skill development in the early years.
- Support to improve the effectiveness of learning & teaching of English / reading & maths / numeracy within KS3 & 4 with a particular focus on eFSM pupils and vulnerable groups.
- Support to improve the effectiveness of PDG grant planning and implementation
- Increasing the number / proportions of learners who achieve higher level outcomes at each key stage, but particularly in the Foundation Phase
- Support for assessment and target setting procedures within schools, with a particular focus on formative (assessment for learning).
- Increasing opportunities for schools to share good practice.

Risk Considerations

- The risk is that the COVID-19 emergency response has impacted upon learner progression across the board, but particularly in KS4 and early year's skill development e.g. language acquisition.

2.2 Support for Vulnerable Learners - Areas where good progress has been made and how we know

Good progress has been made through the comprehensive ALN Provision Improvement Plan:

- The River Centre is now open, ASD provision is in place,
- The ALN Service has undergone a review and is being reconfigured to meet the diversity of present need,
- Resource Base provision has improved, particularly for pupils who experience Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD),
- Excellent practice has been secured in Pen-y-Cwm Special School,
- Estyn judgements in school inspections for care support and guidance remain good or better.

Practice to identify pupil progress using matched data (also for specific pupils groups) is now in its second year and is helping to identify where further improvement in provision is needed, for example,

- in KS3 in particular and in identified schools
- in the progress rates between KS 3 and KS 4 in English and Maths, and
- to secure improved progress for all vulnerable groups, including eFSM and particularly during and between KS3 and KS 4

2.2 Support for Vulnerable Learners - Areas for improvement and how we are going to do it

Areas identified for improvement and Required Action

- The quality and effectiveness of support to increase attainment of young pupils in the early years and at the end of the Foundation Phase (particularly eFSM but not solely) needs to improve so that progress rates going forward for these learners is accelerated significantly.
- The quality and effectiveness of support provided for all vulnerable learners needs to improve so that attainment and progress increases significantly both during and between KS 3 and 4. The quality of provision and effectiveness of leadership and management of inclusion, in these Key Stages, need to improve, particularly in identified schools and settings and for the specific groups in this report.
- Exclusions: Monitoring of pupil level exclusion data by all Inclusion teams has improved and is effective, informing the quality of Officers' work and dialogue with individual schools. The establishment of the Safer Schools Partnership approach is beginning to support improved partnership work which will help reduce exclusions in the longer term. Work is currently mainly focussed on two secondary settings in particular to reduce exclusions.
- Revolving Door Approach: effective support in the River Centre is provided to pupils presenting with difficult behaviour and those reluctant to attend school. However, further developments are needed to develop capacity within mainstream settings to enable pupils to remain in and return back to their host schools, particularly for KS 3 pupils. There needs to be a service agreement in place between the River Centre and the Council to formalise the arrangements.
- ALN: the LA and EAS need to work more closely to support schools in improving analysis of pupils with SEN who perform below expected levels to ensure that all pupils show good progress in line with their ability from their individual baselines, particularly for those pupils in KS 3 at SA and SA +level. Such analyses is to include the impact of targeted interventions
- ALN in Early Years: Panel arrangements are effective in providing support for EY pupils with ALN. However, developing ALN capacity-building in EY is in the early stages of development and needs to be accelerated.
- EHE practice for those on the cusp of EHE needs to be more targeted. The Action Plan needs to be fully implemented.
- CME: The local authority needs to continue to monitor CME practices and address any gaps as they arise and embed the agreed processes and ensure that regular reporting continues.
- Young People who offend: all children involved with YOS to have access to 25 hours of education. At KS3 & 4, teachers and schools need to improve levels of support for pupils in line with required improvements for mainstream pupils. Schools / the LA will review their current methodology for SEN categorisation in KS4 to ensure pupils receive the required support necessary for them to attain outcomes aligned to their ability a particular emphasis on improving progress and outcomes of pupils in GCSE maths. Ensure the YOS fully implement their Literacy & Numeracy Strategy. Ensure that the recommendations made by ESTYN via their thematic report are fully implemented.
- EPS Service: to secure better blended working with Children's Services to explore how the EPS can work more effectively within Early Years settings. Work with colleagues in the wider Inclusion team and regionally to continue to provide support and challenge for schools in line with the ALNET Act. In particular, this will need to look at developing ALNCos' role to become more strategic, while also building the skills of the wider workforce to meet the needs of vulnerable learners. Work to develop more consistent practice within and between schools around

behaviour management, in its widest sense, to include a re-focus on the high quality research undertaken by the EPS around SEBD, literacy and assessment as well as developing schools' understanding of the ACEs agenda (with awareness training provided via EAS on a cluster-basis) and further attention to schools supporting the work of their ELSAs.

- Pregnant School Girls and Young Mums: To ensure that as a local authority we are made aware of these pupils in a timely basis, so that exclusions, attendance, support and any alternative provisions are monitored and reviewed on a monthly basis and in compliance with the policy.
- Review the Pen-y-Cwm capacity to meet the increasing demand for places.

Risk Considerations

- The strategic risk relates to the readiness for the implementation of the ALNET Bill's approach to supporting learners presenting ALN and meeting the increasing demand for places in Pen-y-Cwm.

2.3 Support for Other Services - Areas where good progress has been made and how we know

- The Council's 21st Century Schools investment objectives are clearly aligned to the Vision for Education in improving educational standards and this is evidenced in a positive Gateway Review in 2019. Preparations for the Band B programme are well structured and deliverable.
- The Youth Service is good, taking account of its statutory duties and meeting them effectively, providing a wide range of universal and targeted opportunities for young people aged 11-25. Effective participation structures are embedded across the Youth Service. The Independent 11-18 Counselling Service is very effective. The service is line managed by the Youth Service, which allows a co-ordinated approach to wellbeing between all projects.
- The Council has an enhanced knowledge of school capacity linked to the effective annual monitoring processes that are in place; along with an on-going facilities review/management protocols and effective admissions processes. This is evidenced by the annual review and publication of the School Admissions Policy.
- Strong progress is being made in relation to surplus places reduction, with the Council seeing an overall reduction in both the primary and secondary sectors over the last 6 years; with a continued decrease projected for both primary and secondary over the next 2 years, taking the primary percentage to 11% and secondary to 9%, by the 2021/22 academic year – with the overall combined projected status as 12%. There are very few sufficiency issues within Blaenau Gwent schools at present.
- Blaenau Gwent's Post 16 provision is provided in partnership with Coleg Gwent at the Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone in Ebbw Vale. The Learning Zone's Self-Assessment Report (SAR) recognises that there is an effective partnership approach between the Council and Coleg Gwent, which is resulting in improvements to the participation rates of Post 16 learners, a broadening of the learning offer and increasing attainment levels for both academic and vocational learners. The 'A' Level A*-E pass rate is approaching 99% and well above the national average and the vocational learning success rate (retention/attainment) is over 80% against all levels. The ALIS tertiary benchmarking data places the Learning Zone in the top 8% of Post 16 learning institutions for added value across the UK.
- The Council have a highly effective system in place linked to forecasting and monitoring pupil place requirements; this is evidenced pupil projection accuracy, which was at 97 % for primary 94% for secondary during the 2016/17 academic session and has been continually high over the last 3 academic years.

- The Council has good arrangements in place to support the coordination of early years, childcare and play to ensure sufficiency. Childcare is a rapidly developing sector in Blaenau Gwent and has grown from 142 registered places in 2002 to 1332 places currently. The sector continues to develop in response to emerging needs.

2.3 Support for Other Services - Areas for improvement and how we are going to do it

- The delivery of the WESP targets is dependent upon the Welsh medium seedling proposal and the need to secure the revenue.
- The ET and Youth Services are very dependent upon external funding and sustainability is a key consideration. Therefore, continued monitoring of team capacity is required in order to assess capacity requirements and secure/ sustain the positive progression of service priorities. The ESF Inspire funding risk needs to be escalated.
- There is a need to consider the management of the home to school and college transport operations and/or how the Environment/Regeneration and Education Directorates develop procedures, and agreements that are able to more effectively address identified gaps in reviewing the policy.
- A review of online admissions is required, in order to further improve parental engagement with the admissions process, and address the current ineffective online system. A business case is under development, in line with the use of Capita One's online module, which is the system used within current neighbouring and other Councils throughout Wales. This will require investment, which will be beneficial in the long-term and could enhance partnership working and data monitoring with other Council.

Risk Considerations

- There are risks associated with the revenue implications associated with the Welsh medium proposal as well as the Youth Services Inspire initiative, which is currently funded through European (ESF) funding.
- Responding to the COVID-19 emergency to ensure that learner progression is maintained in safe settings.

3.1 Quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers - Areas where good progress has been made and how we know

- The improving School Categorisation and School Inspection profile over the last 3 years demonstrates the increased effectiveness of leaders and managers in Local Government Education Services in Blaenau Gwent.
- The Council considers all evidence and implements its full use of statutory powers, where applicable.
- The impact of good, effective leadership is demonstrated through programme completion for example, the opening of Six Bells, the River Centre, good progress through the 21st Century Schools Band A programme and approval of Band B programme for 2019 to 2025 period.
- Regional leadership is being exercised well by senior officers.

3.1 Quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers - Areas for improvement and how we are going to do it

- To initiate the recruitment process for the appointment of a Corporate Director of Education post during the Autumn term 2020. This will be followed with a review of the Education Directorate's structural requirements.
- To continue to develop officer expertise through the Professional Learning Offer.
- To further develop member led self-evaluation activity across key service areas located within Local Government Education Services, for example via the Scrutiny sub-group looking at wellbeing in schools.
- To continue to develop member understanding and effectiveness via the Member Development Programme.

Risk Considerations

- There are risks associated with securing effective Corporate Director leadership for the Education Directorate, with recruitment initiated in the Autumn term.

3.2 Self-evaluation and improvement planning - Areas where good progress has been made and how we know

- The Self-Evaluation Policy (reviewed September 2020) and the SE Toolkit clearly sets out the ongoing cycle for self-evaluation processes and reporting. The FADE approach to writing evaluations is now embedded into routine practice. Processes are totally aligned with corporate policy. The Education Directorate is confident in its SE processes and their ability to sustain continual improvement. The Council is swift in its action and use of full statutory powers where applicable, to secure the improvement required.
- Partnership working between the Council and the EAS is strong and is subject to significant joint working and quality assurance. Impact evaluations reveal that the EAS and direct work of Challenge Advisers is having a positive impact on outcomes, provision and the quality of leadership. The School Categorisation and School Inspection profile has improved significantly over the last 3 years effectively evidencing the effectiveness of our self-evaluation processes. Improvement has been secured in EFLC (out of SI), in Glyncoed Primary School and to a certain degree in ALC (ESTYN monitoring visit summer term 2019). Progress in ALC will continue to be monitored.

3.2 Self-evaluation and improvement planning - Areas for improvement and how we are going to do it

- To continue to engage members in meaningful self-evaluation activity, for example the Scrutiny sub-group looking at wellbeing in schools.
- To continue to ensure that business plans bring about the improvement required.
- To continue to engage with a wider stakeholder group when undertaking evaluations, particularly Headteachers.
- To establish the Post 16 Partnership Board formally during the Autumn term 2020.

Risk Considerations

- The risk is that self-evaluation and improvement planning fails to deliver improved outcomes for learners.

3.3 Professional learning - Areas where good progress has been made and how we know

- Senior Officers now hold Chair positions across a number of all Wales groups; this supports their ongoing professional development.
- 121 coaching sessions are embedded as routine practice.
- PDR underpinned by an effective 360 process is now also an embedded process. This also includes contributions from Headteachers for senior Officer's PDR i.e. the Corporate Director for Education and Head of Education Transformation.
- New Headteacher and aspiring deputy induction learning offer is in place and led by an experienced Headteacher.

3.3 Professional learning - Areas for improvement and how we are going to do it

- To engage in more formal evaluations of the impact and effectiveness of CPD for Directorate officers.
- To develop further cost neutral ways in which officers can continue to engage in professional development activity set against a backdrop of Council austerity measures.

Risk Considerations

- The risk is that there is less resources to support professional learning and this impacts on the Directorate and schools' improvement journeys.

3.4 Safeguarding - Areas where good progress has been made and how we know

- The Safeguarding Matrix approach to capturing information is helpful and supports the ongoing improvement in practice in this area.
- The close working arrangements between Education and Social Services have developed well, further supporting a coherence of approach regarding safeguarding in schools and settings. The Safeguarding Policy is regularly reviewed and understood by key stakeholders.
- Recent work to respond to community safety issues, counter potential terrorism and extremist behaviours has progressed well, for example, the Safer School Partnership, the Respect and Resilience Action Plan.
- The Operation Encompass work has progressed very well and supports schools in this regard.
- Quality assurance processes to test the robustness of safeguarding processes have been implemented and inform ongoing work in this area.
- The new Council Policy requiring all school Governors to be DBS cleared is being implemented.

3.4 Safeguarding - Areas for improvement and how we are going to do it

- Continue to develop policy and practice that is responsive to emerging school concerns in line with the Vision for Education of school led improvement in a contextual safeguarding approach.
- Full implementation of VAWDASV (Group 1) training needs to be achieved at school level, as well as the implementation of Group 2 training across all LGES settings.
- The 360-degree safe Cymru Policy needs to be agreed by the Executive and implemented in all schools.
- Digitalisation of the safeguarding matrix to be developed and streamlined to enable greater readability, including the roll-out of MyConcern now that the Council has secured a revenue budget.
- Provide greater flexibility in the training offer to increase the uptake of safeguarding training by school governors

Risk Considerations

- There is a risk that the roll-out of the safeguarding package MyConcern is not implemented fully across the school estate.

3.5 Use of Resources - Areas where good progress has been made and how we know

- The school's Individual Schools Budget (ISB) has been prioritised. Schools have been given a 1.59% uplift for 19/20. Predicted for 20/21 is approximately 5% which is slightly above the Council increase of 4.9%. Capital has been secured to match fund the 21st Century Schools Programme.
- Strategic Education Improvement Manager and Service Manager for Inclusion now in post and fully functional.
- Staffing review of officers without line management responsibility completed.
- Financial Efficiency Savings: devised, approved and budget agreed for 2019/20. No savings are required for FY 20/21.
- SENCOM Review completed – BG contributed extensively to the review and supports the findings.
- GEMS provide good value for money
- Arrangements with the regional Education Achievement Service (EAS) provide good value for money.
- There is good engagement of Blaenau Gwent elected members in the governance arrangements of the EAS; thereby effectively holding the EAS to account.
- Use of resources i.e. Education staffing have been significantly streamlined to ensure greater value for money.
- 21st Century Band B Programme has been approved
- The Education Transformation, Youth Service and Inclusion Services provide good value for money.
- Schools have worked strategically with the Directorate to establish a Premature Retirement Contribution budget for staff terminations.
- Majority of schools have signed up to the 3 year SLA arrangement for support services with the Council.

3.5 Use of Resources - Areas for improvement and how we are going to do it

- Bridging the Gap Programme to continue to seek greater effectiveness and efficiencies, where available.
- To review the Education Directorate Professional Learning Programme so that it provides an effective, overarching strategy; which links professional learning with the findings of self-evaluation and the broad aims of the Directorate.
- To evaluate the impact and effectiveness of staff professional learning on outcomes, wellbeing, provision and the quality of leadership of LGES.
- The viability of other SEWC regional services needs to be kept under close review to ensure sustainability and value for money going forward.
- Schools' deficit balances in the secondary sector have increased and need to be kept under close review going forward; timely support to be provided by the LA.
- To escalate the risk level for Youth Service's funding, as ESF comes to an end in 2022.
- There will need to be close monitoring and support for schools predicting surplus and deficit budgets, particularly for the two all-through schools;
- Effective monitoring of the out of county placement revenue budget is required; and,
- Facilitating robust Service Level Agreements (SLAs) and partnership arrangements with key partners, such as the EAS to ensure effective and sustainable provision for schools.

Risk Considerations

- Failure to deliver the corporate revenue savings requirements, in line with the Bridging the Gap proposals. This is likely to be impacted by the continued response to the COVID-19 arrangements moving forward.

Agenda Item 21

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 23.11.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 24.11.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**
Date of meeting: **9th December 2020**
Report Subject: **Summary of Inspection Outcomes for Educational Establishments – Autumn Term 2019 and Spring Term 2020**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr J Collins, Executive Member for Education**
Report Submitted by: **Lynn Phillips, Corporate Director of Education
Michelle Jones, Strategic Education Improvement Manager**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
x	x	24.11.20			03.11.20	09.12.20		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Members with performance monitoring information regarding the inspections undertaken by ESTYN of educational establishments and an update of inspection outcomes for:
- schools inspected during the Autumn term 2019 and Spring term 2020, and,
 - the outcomes of Estyn monitoring visits during this period.
- 1.2 Members will be aware that the publication of this report has been delayed as a result of the emergency response to the pandemic.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The report summarises the outcomes and recommendations of inspection reports awarded by Estyn for educational establishments inspected during this period together with reported outcomes of Estyn monitoring visits to identified settings and schools during this period.

3. Options for Recommendation

- 3.1 This report has been discussed by Education DMT, CLT prior to submission to Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee and Executive Committee.

3.2 Option 1

Accept the report as provided.

Option 2

To review the performance information and offer comments for consideration by the Education Directorate.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 **Statutory Responsibility**

4.1.1 All education and training providers in Wales are inspected by Estyn. The current inspection framework changed in September 2017.

4.1.2 Schools and other education providers are now given judgements in relation to the 5 inspection areas of (the arrangements for early years settings are summarised in Appendix 1):

- 1. Standards,
- 2. Wellbeing and attitudes to learning
- 3. Teaching and Learning Experience
- 4. Care support and guidance and
- 5. Leadership and Management

4.1.3 With judgements now being made on a four point scale

Judgement : What the judgement means?	
Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice.
Good	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement.
Adequate and needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement.
Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths.

4.1.5 A further breakdown of what each inspection area covers is shown in appendix 1.

4.1.6 Recommendations to secure further improvement are always made in all inspection reports. The school/setting are expected to address these recommendations through their improvement planning processes. Schools and education settings are supported to devise their plans by the Education Achievement Service (EAS). The EAS approve all plans and also monitor progress through the plans.

4.1.7 Where necessary, Intervention Plans are drawn up and progress is monitored more formally through a School Causing Concern (SCC) process that operates in accordance with the regional South East Wales Consortium (SEWC) Schools Causing Concern Policy.

4.1.8 Depending on the result of the inspection, Estyn determines the level of follow-up which the school requires. An explanation of the difference between the levels of follow-up activity is shown in appendix 1.

4.1.9 **Blaenau Gwent Wellbeing Plan**

The Estyn inspection framework is clearly aligned to the objectives in the Blaenau Gwent Wellbeing Plan which aims for everyone to have the best start in life. Through this plan it seeks to ensure that the education provision is appropriate and able to meet the needs of children and young people so that their progress is as good as it ought to be.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

There are no direct financial implications for this report. Blaenau Gwent continues to make a financial contribution to the regional Education Achievement Service (EAS) arrangements of approximately £364,000 per annum. As a part of the Council's arrangements for intervention in schools in line with the South East Wales Consortium (SEWC) framework, there are occasions when additional funding is required to support schools through the use of external agencies particularly, when an adverse inspection report is received. Any funding required is allocated from within current budgets within the Education Directorate portfolio.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

The Estyn inspection Framework focuses primarily on standards, the quality of education provision and the quality of leadership in educational establishments and schools. Failure to identify schools and provide support appropriately places at risk the quality of education and standards in individual schools. The Estyn Inspection Framework provides an external viewpoint through which potential risk is identified and resolved. Moreover, the public nature of Estyn inspection reports also poses reputational risk to the individual school or setting and to the Council as a whole should an adverse report be published, and the Council's role is to ensure that high standards and quality of provision are maintained in all settings.

Failure to ensure that there is robust monitoring of settings and of Council services carries with it a number of significant risks:

- Undetected and unaddressed decline in school performance and the quality of provision.
- Students do not achieve to acceptable levels.
- Lack of overall improvement in schools' performance.
- Children do not receive the best start in life
- Negative impact on the reputation of the Council.

Similarly, ineffective monitoring of Council services also poses a range of risks including:

- Reducing standards and quality of provision in settings,
- Poor value for money,
- Ineffective support for settings which hinders their improvement,
- Negative impact on the reputation of the Council.

Through the monitoring of performance by means of Estyn reports, the Scrutiny Committee ensures that educational settings and supporting services are able to deliver provision of a high quality.

5.3 **Legal**

Estyn is a Crown body, established under the Education Act 1992.

5.4 **Human Resources**

None for this report.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

6.1.1 During the reporting period three establishments were inspected with no monitoring visits during the period.

6.1.2 **Brynmawr Foundation School**

Brynmawr Foundation School was inspected by Estyn in December 2019. The inspectors awarded a judgement against all four inspection areas of 'unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement' and against the inspection area of care support and guidance a judgement of 'adequate and needs improvement' was recorded. The Estyn report is attached as appendix 2.

Estyn made four recommendations for improvement and these are summarised below;

- R1 Improve pupils' standards across the school, including their literacy and numeracy skills
- R2 Improve pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning
- R3 Improve the effectiveness of teaching to motivate, engage and challenge pupils to make good progress in lessons
- R4 Strengthen leadership at all levels to improve leaders' ability to identify areas for development and to plan effectively for improvement

The report recognises that 'Since 2018, the Headteacher has worked positively with staff and pupils to create stability following a period of uncertainty and change. He has instigated a programme of change across the school that focuses appropriately on strengthening leadership at all levels and developing teaching. Staff are engaging enthusiastically in professional learning. However, these changes have not had a sufficient impact on important areas of the school's work such as teaching and pupils'

standards. Although pupils make strong progress in a few lessons, in a majority of lessons, many pupils do not make enough progress. The school has a supportive and inclusive ethos. Many pupils are confident in their social interactions. However, many pupils are not suitably resilient or motivated in their lessons, and this hinders their learning. “

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Estyn were of the opinion that, that special measures were required in relation to this school. Subsequently, the school has drawn up a Post Inspection Action Plan that details how it is going to address the recommendations and the Local Authority and EAS has drafted a statement of action as to how it will support the school. In line with agreed procedures for schools in an Estyn Category a meeting took place on 27th February 2020 at which the Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) was reviewed and feedback provided by Estyn as to how the action plan may be furthered strengthened. Moving forward, Estyn will monitor the school’s progress on a termly basis. However, given the present pandemic the approach to a return to business as usual activities is yet to be determined but this is likely to be a key activity at the commencement of the new academic session.

6.1.3 **Cwm Primary School**

Cwm Primary School was inspected by Estyn in December 2019. The inspectors awarded a judgement against all five inspection areas of “Good.” The Estyn report is attached as appendix 3.

Estyn has also invited the school to prepare a case study on its work in relation to intergenerational community work, for dissemination on Estyn’s website. Estyn made three recommendations for improvement and these are summarised below:

- R1 Ensure that pupils in the foundation phase have meaningful opportunities to develop as independent learners
- R2 Ensure that teachers match activities to the needs of pupils of all abilities, particularly the least able
- R3 Improve the quality of presentation, spelling and punctuation in key stage 2

The report recognises that “Cwm Primary School plays a key role at the heart of its community. Staff place great importance on the happiness of pupils and recognise that all pupils need to feel safe, secure and valued in order to be able to learn and make progress. As a result, standards of wellbeing in the school are very high.

Teachers and teaching assistants deliver learning activities that engage pupils and encourage them to want to learn. They integrate aspects of Welsh culture and local history well. Staff use the Welsh language frequently and encourage its use among pupils effectively. As a result, standards in Welsh are a particular strength.

The Headteacher sets a clear vision for the school based around pupil wellbeing. She works with other leaders, teachers and teaching assistant in a series of teams that encourage all to develop their leadership skills and contribute to school improvement. The school works well with other providers to improve the quality of its provision and share its strengths.

6.1.4 **Ysgol Gymraeg Brohelyg**

Ysgol Gymraeg Brohelyg was inspected by Estyn in February 2020. The inspectors awarded a judgement against four inspection areas of “Good” and “Adequate and need improvement” against the inspection area of teaching and learning experiences. The Estyn report is attached as appendix 4. Estyn made three recommendations for improvement and these are summarised below:

- R1 Ensure that teaching and learning experiences develop the independence of all pupils in the foundation phase consistently
- R2 Improve provision to develop pupils’ ICT skills across the school
- R3 Strengthen self-evaluation and planning for improvement procedures in order to prioritise and address the most important areas

The report recognises that “The school is a caring and hard-working community which provides a firm foundation for pupils’ learning from an early age, particularly in acquiring the Welsh language. The Headteacher and staff have high expectations of pupils and, as a result, most make good progress during their time at the school. Staff organise purposeful interventions for pupils, which succeed in supporting them to improve their literacy and numeracy skills, and wellbeing, well.

Across the school, most pupils show enthusiasm towards their learning. They respect others well and work diligently in pairs and groups. Classes are organised and industrious places in which most pupils persevere well with their tasks. However, not all pupils in the foundation phase are given enough opportunities to enable them to make their own decisions and become independent learners. Staff plan valuable opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills consistently in their work. However, they do not plan purposefully enough to develop pupils’ information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

The Headteacher has a clear vision to realise the aim of ‘setting a firm foundation for a bright future’. The school has established a hard-working management team that has succeeded in leading significant improvements successfully over time. However, processes for self-evaluation and planning for improvement do not always focus enough on the most important priorities in order to move the school forward.”

- 6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***
Monitoring of inspection reports is an important mechanism for ensuring that Members of the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee are sufficiently informed to enable them to hold the authority to account effectively for the quality of education provision.
- 6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***
The Estyn Inspection Framework is delivered in accordance with National regulation.
- 6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***
The Estyn Inspection Framework is focused on securing long term improvement in settings. It is one of a number of triggers through which additional monitoring and support can be targeted at a setting to secure strong and continuing prospects for improvement. However, the SEWC regional framework for school categorisation linked with support for schools causing concern seeks to ensure that schools deliver high quality provision and standards in the long term with the aim that Estyn reflects this in their inspection reporting.
- 6.5 ***Preventative focus***
A key element of the Council's work is to work with the EAS to ensure that settings are regularly monitored so that appropriate support is in place and high standards are secured. Estyn Inspection reports reflect the extent to which settings and Local Authorities have been effective in achieving this. The vast majority of recent inspection reports in Blaenau Gwent settings have demonstrated that the Council has achieved this goal.
- 6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***
Educational improvement in Blaenau Gwent is delivered on a regional basis through the South East Wales Consortium in collaboration with Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen Councils. The Council also secures a range of provision to support vulnerable learners through regional arrangement as well as support for its early years settings.
- 6.7 ***Integration(across service areas)***
The Estyn Inspection Framework is aimed at promoting high quality leadership, excellent standards and high quality education provision. This aim is fundamental to the Council's well-being objectives and is fundamental to the joint work between Education and Social Services Directorates.
- 6.8 ***EqIA(screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)***
Not required for this report.
7. **Monitoring Arrangements**
- 7.1 Monitoring of inspection reports is an important mechanism for ensuring that members of the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee are

sufficiently informed to enable them to hold the authority's services to account effectively for the quality of education provision and pupil outcomes.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – School Inspection Framework

Appendix 2 – Brynmawr Foundation School

Appendix 3 – Cwm Primary School

Appendix 4 – Ysgol Bro Helyg

Overview of Current Inspection Framework	
Inspection Area	
1	Standards
	1.1 Standards and progress overall 1.2 Standards and progress of specific groups 1.3 Standards and progress in skills
2.	Wellbeing and attitudes to learning
	2.1 Wellbeing 2.2 Attitudes to learning
3	Teaching and Learning Experience
	3.1 Quality of teaching 3.2 The breadth, balance and appropriateness of the curriculum 3.3 Provision for skills
4	Care, support and guidance
	4.1 Tracking, monitoring and the provision of learning support 4.2 Personal development 4.3 Safeguarding
5	Leadership and Management
	5.1 Quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers 5.2 Self-evaluation processes and improvement planning 5.3 Professional learning 5.4 Use of resources

Inspection Arrangements for Early Years Settings

Members will be aware that the inspection framework under which early years settings were inspected differs from the school framework which is presently reported with the provision being assessed against the three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management

As a result of the inspection, the setting's current performance and prospects for improvement are assessed against a four-point judgement scale which is shown below:

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement

Post Inspection Follow up Arrangements

- **Estyn review** (formerly Estyn monitoring) - Normally, schools will require this level of activity when the judgement for inspection area 5, leadership and management, is adequate and needs improvement. It would be possible that a few inspection areas have been judged as good. However, the school would have some important areas for improvement that require monitoring.
- **Significant improvement** - The inspection report will state that in accordance with the Education Act 2005 HMCI is of the opinion that this school is in need of significant improvement. Schools in need of **significant improvement** are likely to have fewer important areas for improvement than schools in need of special measures. If inspectors have seriously considered, but rejected, the judgement that the school is in need of special measures, it is highly likely that it will come into the category of schools requiring significant improvement.
- **Special measures** - The inspection report will state that In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that special measures are required in relation to this school. Schools identified as in need of **special measures** during a core inspection are likely to have many important areas for improvement in their work. Some schools may have a few important areas for improvement to a very marked degree or many areas for improvement to a lesser degree. In most instances, it will be the cumulative weight and effect of a combination of these areas for improvement which, when taken together, will prompt the judgement that a school is not providing an acceptable standard of education. While one feature alone is unlikely to result in a judgement that a school requires special measures, where inspectors find low standards and poor teaching and learning, significant risks to pupils or the likelihood of a breakdown of discipline, the school will normally require special measures.

For some educational establishments / schools there will be no follow-up activity.



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Brynmawr Foundation School
Intermediate Road
Brynmawr
Blaenau Gwent
NP23 4XT**

Date of inspection: October 2019

by

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**

About Brynmawr Foundation School

Brynmawr Foundation School is an 11-16 mixed comprehensive school in Blaenau Gwent local authority. The school became grant maintained in 1992 and assumed foundation status in 1999.

There are 699 pupils on roll, compared with 751 pupils at the time of the last inspection in 2013.

The school serves Brynmawr and the surrounding area. About 22% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above the Wales average of 16.4% for secondary schools. A very few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and English is spoken as the first language in nearly all pupils' homes.

Nearly 21% of pupils are on the school's special educational needs register, which is just under the national average of 22.9%. Around 2% of pupils have a statement of special educational needs compared with 2.2% for Wales as a whole.

The headteacher took up his post as temporary headteacher in September 2018. He became the substantive headteacher in April 2019. The senior leadership team consists of the headteacher, one deputy headteacher, three assistant headteachers and one business manager. None of the current team was in post at the time of the last inspection.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website at the link below.
<http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/Schools/SchoolSearch?lang=en>

Summary

Since 2018, the headteacher has worked positively with staff and pupils to create stability following a period of uncertainty and change. He has instigated a programme of change across the school that focuses appropriately on strengthening leadership at all levels and developing teaching. Staff are engaging enthusiastically in professional learning. However, these changes have not had a sufficient impact on important areas of the school's work such as teaching and pupils' standards. Although pupils make strong progress in a few lessons, in a majority of lessons, many pupils do not make enough progress.

The school has a supportive and inclusive ethos. Many pupils are confident in their social interactions. However, many pupils are not suitably resilient or motivated in their lessons, and this hinders their learning.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement
Teaching and learning experiences	Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement
Care, support and guidance	Adequate and needs improvement
Leadership and management	Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

Recommendations

- R1 Improve pupils' standards across the school, including their literacy and numeracy skills
- R2 Improve pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning
- R3 Improve the effectiveness of teaching to motivate, engage and challenge pupils to make good progress in lessons
- R4 Strengthen leadership at all levels to improve leaders' ability to identify areas for development and to plan effectively for improvement

What happens next

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that special measures are required in relation to this school. The school will draw up an action plan to show how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress on a termly basis.

Main findings

Standards: Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

In a majority of lessons, pupils of all abilities generally do not make enough progress. They do not recall or use prior learning well enough, nor do they develop their skills sufficiently, particularly in literacy and numeracy. This is an important shortcoming.

In a few lessons, many pupils make strong progress. For example, in drama, Year 11 pupils work productively to devise dramatic pieces that develop their subject skills and their understanding of Brechtian style theatre.

A minority of pupils listen well to the teacher. However, a majority do not listen with sufficient attention and miss information and instructions that would benefit their learning. In many lessons, many pupils are reluctant to enter into discussion or to answer questions about their work. They are often diffident or unsure, and offer only limited verbal responses. In a few lessons, a few more able pupils speak fluently, using a wide range of vocabulary.

In a few classes, at key stage 4, many pupils analyse and respond to more complex texts well. For example, they identify that a poet uses particular words and phrases to help elicit sympathy from the reader. They comment thoughtfully on contentious issues and ideas, using the text to support their opinions when, for example, commenting on the poor and violent treatment of black people in the United States in the past. Many pupils have a useful range of strategies to extract information and ideas from simple texts. However, a majority are careless in transferring and assimilating information derived from their reading into their own work. In general, many pupils struggle with inference and deduction.

At key stage 4, a few, more able pupils produce effective creative writing, with vivid description and a wide vocabulary. They produce writing that is technically correct and structured suitably, which engages and sustains the reader's interest. However, a majority of pupils make frequent basic errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar. They do not express their ideas clearly, draw upon a suitably wide vocabulary, or use the full range of punctuation to clarify meaning strongly enough.

Overall, pupils do not develop their numeracy skills sufficiently in suitable contexts.

Pupils develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills well in only a very few subjects. For example, in design technology they use computer aided design to explore design solutions, and present their ideas effectively using a suitable range of graphics applications.

A few pupils develop their creative skills well, for example in art when investigating a range of imaginative sources to explore their ideas. However, generally, pupils do not practise their creative thinking often enough in subjects across the curriculum, and the development of creativity and thinking is often hindered by teaching approaches.

Many pupils develop their physical skills suitably in subjects such as physical education, for example when controlling the ball through dribbling and passing in football.

A majority of pupils make satisfactory progress in their Welsh language skills. They write basic sentences with suitable accuracy and develop their reading skills appropriately. However, many pupils provide short, underdeveloped verbal responses to questions. Many pupils do not develop their writing skills sufficiently, and make frequent basic errors in their grammar. Very few pupils use their Welsh outside of Welsh lessons.

Pupils' progress has declined over the past few years and in 2018 they made much less progress than expected. The performance of pupils eligible for free schools meals has fluctuated. Overall, pupils' performance does not compare favourably with that in similar schools.

At the end of Year 11, nearly all pupils progress to further education, training or employment.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

Pupils are confident that staff deal competently with any bullying that is reported. However, almost one-in-four pupils of those who completed the questionnaire do not feel safe in school. A minority of pupils do not behave well in lessons and around the school and a few are regularly late to lessons. Occasionally this disrupts their own learning and that of others.

A few pupils are ambitious, confident and capable, independent learners. However, many pupils do not demonstrate suitable motivation, concentration and perseverance throughout their lessons to ensure that tasks are completed successfully. As a result, they make insufficient progress.

Many pupils have positive social skills and are confident and polite in their interactions with adults around the school. Many pupils show respect to visitors. For example, they open doors and say 'thank you' when doors are opened for them.

The school council has a valuable understanding of the rights of the child, and has worked purposefully to develop a 'pupil manifesto' that is displayed in every classroom. A few pupils, who are part of the school council, have worked on an appropriate range of initiatives linked to healthy choices and the environment. This includes increasing the number of water fountains, reviewing the choice of healthy drinks in the canteen and introducing recycling bins. However, a majority of pupils do not have a good enough understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle.

A few pupils deliver whole school assemblies throughout the year on key issues linked to the development of pupils as ethical, informed citizens. Themes include mental health awareness, hate crimes, young carers and the work of the Show Racism the Red Card organisation. Many pupils engage positively in local, national and global charity events throughout the year. However, apart from through the school council, pupils do not develop their leadership skills well enough.

Many pupils participate eagerly in the annual school production, most recently 'Grease'. Pupils engage enthusiastically in a range of extracurricular activities. Levels of participation in sport and drama clubs are high.

Pupils' attendance has mostly been above expectations over the last four years.

Teaching and learning experiences: Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

In a majority of lessons, teachers explain tasks usefully, and in a few provide useful models to help pupils organise their work. In these lessons, most pupils are aware of what teachers expect. A few teachers use an appropriately diverse range of approaches to help pupils to improve their skills and understanding. For example, in English, teachers introduce supplementary resources that complement the class text well. This allows pupils to make useful links between a range of writing on a similar theme. In a minority of lessons, teachers build positive relationships with pupils and a few teachers create a very productive learning environment.

In a majority of lessons, learning is over-directed by the teacher. This means that pupils do not explore ideas well enough or deepen their understanding. Teachers spend too much time talking, at the expense of engaging pupils in the learning. In many lessons, teachers question pupils simply in order to recall basic information. A very few expect, or ask for, more than short, simple responses. They do not use questioning well to probe and test pupils' understanding. As a result, pupils do not develop their thinking or verbal skills well enough. In around half of lessons, teachers have too low an expectation of pupils and do not challenge weaker work. Many teachers do not tailor work to pupils' individual needs carefully enough. They do not challenge more able pupils, and do not support pupils who need help well enough. As a result, in a majority of lessons, pupils make insufficient progress.

A majority of teachers monitor pupils' work in lessons beneficially. They offer encouragement and praise, and a minority help pupils to understand appropriately where their work needs strengthening. Most teachers provide pupils with written comments on their work, which helps pupils to identify where they need to correct misspelt words or edit inaccurate punctuation. However, in only a few cases does feedback identify and explain well enough how pupils can improve the quality of their work. As a result, pupils do not always understand their strengths, or what they need to do to make their work better. Overall, feedback does not have enough impact on improving pupils' work.

The school provides a suitable and balanced curriculum, which broadly meets the needs of pupils of all abilities. There is a relevant range of learning pathways for pupils as they progress into key stage 4, where they can choose from an appropriate range of academic and vocational courses. The flexibility in these pathways enables all pupils to have sufficient freedom in their option choices. However, arrangements for physical education in key stage 4 do not ensure that pupils have weekly opportunities to partake in exercise.

The school offers an appropriate range of extra-curricular and after-school activities that support pupils' social development well. For example, pupils engage enthusiastically in the drama and music club production of West Side Story. The

school provides a few beneficial experiences to develop pupils' interests in their areas of learning. For example, art and drama students have the opportunity to visit art galleries and theatres in London.

There are suitable transition links with local primary schools. A collaborative literacy project has been developed to ensure a common understanding and shared expectations of pupil progress and opportunities. However, the school does not review pupils' achievement at key stage 2 robustly enough to identify paths to extend knowledge, understanding and skills.

There are worthwhile partnerships with local and national businesses that enhance learning experiences, for example workshops to encourage girls to follow careers in engineering and science.

The school provides very few worthwhile opportunities for pupils to learn about sustainable development and global citizenship through the curriculum and extra-curricular activities.

At present, the provision for literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum is underdeveloped. Recently, the provision of all skills has been included in schemes of work, for all subjects, at all levels. However, most teachers do not include appropriate opportunities for the progressive development of skills within their lessons. As a result, the provision overall does not provide suitable opportunities to develop pupils' skills well enough.

Overall, there are very few opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills apart from in Welsh lessons. There are a few beneficial opportunities to extend pupils' use of Welsh through extracurricular activities such as trips to Llangrannog and Glan-Ilyn residential centres. However, the school does not promote bilingualism effectively, and does not plan purposefully enough to develop pupils' Welsh language skills.

Care, support and guidance: Adequate and needs improvement

Brynmawr Foundation School has a supportive and inclusive ethos. The pastoral transition arrangements with feeder primaries are effective and provide valuable support for the most vulnerable pupils.

The school has appropriate systems to identify pupils who are at risk of underachieving. They provide a suitable range of intervention strategies for these pupils, such as mentoring sessions and nurture groups. However, they do not monitor the impact of intervention closely or consistently enough, and it is too early to judge any impact on improving pupils' standards.

Pupils' attendance is monitored successfully and the school provides suitable interventions where required. These actions contribute beneficially to pupils' rates of attendance. However, the school's arrangements to track progress and other aspects of wellbeing are at an early stage of development. Leaders and teachers do not use the information they gather well enough to monitor pupils' progress, or to support improvements in behaviour and attitudes to learning.

The school provides pupils with appropriate advice and guidance to help them make informed decisions about their future learning and career choices. It uses worthwhile links with local businesses to support this work, for example curriculum vitae writing workshops.

Interim reports provide parents with useful information. However, in a minority of cases annual reports to parents do not contain sufficiently clear targets for improvement. In addition, communication with parents, and particularly those who do not have access to the internet or social media, is not effective.

The school has developed a new behaviour policy. There is a points system to record positive behaviour, constructive contributions to learning and incidents of poor behaviour in lessons. However, it is too early to measure the effectiveness of this in addressing the negative and disruptive behaviour of a minority of pupils in lessons and around the school, and on improving pupils' attitudes to learning.

The school provides suitable opportunities for pupils to work with outside agencies to support their personal, social and emotional development. It works productively with parents and outside agencies to provide appropriate guidance and support for the more vulnerable pupils. However, only a limited number of staff have had training to feel confident enough to support pupils effectively with a range of wellbeing issues, for example when implementing restorative practice interventions.

There is efficient identification of pupils with special educational needs (SEN). Individual development plans are appropriate and shared well with staff and parents. However, these plans are not used well enough in lessons. In addition, the school does not measure the impact of individual interventions robustly enough.

The personal and social education programme supports the moral, social and cultural development of pupils suitably and promotes diversity and equality appropriately. However, the use of tutor-led pastoral sessions to support the development of spiritual guidance for pupils is inconsistent.

The school's arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking are appropriate. However, a majority of pupils do not have a sufficient understanding of healthy living and a minority continue to make unhealthy choices.

The school provides an appropriate range of extra-curricular activities, including educational visits. It offers a narrow range of opportunities to take on responsibilities and become active citizens within the school and wider community. These are available to all pupils. A few of these opportunities are particularly beneficial, for example pupils leading a sign language class in school for peers and staff.

The school has suitable systems in place to deal with any instances of bullying and arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

Following a period of consistently poor outcomes, low staff morale and uncertain leadership, the newly appointed headteacher has embarked on a programme of change. This work is focused on improving leadership at all levels, addressing shortcomings in teaching, and making sure these aspects have a positive impact on

pupil standards in lessons. In the process of introducing a culture of high expectations, the headteacher is mindful of the need to gain the trust and support of staff and the school community, and this is having a positive impact on staff engagement and wellbeing.

The headteacher has set about establishing systems and processes to build the capacity of staff to improve pupil standards and wellbeing. He has appointed a new senior team and has restructured suitably the middle leadership. Roles and responsibilities have been reviewed, and senior and middle leaders are beginning to understand their accountability for pupil standards and wellbeing. However, leaders, overall, do not have a strong enough understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in pupils' learning and in teaching. This limits their capacity to focus on actions that will have greatest impact. In many areas the changes made have not had a sufficient impact on pupil standards in lessons and over time, particularly in mathematics and science.

The composition and leadership of the governing body has been strengthened to increase its capacity to challenge. Governors provide useful and robust challenge in relation to budget and finance. They are increasingly willing to question and challenge other aspects of the school's work, for example when scrutinising a new behaviour policy. Governors are aware that they have a responsibility to scrutinise standards but do not have a sufficiently strong understanding of standards in lessons and the progress made by pupils.

Generally, senior leaders use a range of data appropriately to analyse and compare trends in performance. As a result, they are able to identify the departments most in need of support. However, the over-focus on outcomes at key stage 4 has limited leaders' evaluation of pupils' progress and standards in lessons.

The school has recently implemented a suitable calendar of self-evaluation and improvement planning activities. This is beginning to increase the range of first hand evidence that they gather about the school's work. Leaders have identified suitably the overarching aspects that require improvement. However, the culture of self-evaluation is in its early stages of development and leaders do not identify strengths or areas for improvement sharply enough.

The recently introduced faculty reviews have supported the school to begin to collect evidence about standards and teaching. These reviews include activities such as lesson observations, work scrutiny and pupil voice. In addition, leaders have introduced whole school book scrutiny to encourage all staff to engage in a professional dialogue about teaching and learning. However, these activities focus too heavily on routines instead of the impact that activities have on pupil progress. This prevents senior leaders from being able to draw accurate conclusions about the strengths and weaknesses in important aspects of the school's, work such as teaching. In addition, leaders at all levels are too generous in their evaluation of teaching and do not identify the most important weaknesses in teaching for individuals or at a whole school level. This is hampering their ability to prioritise and plan for improvement.

Middle leaders are beginning to engage in self-evaluation activities such as work scrutiny and learning walks. However, most middle leaders do not have a good

enough understanding of the features of effective teaching or progress. As a result, they have had limited impact in improving the quality of teaching or the standards that pupils achieve in lessons.

The school has recently introduced a timetable of professional learning. This has supported leaders to develop a culture where most staff feel valued. However, self-evaluation processes are not enabling leaders to plan professional learning opportunities sharply enough to secure improvements in the most important aspects of their work. In addition, they do not evaluate the impact of professional learning well enough. As a result, professional learning has not been successful in improving important aspects of teaching. For example, work on improving questioning has had limited impact on classroom practice.

The school has taken robust action to address the deficit budget and implemented a plan to reduce it significantly over the next five years.

Planning for the use of grant funding is broadly suitable. However, the pupil development grant is insufficiently focused on pupils eligible for free school meals. The school does not evaluate the impact of grant funding on pupil standards and wellbeing, apart from key stage 4 outcomes and attendance.

The provision of learning support assistance is low and a very few subjects have sufficient staffing levels to provide pupils with subject specialists. In many subjects, resources are insufficient to meet the needs of pupils. For example, in music there are too few instruments. The school does not have a library.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and the governing body through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents to hear their views on the school and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, governors, senior and middle leaders (where appropriate) and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work, to listen to them read and to gain their views about various aspects of their school
- meet groups of pupils in leadership roles, such as representatives from the school council and eco-committee
- visit a broad sample of classes, including learning support groups and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning and to see staff teaching in a range of settings, including classrooms, support groups and in outdoor areas
- where appropriate, visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs, where appropriate
- attend assemblies and daily acts of collective worship
- look closely at the school's self-evaluation processes
- consider the school's improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the school has taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of school documents, including information on pupil assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the governing body, information on pupils' wellbeing, including the safeguarding of pupils, and records of staff training and professional development

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- review the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
Adequate and needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.wales

© Crown Copyright 2019: This report may be re used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 13/12/2019

This page is intentionally left blank



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Cwm Primary School
Canning Street
Cwm
Ebbw Vale
Blaenau Gwent
NP23 7RD**

Date of inspection: December 2019

by

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**

About Cwm Primary School

Cwm Primary School is in the village of Cwm in Blaenau Gwent local authority. There are 211 pupils on roll, aged from 3 to 11 years, including 22 nursery pupils. There are nine classes, including the nursery class.

Over the past three years, around 24% of pupils are eligible to free school meals. This figure is above the Welsh average of 18%.

The school identifies about 16% of pupils as having special educational needs. This is below the average for primary schools in Wales (21%). Very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

Very few pupils have English as an additional language. There are no pupils who speak Welsh at home.

The headteacher took up post in May 2011. The school's last inspection was in October 2012.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website at the link below.
<http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/Schools/SchoolSearch?lang=en>

Summary

Cwm Primary School plays a key role at the heart of its community. Staff place great importance on the happiness of pupils and recognise that all pupils need to feel safe, secure and valued in order to be able to learn and make progress. As a result, standards of wellbeing in the school are very high.

Teachers and teaching assistants deliver learning activities that engage pupils and encourage them to want to learn. They integrate aspects of Welsh culture and local history well. Staff use the Welsh language frequently and encourage its use among pupils effectively. As a result, standards in Welsh are a particular strength.

The headteacher sets a clear vision for the school based around pupil wellbeing. She works with other leaders, teachers and teaching assistant in a series of teams that encourage all to develop their leadership skills and contribute to school improvement. The school works well with other providers to improve the quality of its provision and share its strengths.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Good
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning experiences	Good
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Good

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that pupils in the foundation phase have meaningful opportunities to develop as independent learners
- R2 Ensure that teachers match activities to the needs of pupils of all abilities, particularly the least able
- R3 Improve the quality of presentation, spelling and punctuation in key stage 2

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

Estyn will invite the school to prepare a case study on its work in relation to intergenerational community work, for dissemination on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Standards: Good

Around half of pupils begin school with literacy, numeracy and social skills below those expected for their age. Nearly all pupils make good progress in these skills over time and a minority make better than expected progress. The development of pupils' personal and social skills is a particular strength. Most pupils with special educational needs and those eligible for free school meals make good progress over time.

Most pupils in the foundation phase develop effective listening skills. For example, reception pupils listen carefully to the class teacher's instructions before beginning their carousel of activities. Many pupils speak with confidence to other pupils and when contributing to class discussions. Most build well on these skills in key stage 2, and, by Year 6, many pupils speak with developing clarity to staff and visitors.

Most pupils develop an effective knowledge of letter sounds at an early stage. This helps them to make quick progress with their reading skills. By Year 2, they read basic texts fluently and with understanding, paying good attention to punctuation. For example, they recognise speech marks and add expression to their voice when reading what a character says. By Year 6, most pupils express preferences around favourite authors, use the blurb to help them choose a book and understand the features of different types of fiction and non-fiction texts. A few are beginning to develop higher order reading skills and use inference and deduction to predict what may happen next in a story.

In the foundation phase, many pupils develop effective writing skills. They develop quickly the ability to write neat, well-formed letters and use their phonic knowledge well to construct simple words. By Year 1, they write informative short passages, such as when explaining how they carried out an experiment about the properties of different materials. In key stage 2, most pupils continue to improve their knowledge of a good range of fiction and non-fiction forms of writing. For example, pupils in Year 5 create imaginative leaflets to advertise a dinosaur theme park using engaging language, such as, 'immerse yourself in this amazing VR room!' However, in too many cases in key stage 2, the quality of handwriting and presentation is inconsistent and pupils make basic errors in spelling and punctuation. This sometimes distracts from the overall good quality of the content of their writing.

In the foundation phase most pupils develop a good range of mathematical skills. For example, in Year 2 they use their ability to count to 100 to measure swords in centimetres as part of their castle project. They have good recall of number bonds to 10 and transfer these into counting in 10s to 100. They double and halve numbers to 20 confidently and understand simple fractions, such as halves and quarters. Most pupils in key stage 2 use their numeracy skills successfully. They handle data accurately and present it in various forms purposefully. For example, they use line graphs correctly to identify the most effective insulating material to keep tea warm. Older pupils use their understanding of money and the four rules of number successfully to work out the best option to buy group readers for their class.

Most pupils make very strong progress in developing their Welsh oracy skills within Welsh lessons and through class routines. Many are eager to practise these with visitors and around the school. By Year 2, many use suitable phrases regularly in everyday situations. For example, they recall the days of the week and describe the weather for the day. Many read simple texts with understanding and write a sequence of sentences correctly, such as to describe themselves. In key stage 2, many pupils ask questions and respond appropriately when discussing favourite activities and their families, with teachers, each other and visitors. Many pupils' reading and writing skills in Welsh are developing appropriately. Older pupils state that they enjoy speaking Welsh and they believe it is important to be bilingual.

Most pupils develop effective information and communication technology (ICT) skills. In foundation phase, pupils use programmable toys, tablets and interactive whiteboards well. For example, reception pupils write simple instructions to guide a toy robot around a model town. Most pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 use databases and spreadsheets skilfully to create and find records and calculate totals using basic formulae. For example, Year 6 pupils collaborate to create a database on countries of the world. Older pupils' keyboard skills are strong, for example they use keyboard short cuts to carry out actions to edit work. They log in successfully, access and save work to a variety of online platforms, including Hwb. Many also access these at home or in the local library.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Most pupils behave well in class and when moving around the school. They listen carefully in assemblies and show respect to each other. They are aware of their rights, and the responsibilities they have towards the rights of other children in their school. For example, each class has created a class charter, using articles in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Most pupils speak politely and confidently to adults and are keen to share their learning and information about the school. They benefit from strong relationships with their teachers, other adults in the school and the wider community. For example, many pupils participate enthusiastically in the community walking project and other inter-generational activities.

Nearly all pupils engage well and settle quickly on arrival into class and are ready to learn. Many pupils work effectively in a group to discuss ideas and create questions. For example, Year 6 pupils discuss successfully why humans might need to establish a human colony on Mars, and then ask purposeful questions to expand their thinking. However, a minority of pupils do not persevere to produce work of a high quality, they have limited independent skills and do not reflect purposefully on how to improve their work.

Nearly all pupils understand the importance of exercise. They enjoy taking part in engaging daily fitness activities, focusing on both physical and emotional wellbeing. Sport's ambassadors from key stage 2 organise valuable fitness activities for younger pupils at lunchtimes. Many pupils represent the school successfully in sporting competitions. Nearly all pupils know how to make healthy choices about what they eat. For example, the Year 6 fruit tuck shop is well-attended at playtimes.

Most pupils like school and feel safe, secure and well cared for. They know they can talk to an adult each playtime by going to the highly effective 'have a chat' session, and can also attend the weekly 'happy café'. Pupils with specific social and emotional needs make very good progress against their targets, as a result of effective interventions. Most pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe online. For example, they understand how to protect a password and the information they should not share with someone on the internet.

Most pupils are keen to take on worthwhile leadership roles within the school. Many pupil leadership groups have been effective in making decisions to improve the school. For example, the eco-council promotes sustainability effectively across the school. They organise a uniform shop to encourage the reuse of school uniform items and also arrange litter picks. Pupils in other groups contribute to school life by, for example, improving the environment of the school with the new bike racks and shelter.

Nearly all pupils value highly the school's place and impact on the local community. The head boy and head girl represent the school at community remembrance services and Christmas celebrations. The highly regarded choir sings at local events to fundraise for charity. Pupils have recently made parcels to help homeless people.

Many pupils have a good understanding of the ways in which humans can impact positively and negatively on the environment. For example, Year 6's 'drowning in plastic' project involved a wide range of skills and activities to learn about the impact of plastic on the oceans.

Pupils' attendance is very good and most pupils are punctual. Attendance levels compare well to those in other similar schools.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Staff have very good working relationships with pupils and employ effective behaviour management strategies that ensure a positive and purposeful learning environment. Teaching has a positive effect on many pupils' standards. In most classes, teachers ask questions frequently and skilfully to develop pupils' responses and ideas further. In the best cases, they use questioning well to share good work and ensure that pupils know how to be successful in their activities. However in the foundation phase, although the content of lessons engages many pupils' interest appropriately, teachers and teaching assistants tend to over-direct pupil activities. This limits the development of wider skills such as resilience and independence.

The thematic approach to planning stimulates nearly all pupils' interest and encourages their engagement in learning. Through class discussion at the beginning of a new topic, pupils have appropriate opportunities to make choices about what they would like to learn. For example, pupils in lower key stage 2 chose a topic on food and wanted to investigate pizzas. This culminated in a trip to a pizza restaurant. Teachers arrange worthwhile trips to reinforce class topics. In the foundation phase, teachers ensure that the indoor learning areas meet pupils' requirements appropriately. The use of outdoor areas is developing satisfactorily, for example, pupils engage enthusiastically in building a castle as part of their role play. However, in too many cases across the school, activities do not challenge pupils to achieve at the level of which they are capable.

Teachers ensure good opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum. For instance, in the foundation phase pupils write their addresses when labelling parcels for the 'Jolly Christmas Postman'. They use a map of the street in Cwm to direct a programmable toy to different destination and landmarks. In Year 3, pupils use their numeracy skills successfully to compare the prices of fair trade and non-fair trade goods.

The school ensures that assessments are valid and accurate through regular validation meetings internally and with teachers from other schools. Teachers' feedback often helps pupils to know how well they are doing and what they need to do in order to improve. However, this is not consistent and in too many cases feedback does not indicate to pupils what they need to do next or provide sufficient opportunities for them to make improvements.

The provision to develop pupils' Welsh language skills across the school is a notable strength. Nearly all members of staff use Welsh commands and phrases effectively and lessons link well to pupils' everyday lives, such as their families and homes. The school has a range of colourful displays to encourage the use of Welsh outside the classroom and the 'Criw Cymraeg' conduct a weekly assembly where everyone recites the Welsh school prayer. The use of visitors and visits enrich pupils' learning well, such as through visits to museums and local important landmarks. The school celebrates the culture and heritage of Wales well, for example through studying the effect of the World War One on Cwm and the number of soldiers who lost their lives. Local artists visit the school and work with pupils to produce interesting portraits using food paint.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Cwm Primary School is a caring and nurturing school. Its ethos ensures very strong relationships between staff and pupils and places the school at the heart of the community.

The school provides well for pupils with special educational needs. Experienced and knowledgeable teaching assistants lead effective interventions to develop the literacy and numeracy skills of targeted pupils. For example, an oracy support programme is successful in developing pupils' listening skills and improves their ability to share ideas through the use of a range of sentence structures and tenses. Staff have developed a simple and effective method to summarise pupils on a single page. This provides staff with clarity over each pupils' individual interests and needs. The special needs coordinator and teachers work together to create beneficial individual education plans with relevant targets for pupils in need of additional support. However, outside of additional support sessions, teachers do not always sufficiently consider these targets or ensure that tasks are suitable for pupils of all abilities when planning lessons and activities.

The school provides highly effective support to pupils with emotional and social difficulties through careful assessment and targeted interventions. Nearly all staff are aware of these pupils' needs and how to meet them. Recent staff professional learning on coping with adverse childhood experiences and attachment issues has further helped teachers and teaching assistants to understand and support these pupils.

The school has suitable processes to assess and track the progress of individuals and groups of pupils. The school tracks and monitors attendance very effectively and addresses any issues of poor attendance actively.

The school has established very good working relationships with the parents and they value the school's caring and supportive ethos. The school keeps parents well informed about how their child is progressing, through reports and parents' evenings. The school runs beneficial workshops to enable parents to develop their understanding of how pupils learn, for example by explaining how teachers teach multiplication and division. This is effective in helping parents to support their child with their work at home. The school communicates important information about the life of the school effectively through social media.

The school promotes healthy eating and drinking very well and helps pupils to understand the benefits of healthy choices. It sets very high expectations for behaviour and works successfully with partners to address issues when they arise. For example, the Police Liaison Officer supported the school effectively to help pupils understand the need to treat everyone equally. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Pupils benefit from the school's comprehensive range of extra-curricular clubs and activities. The school plans successfully for pupils to take on a growing range of responsibilities as they mature. For example, digital leaders organise ICT equipment and help other learners with their ICT skills in class.

The school plays an important role at the centre of its community. Links with local organisations enable pupils to develop their self-confidence to perform or speak in front of different audiences and with a variety of people. For example, the successful school choir sings regularly in community events and with other choirs. The school's work to extend its wellbeing initiatives into the local community is a particular strength. For instance, its 'intergenerational walking project' helps develop pupils' awareness of their role in supporting the needs of others in the local community

The school's personal and social education programme ensures that pupils develop a sound understanding of how people change as they mature and the importance of considering the views and beliefs of others. Assemblies and religious education lessons develop pupils' sense of spiritual awareness and knowledge of cultures around the globe. For example, pupils in key stage 2, compare the features of major world religions such as Sikhism, Judaism and Christianity. The school integrates pupils' understanding of the wider world into class topics appropriately. For example, the 'around the world' topic in key stage 2 has allowed pupils to investigate a range of arts, facts and traditions from chosen countries.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher has developed a clear vision for the school that places pupils' wellbeing at the heart of its work. She recognises that pupils need to feel safe, happy and secure to be able to learn. She shares this vision very effectively with staff, pupils, governors and parents, who work collaboratively to create a positive learning environment where pupils feel valued and cared for.

Leaders and staff have high expectations of themselves and others. They have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and discharge these well. A particular strength of leadership is the sense of team working and collaboration that underpins the school's work. The organisation of staff into four curriculum teams is effective in ensuring that teachers and teaching assistants have good quality opportunities to develop their leadership skills. They create and implement action plans for their curriculum areas, monitoring their effectiveness and reporting on progress. Staff are keen to take on leadership roles. For example, teaching assistants with responsibility for implementing a nurture intervention programme have taken the initiative in developing tracking systems that allow them to monitor the progress of the pupils they work with.

The governing body is developing its role effectively. They gather first-hand information about the quality of provision and its impact on pupil outcomes through looking at pupils' work using crib sheets produced by staff and by undertaking visits to lessons. This provides them with the information they need to provide effective challenge and support to the work of the school.

The school is developing well as a learning community. Staff are keen to learn from each other and colleagues in other schools. For example, visits to another primary school led to the implementation of 'independent zones' across the school. These are beginning to improve the opportunities for pupils to practise the skills they learn in maths and literacy lessons independently. Teachers have begun to use research information well to help reflect and improve their practice. For example, in the foundation phase, a teacher videoed pupils to provide a baseline record of their oracy skills before trialling a new approach to improve their vocabulary. She then used the video to measure the progress the pupils had made over time and to judge whether the intervention had been successful. The school shares aspects of its work successfully with other providers by hosting visits and through staff presenting at conferences. This is particularly the case for its strong work on ensuring high levels of pupil wellbeing.

The school has a strong track record of improvement in many areas. In most cases, their self-evaluation procedures identify relevant areas for improvement and leaders plan effective actions to address these. For example, staff identified successfully the need to improve pupils' ICT skills. Similarly, they recognise the need to improve pupils' resilience in their learning. The school's actions to improve standards of pupils' Welsh have been particularly effective. However, in a very few cases, the school does not identify important areas for improvement, such as the quality of foundation phase provision or ensuring that teaching meets the needs of pupils of all abilities.

Senior leaders work well with the governing body to oversee financial and other resources. They link spending closely to the school's improvement priorities and regularly evaluate whether expenditure is cost effective by reviewing their action plans. The school has sufficient teachers and support staff to deliver the curriculum and meet the needs of pupils. It is well resourced, with plentiful books, ICT hardware and other equipment. Leaders plan well for the use of grant funding, including the pupil development grant, which they target effectively to support vulnerable learners.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and the governing body through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents to hear their views on the school and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, governors, senior and middle leaders (where appropriate) and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work, to listen to them read and to gain their views about various aspects of their school
- meet groups of pupils in leadership roles, such as representatives from the school council and eco-committee
- visit a broad sample of classes, including learning support groups and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning and to see staff teaching in a range of settings, including classrooms, support groups and in outdoor areas
- where appropriate, visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs, where appropriate
- attend assemblies and daily acts of collective worship
- look closely at the school's self-evaluation processes
- consider the school's improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the school has taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of school documents, including information on pupil assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the governing body, information on pupils' wellbeing, including the safeguarding of pupils, and records of staff training and professional development

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- review the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
Adequate and needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.wales

© Crown Copyright 2020: This report may be re used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 13/02/2020



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Ysgol Bro Helyg
Rising Sun Industrial Estate
Blaina
Blaenau Gwent
NP13 3DQ**

Date of inspection: February 2020

by

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**

About Ysgol Bro Helyg

Ysgol Bro Helyg is situated near the village of Blaina in Blaenau Gwent local authority. The school serves a wide area and pupils come from all corners of the county. There are 256 pupils between 3 and 11 years old on roll, including 47 nursery age pupils. Welsh is the main medium of the school's life and work.

Around 7% of pupils are eligible for free schools meals. This is significantly lower than the national average of 18%. The school has identified that around 11% of pupils have special educational needs. This is lower than the national figure of 21%. Many pupils come from English-speaking homes. Around 21% come from Welsh-speaking homes.

The current headteacher was appointed in April 2012 and the last inspection was conducted in March 2015.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website at the link below.
<http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/Schools/SchoolSearch?lang=en>

Summary

The school is a caring and hard-working community which provides a firm foundation for pupils' learning from an early age, particularly in acquiring the Welsh language. The headteacher and staff have high expectations of pupils and, as a result, most make good progress during their time at the school. Staff organise purposeful interventions for pupils, which succeed in supporting them to improve their literacy and numeracy skills, and wellbeing, well.

Across the school, most pupils show enthusiasm towards their learning. They respect others well and work diligently in pairs and groups. Classes are organised and industrious places in which most pupils persevere well with their tasks. However, not all pupils in the foundation phase are given enough opportunities to enable them to make their own decisions and become independent learners. Staff plan valuable opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills consistently in their work. However, they do not plan purposefully enough to develop pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

The headteacher has a clear vision to realise the aim of 'setting a firm foundation for a bright future'. The school has established a hard-working management team that has succeeded in leading significant improvements successfully over time. However, processes for self-evaluation and planning for improvement do not always focus enough on the most important priorities in order to move the school forward.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Good
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning experiences	Adequate and needs improvement
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Good

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that teaching and learning experiences develop the independence of all pupils in the foundation phase consistently
- R2 Improve provision to develop pupils' ICT skills across the school
- R3 Strengthen self-evaluation and planning for improvement procedures in order to prioritise and address the most important areas

What happens next

The school will produce an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

Main findings

Standards: Good

On entry to the school, many pupils have communication skills that are below the standard expected for their age. Very few are able to speak Welsh before entry. However, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress during their time at the school.

Many pupils begin to acquire Welsh oracy skills very quickly after starting at the school. They come to know instructions and begin to speak Welsh by using appropriate vocabulary and simple sentences. By the end of the foundation phase, most pupils speak Welsh confidently with visitors, and respond appropriately to staff's questions. Most pupils develop their oracy skills further during their time in key stage 2 and begin to give purposeful consideration to the audience, for example when providing voiceovers for their animation work, 'Antur India'. Nearly all pupils listen attentively to adults in lessons.

Most pupils make strong progress in their reading skills. By the end of the foundation phase, they read well with a good level of fluency and use different strategies to break down unfamiliar words. Most show a thorough understanding of content and succeed in translating sentences from Welsh books to English. Many pupils in key stage 2 develop successful reading skills, and a majority read for pleasure and discuss their favourite authors confidently. They use their reading skills skilfully to analyse and find information, for example when solving a series of mathematical problems.

During their time in the foundation phase, most pupils develop sound writing skills. Many of the youngest pupils develop robust fine motor skills by making marks and begin to write letters and simple words. By the end of the foundation phase, most develop to write extended pieces successfully, such as a letter to a 'snowman'. During key stage 2, most write purposefully in a variety of different genres. For example, they write an article for an imaginary newspaper, 'Clecs y Cwm', and write a portrayal of King Richard III as part of a project about William Shakespeare.

Many pupils in the nursery classes are beginning to recognise numbers and count to ten correctly. They come to recognise and create patterns successfully, for example when printing shapes by using potatoes. By the end of the foundation phase, most pupils use number confidently in their work. For example, they find the correct change when paying for different 'fruits' with pretend money in the role-play area. Most pupils continue to apply their numeracy skills productively during key stage 2, for example as they record the results of a scientific investigation to discover the average distance of the flight of a paper aeroplane.

Most pupils develop a limited range of information and communication technology (ICT) skills appropriately. For example, Year 2 pupils use digital art packages to draw pictures of Celtic roundhouses and add a purposeful sentence to them, while Year 6 pupils find information on the internet confidently. However, many pupils' ICT skills have not developed soundly enough.

Most pupils develop creative skills skilfully. For example, individuals in the foundation phase learn about the different cultures of the world by creating Chinese lanterns and Rangoli patterns, while Year 6 pupils perform Shakespeare's plays in a local theatre.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

The working relationship between pupils and staff at the school is sound and provides an effective foundation to maintain a caring and supportive ethos. Nearly all pupils talk about their school with pride.

Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They share their ideas about their education appropriately by providing ideas about what they would like to learn at the beginning of each theme. They concentrate well and persevere for extended periods. They are very willing to discuss their work, their successes and the next steps in their learning with adults. A good example of this is their pride when talking about their work on managing funds. They work together effectively, either in groups, pairs or by supporting each other, when necessary.

Pupils have a high level of trust in staff and know that they will do their best for them. As a result, nearly all pupils enjoy school, understand what to do if anything is worrying them, and feel completely safe there. They speak confidently about how to stay safe online. Pupils are able to discuss confidently the importance of not revealing information online and keeping their contact details confidential.

Most pupils understand the importance of eating and drinking healthily and make healthy choices. The mile-a-day running activity has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes to physical exercise and a healthy lifestyle. Many pupils take advantage of opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities, such as sports and art clubs.

Pupils play a leading role in the school's strategic work. Members of the wide range of children's committees have a purposeful influence on different aspects of the school. Pupils understand their responsibilities clearly, and discharge their duties enthusiastically and maturely. A good example of this is the Criw Cymraeg and their work to promote the use of the Welsh language within businesses in the local community. The school council organises fundraising activities for a large number of charities. A significant amount of money was raised recently for a children's charity. This has a positive effect on most pupils' awareness of the needs of others within their community and the wider world.

Most pupils develop well are moral and knowledgeable citizens through their increasing awareness of values that are promoted by the school.

Teaching and learning experiences: Adequate and needs improvement

Staff have a positive and supportive working relationship with pupils. Teachers know the pupils and their needs well and, as a result, most make appropriate progress in lessons. Teachers have high expectations of pupils. Most lessons have a purposeful pace, which contributes effectively to the hard-working environment that is evident in the classrooms. Teachers plan regular opportunities for pupils to learn in groups and pairs and, as a result, most respect their peers' contribution to their learning.

All staff contribute successfully towards creating a Welsh ethos in the school. They model the language skilfully and take appropriate advantage of opportunities to enrich pupils' vocabulary. As a result, most pupils make sound progress in learning the language from a very early age. Staff ensure that pupils make full use of the Welsh language in lessons and outside the classroom. As a result, by key stage 2, they talk to each other naturally through the medium of Welsh during lessons. Teachers use off-site visits effectively to deepen pupils' understanding of their themes, for example by taking part in science and technology workshops at the university. However, teachers do not always take advantage of opportunities to weave Welsh culture and history into work across the curriculum.

Teachers plan an appropriate range of interesting activities that engage pupils' interest. They have good subject knowledge and give due attention to pupils' previous learning when planning new experiences. Teachers work purposefully with assistants, who support teaching effectively. They question pupils' skilfully during lessons, which contributes beneficially towards developing their thinking skills. This also helps them to move to the next step in their learning, and is a useful means of assessing their progress. Teachers give pupils purposeful and regular feedback during their lessons, including opportunities for them to reflect on their own progress and that of their peers. As a result, in the best practice, pupils refine, correct and improve the content of their work appropriately. Teachers set useful personal targets for pupils and arrange for them to have time to practise them regularly.

Overall, foundation phase staff plan a suitable range of learning experiences that respond appropriately to pupils' requirements. Teachers prepare suitable focus activities in order to present new concepts to pupils. In addition, there is a range of interesting challenges in the different areas in the classrooms, which provide valuable opportunities for pupils to apply their skills appropriately. However, pupils are not given enough opportunities to make choices about their learning nor to conduct research and find information for themselves. There are also very few opportunities for pupils to take part in beneficial learning experiences in the outdoor area and develop their independent learning skills in full.

Teachers plan valuable opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy and numeracy skills in lessons across the school. They apply these skills in various areas across the curriculum. For example, key stage 2 pupils have recently analysed data on the Welsh rugby team. However, teachers do not plan purposefully enough to ensure that pupils build on their ICT skills during their time at the school.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a caring and inclusive community that provides high quality care and support for nearly all pupils. All staff are committed to identifying pupils' needs at an early stage and providing them with valuable support. They use robust systems successfully to track their progress from their starting points. As a result, they provide them with purposeful interventions by using a wide range of programmes in order to improve their literacy and numeracy skills, and wellbeing, where appropriate. Purposeful planning between teachers and assistants ensures that all understand their roles to enable them to meet pupils' needs robustly.

The special educational needs co-ordinator works successfully with parents in order to seek their views as they plan support for their children, and report to them on their progress. Individual plans for pupils with special educational needs are purposeful and enable them to make good progress against their targets.

Staff work effectively with a full range of partners and external agencies to support provision for pupils with special educational needs or emotional needs. This contributes well to the school's caring and familial ethos.

The school develops the pupil's voice well through a number of school councils and committees. This has a positive effect on the school's ethos, as pupils feel that they are respected and that staff listen to their ideas. These opportunities promote principles such as co-operation, courtesy and friendship effectively and naturally.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern. External partners, such as the police, are used effectively to ensure that pupils understand how to stay safe online and the importance of not abusing substances.

The school promotes pupils' health and wellbeing effectively and has appropriate arrangements to promote eating and drinking healthily. A full range of beneficial activities, such as extra-curricular cooking, netball and football clubs, and skipping during break times, support this well. As a result, most pupils understand the importance of keeping healthy.

There is a robust relationship between the school and parents. Staff promote an open and co-operative culture, which succeeds in ensuring their commitment and comprehensive support. Successful arrangements include implementing a transition programme when pupils start at the school, which helps them to settle quickly. This programme also provides valuable support for parents to develop their knowledge of making healthy food at home, in addition to developing their initial knowledge of the Welsh language.

There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their awareness and knowledge of different cultures and other parts of the world by learning about special celebrations. A good example of this is the work on the Chinese New Year, and the differences and similarities between some of the world's religions. This ensures that pupils show empathy towards the lives of others and are given suitable opportunities to develop spiritually by reflecting on their own beliefs. The school promotes pupils' moral development successfully. It places a clear emphasis on aspects such as the importance of treating others with respect and promotes children's rights. The school has a supportive and effective programme to support young carers. It has successful links with people who are living with dementia, and beneficial opportunities are provided for pupils to support charities such as the local Cancer Centre.

Provision to develop pupils' understanding of sustainability is good. As a result of the work of the eco council, teachers and pupils promote the importance of looking after our planet effectively. For example, they recycle paper and develop ways of saving energy to foster the whole community's understanding of the importance of living a greener lifestyle.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher and leaders have a clear and robust vision to develop the school as a successful learning community by providing high quality education and care for all pupils. This vision is based soundly on raising standards, developing pride towards the Welsh language, and pupils' wellbeing. The headteacher has established an effective leadership team to support the work of setting a decisive strategic direction for all of the school's work. They share this successfully with staff, governors, parents and pupils. Members of the senior management team have high expectations of themselves and others. They use their expertise skilfully to ensure support and encouragement for staff to commit themselves fully to improving pupils' outcomes. Nearly all members of staff are very aware of their roles and responsibilities, and operate highly effectively as a team. All of this has had a positive effect on raising standards, and has ensured clear improvements across the school over the last five years.

The school has robust procedure to manage the performance of its teachers and assistants. This ensures that they are given support to fulfil the school's priorities and their individual professional needs. A strong feature of the school's work is the way in which leaders support and encourage staff to undertake professional learning activities successfully within the school and through a range of beneficial networks with schools across the region. A good example of this is the guidance that the school provides to schools in the cluster on professional learning. This enables all staff to reflect on their practice and develop leaders' confidence. The headteacher also supports staff to take part in further training activities to prepare them for the next step in their careers. Most learning assistants are trained effectively to support individual pupils and specific groups of pupils with a variety of useful interventions. This contributes successfully towards strengthening staff's skills, in order to ensure that pupils' standards are good in terms of their learning and wellbeing.

The governors are supportive of the school and have a good understanding of pupils' standards and achievement. They receive purposeful information from the headteacher, and valuable and regular presentations from staff on particular elements of the school's life and work. Members of the governing body conduct valuable learning walks with pupils, staff and the challenge adviser in order to seek more information about provision. This develops their understanding of the school's work successfully and enables them to challenge leaders appropriately.

Leaders have established a strong culture of continuous self-evaluation, which focuses appropriately on pupils' outcomes and wellbeing, in addition to provision. Leaders make suitable use of the views and input of parents, pupils and staff as part of the school's self-evaluation procedures. Leaders and teachers follow a comprehensive monitoring programme in order to evaluate the quality of provision and learning. However, these evaluations are not always incisive enough to identify some areas for improvement effectively enough. Overall, there is an appropriate link between the findings of self-evaluation procedures and the priorities in the school development plan. The development plan is a comprehensive document, which outlines suitable actions to ensure improvement. However, priorities are very wide-ranging and include a number of areas for improvement. As a result, leaders do not always prioritise the most important areas that are in need of attention.

Leaders manage the budget carefully and ensure that expenditure links well with plans for improvement. The school makes skilful use of different grants, including the pupil development grant, to support vulnerable pupils. This has a positive effect on the literacy and numeracy skills, and wellbeing, of these pupils.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and the governing body through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents to hear their views on the school and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, governors, senior and middle leaders and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work, to listen to them read and to gain their views about various aspects of their school
- meet groups of pupils in leadership roles, such as representatives from the school council and eco-committee
- visit a broad sample of classes, including learning support groups and the specialist resource base (where appropriate), and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning and to see staff teaching in a range of settings, including classrooms, support groups (where appropriate) and in outdoor areas
- visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning (where appropriate)
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs, where appropriate
- attend assemblies and daily acts of collective worship
- look closely at the school's self-evaluation processes
- consider the school's improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the school has taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of school documents, including information on pupil assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the governing body, information on pupils' wellbeing, including the safeguarding of pupils, and records of staff training and professional development

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- review the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
Adequate and needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.wales

This document has been translated by Trosol (Welsh to English).

© Crown Copyright 2020: This report may be re used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 06/04/2020

Agenda Item 22

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 23.11.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 24.11.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **9th December 2020**

Report Subject: **Education Directorate - Response to COVID-19**

Portfolio Holder: **Executive Member of Education, Cllr. Joanne Collins**

Report Submitted by: **Corporate Director for Education, Lynn Phillips**

Reporting Pathway (Dates to be Entered)								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
1.10.20	8.10.20	24.11.20			3.11.20	09.12.20		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Executive Committee with an opportunity to review the Education Directorate's response to the COVID-19 situation, particularly supporting the schools during the emergency period.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The Corporate Director of Education provided a verbal update to Scrutiny Committee at the meeting in September regarding the response to the COVID-19 emergency. However, this report provides the background, context and a current view of the response, in particular how the Council has and will continue to support schools during the pandemic.

The Welsh Government Minister for Education, Kirsty Williams MS, outlined the national approach for the return of children and young people to schools in Wales on Wednesday 3rd June 2020. The approach involved schools in Wales reopening on June 29th 2020. Welsh Government advocated a phased return to schools, supporting pupils to check in and catch-up with a focus on wellbeing, whilst also continuing with distance and online learning in and around school-based sessions.

2.2 School Communication and Operations

The reopening of schools in Blaenau Gwent was managed in conjunction with corporate colleagues and schools. There are robust reporting arrangements on Education matters to GOLD via the Emergency Response Team (ERT) protocols. Furthermore, Education has established two Executive School Planning Groups - one for the secondary sector inclusive of special schools, along with one for the primary sector inclusive of Welsh-medium provision. The aim of these groups is to oversee the development of a common framework and principles within which the reopening of schools can be implemented. During the summer term, the secondary sector including middle schools were operational between the hours of 9:00am and 12:30pm. The primary sector was operational between the hours of 9:00am and 12:00pm Pen-y-Cwm Special School was operational between the hours of 9:00am and 3:00pm, due to travel times and distance from home to school. This approach enabled two key aims to be delivered:

- The aim of the model was to ensure where practicably possible, that pupils had at least 3 opportunities to check in and catch-up during the summer term.
- Schools established maximum engagement opportunities for key year groups such as years 10, 9, 6 and 5 to catch-up and check in.

2.3 **Facilities, Health & Safety and School Support Services**

Technical facilities assessments were undertaken in preparation for reopening to assess physical works and adaptations. In addition, a comprehensive water testing, management and mitigation programme was established and monitored by Education, Technical Services, Health & Safety and Environmental Health. There has been a subsequent Joint Scrutiny Committee that dealt with the water testing issues experienced within schools. Some of the key work carried out from a facilities management and support services perspective included:

- Pupil capacity assessments and facilities planning sessions were programmed to inform the operational plans for each school including: maximum pupil numbers and grouping; operational layout, set-up and systems i.e. one way; room usage; decant and resource management requirements.
- Guidance was provided to schools regarding the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in general, for first aid, medical, intimate care and other purposes. Additionally, there were other resource requirements i.e. signage, spill kits etc. that were identified on a school by school basis.
- An enhanced cleaning service specification and associated guidance was produced and introduced across the school estate.
- The provision of direct payments to families eligible for Free School Meal (eFSM) circa 2,200+ learners.
- A reopening risk assessment template, guidance and example were produced and shared with headteachers. These template documents were then adapted by school leaders and validated by the Council. All school based risk assessments were deemed to be suitable and sufficient.
- Education and Health & Safety colleagues visited all school sites in order to review the reopening plans, risk assessments and to undertake Environmental Health based assessments ensuring compliance with key legislation.

2.4 **School Improvement**

The focus has clearly been on supporting a safe return to school for learners and staff, however, throughout each phase of the pandemic the range of support to schools has flexed in order to respond to emerging learner and school improvement needs. The EAS, the commissioned school improvement service has worked closely with the Council, school leaders, staff and governors to support the identified needs. A high-level summary of the extensive work that is ongoing to support schools is detailed below, but clearly this is not an exhaustive list:

- Providing timely communication and access to virtual networks for school settings and governors, in line with the Welsh Government's Continuity of Learning Plan (CoLP);
- Supporting adaptive and innovative leadership to manage change;
- Providing bespoke leadership support to schools and settings with a focus on self-evaluation, quality assuring current provision and planning for return;
- Providing wellbeing resources and guidance materials, particularly to support remote and blended learning;
- Continuing to provide a range of professional learning that meets the needs of the entire workforce (and governors) over the 2020-21 academic year; and,
- Support for circa 1,400 digitally disadvantaged learners with funding of £600,000+ support from the EdTech initiative.

2.5 Home to School Transport

Education determined that transport provision would be required in consideration of availability and safe operation. Education requested that schools who have transport provision in place in line with the Council's Home to School and Post 16 Transport Policy, provide the Council with their school operation plan and pupil transport priorities, based on the following criteria:

- Distance from home to school;
- The needs of disabled learners and learners with learning difficulties;
- Any particular needs of learners who are 'looked after' or formerly looked after by a Council;
- The age of a learner; and,
- The nature of the route that the learner is expected to take between home and the places where they receive education or training.

Pupils from 15 schools within Blaenau Gwent are currently eligible for transport in line with the Council's policy, along with pupils from 12 schools/specialist education facilities outside of the County Borough. The Council was able to fully meet the transport requirements identified by schools within and outside of the County Borough.

2.6 Key Worker Childcare, Vulnerable Learners and Youth Services

The Council's approach to the re-purposing of schools has provided childcare for over 500 critical workers throughout the course of the last 6 months, via school childcare hubs and/or private childcare provision. 377 children have accessed a key worker childcare place at a school hub between March and early July 2020. School hub attendance increased throughout the summer term to over 140 children and young people per day across 7 school childcare hubs. The percentage split was 83% key worker and 17% vulnerable children and young people.

The Youth Service also supported young people throughout the emergency period in both school and community settings. The team liaised with secondary schools regarding support for school-age young people on a weekly basis along with the following key activities:

- Providing emotional wellbeing support for young people.
- Emergency support for young people in crisis, including the provision of food.
- Resources to support Elective Home Educated (EHE) young people and families in line with requests.
- Reviewing the 'stay at home' campaign with vulnerable 18-25 year olds (liaising with local partners such as Gwent Police).
- Providing support for young people experiencing homelessness issues.

2.7 **Whole School Re-opening - September 2020**

More recently, the Council's corporate response has focussed on preparing for all of our learners returning to whole school environments. The Blaenau Gwent Whole School Re-opening Guidance (Appendix 1) document outlines the local approach and is a key source of reference for implementation in schools. It provided schools with a strategic framework for a safe and effective return to whole school working. It continues to be a dynamic emergency response situation, and therefore, the Council will continue to work with the schools to review the planning arrangements and amend the guidance accordingly e.g. the use of face masks and social distancing requirements. A summary of the main considerations that are pertinent to the whole school re-opening is provided below;

- Blaenau Gwent has adopted a strategic approach to whole school re-opening (September 2020) for consistency purposes;
- School Planning Groups for secondary, primary and special schools are established, including Headteacher representation;
- Re-opening from 1st September involved a common approach across the school estate;
 - 2 planning days.
 - 2 transitional year group planning days.
 - Whole school reopening from the 7th September (WG expectation 14th September).
- Re-opening has been relatively successful e.g. pupil attendance is in range of 85%-90%, but pupil regression has been identified;
- School support services-cleaning regimes further enhanced, a flexible catering offer and transport in place;
- Blended learning in place for learners who are self-isolating through identification of positive cases;
- FSM direct payments will continue for learners not in school;
- Relatively stable position on school based workforce, however, increasing cases are being experienced amongst school based staff; and,
- Positive COVID-19 cases for pupils has resulted in some classes, year groups and one school closure on health and safety grounds.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

- 3.1 This report has been discussed by Education DMT, CLT and Scrutiny Committee prior to submission to the Executive Committee.

Option 1: to the Executive Committee accept the report as presented.

Option 2: Members are requested to review the information detailed within the report and contribute to the continuous assessment of effectiveness.

This report provides the Executive Committee with important emergency response and statutory information, as well as opportunity to identify where progress has been made and where further improvement is required.

4. Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan

4.1 One of the objectives in the Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan is for every child to have the best start in life. The Council seeks to ensure that provision is appropriate and able to meet the needs of children and young people, so that their progress is in line with ambitious expectations. This is particularly pertinent in an emergency crisis situation.

5. Implications Against Each Option

5.1 Impact on Budget

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report, however, it should be noted that the impact of the COVID-19 emergency response on both Council and school revenue budgets is being closely monitored. The Education Directorate Q1 revenue budget monitoring report's position demonstrated a favourable variance circa £340,000, mostly attributable to the reduced provision of transport and out of county support for vulnerable learners. There are, however, some significant cost pressures that are being managed through school support services, such as cleaning, but there is WG Hardship funding available to offset aspects of the additional cost burdens at this point in time.

5.2 Risk including Mitigating Actions

There are two strategic risks associated with this report;

1. The impact of COVID-19 on learner progression and pupil regression. This is being mitigated through the Council, EAS and Schools working in collaboration to support learners across the board; and,
2. The risks associated with the provision of safe learning environments to minimise the potential transmission of COVID. There are comprehensive risk assessments in place to mitigate the risks, but the situation is constantly under review and appropriate remedial action is taken e.g. self-isolation protocols are implemented.

5.3 Legal

This report provides information relating to the emergency response requirements as well as the specific Education obligations set out the School Standards and Organisation Act Wales (2013) to support strategic and operational activity to improve pupil outcomes and wellbeing.

5.4 **Human Resources**

Colleagues in Organisational Development provide a weekly analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on the Education Directorate's workforce. There are increasing cases amongst the workforce, but this has resulted in only a limited impact on service delivery within schools at the time of drafting this report.

6. **Supporting Evidence:**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

Across the board, the emergency response from the Council and its schools has been strong and effective, especially in the following aspects of work:-

- Re-purposing of schools – supporting children of key workers & vulnerable learners;
- Re-opening schools – from the 29th June 2020; and,
- Preparing for academic year 2020/21, particularly whole school re-opening from September 2020, in line with WG expectations.

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

There is a commitment from the Council and its schools to provide quality education for our children and young people to improve their life chances, despite the challenges faced during the emergency crisis.

6.3 **Involvement**

There has been extensive involvement of key stakeholder both corporately and across the school estate. The planning groups for secondary, primary and special schools that are established, including Headteacher representation has secured a collaborative and corporate response.

6.4 **Thinking for the Long term**

This report largely reflects on the emergency response to date, however, there are robust governance arrangements in place to support the next stages of the emergency for the foreseeable future.

6.5 **Preventative focus**

The Council's emergency response has facilitated a preventative approach to minimising the transmission of the COVID-19 virus.

6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**

The report outlines the significant amount of partnership working at a strategic and operational level. This has resulted in a strengthening of the working relationships between the Council and the schools.

6.7 **Integration**

The emergency response has been a 'One Council' approach.

6.8 **EqIA**

There is no requirement for EQIA assessment since there is only a limited change of policy and guidance associated with this report.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

- 7.1 The report will be presented to the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee and then subsequently through to the Executive Committee for monitoring purposes.

Background Documents / Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Blaenau Gwent Guidance for Whole School Re-opening – Autumn Term 2020

This page is intentionally left blank



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

Blaenau Gwent Guidance for Whole School Re-opening

Autumn-term 2020

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

1.1 Foreword	2
1.2 Authority Support	3

2. School facilities

2.1 Capacities	3
2.2 Social Distancing, PHW Guidance and Environmental Health	3-9
2.3 Education Facilities	10-12
2.4 Health and Safety and Fire Risk Assessments	12-13
2.5 Re-opening and Individual Risk Assessment Requirements	13
2.6 Catering	14-15
2.7 Cleaning	15-16
2.8 Access and Visitors	16-17
2.9 Mixing of Groups and Staff	17-20
2.10 Personal and Protective Equipment and Other Resources	20-22
2.11 ICT	22-23
2.12 Co-located Provision and 3rd Party Licensing	23

3. School Management and Support Functions

3.1 EAS, School Improvement and blended learning offer	23-30
3.2 HR Guidance	30-32
3.3 Home to School Transport	32-34

4. Pupils

4.1 Attendance, Inclusion and Vulnerable groups	34-41
4.2 Youth Service	41-42
4.3 Safeguarding, Children Looked After Mentors and Operation Encompass	42-44
4.4 Wellbeing and Healthy Schools	44-46
4.5 Childcare	46-47
4.6 Educational Trips and Visits	47-48
4.7 Use of Leisure Facilities	48-49

1. Introduction

1.1 Foreword

We would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to Blaenau Gwent's strategic full whole school re-opening planning document for the start of academic year 2020/21. Firstly, we need to express our appreciation to everyone for all your hard work, commitment and professionalism demonstrated over the academic year 19/20, but particularly during recent months in responding to the emergency response associated with COVID-19.

Across the board, the BG response from colleagues has been outstanding, especially in the following aspects of work recently: -

- Re-purposing of schools – supporting children of key workers & vulnerable learners;
- Re-opening schools – from the 29th June 2020; and,
- Preparing for academic year 2020/21, as we move to whole school re-opening in September 2020, in line with WG expectations.

It is now time, however, to prepare for all of our learners returning to a whole school environment. This document outlines the BG approach and will be a key source of reference for localised implementation in schools and will also provide a framework for a safe and effective return to whole school working. It has and continues to be a dynamic situation moving forward, and therefore, we will work with our schools to review the planning arrangements and this document accordingly.

We both look forward to working with all key stakeholders to continue to deliver quality educational provision for all of our learners in academic year 2020/21.

Interim Corporate Director of Education

Lynn Phillips

Executive Member for Education

Cllr Joanne Collins

1.2 Authority Support

The Council and its partners such as the Education Achievement Service, Shared Resource Service Wales etc. will be providing specific re-opening support to schools via:

- Weekly Executive School Planning Group meetings
- School re-opening site visits
- Risk assessment reviews
- Providing support and information on a daily/weekly basis
- Offering guidance which is frequently updated in line with the latest Welsh Government, Public Health Wales and local operational developments.

2. School Facilities

2.1 Capacities

The annual capacity assessment process will be undertaken earlier in the autumn term than in previous years. The primary focus will be the use of currently unused internal areas of the school building, in supporting schools to address spatial issues associated with the health, safety and welfare of staff and pupils. The secondary aspect of the assessment will focus on the capacity assessments for September 2022.

The Education Transformation team will work with school leaders to understand their facilities requirements and any associated adaptations which may be required. The review process will commence in late September and conclude in early October, in order to inform a programme of physical works throughout the autumn term.

2.2 Social Distancing, PHW Guidance and Environmental Health

Social Distancing

Having assessed their risk, schools, as far as reasonably possible must adapt to the social distancing guidance, adopting it in a way that works for their school, which allows them to deliver for all learners. If schools and settings follow the guidance set out within this document and the guidance provided by Welsh Government, they will effectively reduce risks in their school and create an inherently safer environment.

Please see the link to the latest operational guidance for schools and settings from the autumn term.

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-08/operational-guidance-for-schools-and-settings-from-the-autumn-term-version-2.pdf>

The latest published evidence in relation to the transmissibility in learners under the age of 12 seems to be particularly low. However, minimising contacts and mixing between people to reduce transmission of COVID-19 is still important in all contexts. Schools and settings must consider how to best implement this while delivering a broad and balanced curriculum. It is acknowledged, however, that schools will have constraints relating to buildings and staffing resources and an element of flexibility may be needed.

The overarching principle to apply is reducing the number of contacts between learners and staff. This can be achieved through keeping groups separate and through maintaining distance between individuals. Both measures will help, but the balance between them will change depending on the:

- Learners' ability to distance
- Layout of the school
- Feasibility of keeping distinct groups separate while offering a broad curriculum (especially at secondary schools).

It is likely that for younger learners the emphasis will be on separating groups and for older learners it will be on social distancing. For learners old enough, they should be supported to maintain distance and not touch staff where possible.

Handwashing

It has been proven that handwashing is the number one preventative measure for reducing the risk of infection, it is vital that the recommended hand hygiene routine is implemented in schools and appropriate signage should be situated around the premises for the children and all staff members.



Hand Hygiene
Routine.pdf



Hand Washing
Techniques.pdf

Clean hands thoroughly, for at least 20 seconds and more often than usual.

Public Health Guidance emphasises the need to ensure that effective and frequent hand washing is an effective way of removing the virus from the hands. The Council will support schools to ensure that learners wash their hands regularly, including when they arrive at school, when they return from breaks, when they change rooms and before and after eating. Regular and thorough hand cleaning is going to be needed for the foreseeable future. Points to consider and implement include:

- Ensure that the school/setting has enough hand washing stations and/or hand sanitiser 'stations' available to ensure that all learners and staff can wash their hands regularly. Please contact Stuart Jones (Procurement) and Emma Jones (Education) should you need to replenish your sanitising station stock

- Children, particularly younger ones, must be supervised whilst using hand sanitiser.
- Ensuring that young learners and those with complex needs effectively wash their hands and assistance provided in a safe manner
- Building these routines into the school's culture, supported by behaviour expectations and helping ensure younger learners and those with complex needs understand the need to follow them

Respiratory Hygiene

Catch it! Bin it! Kill it!

The 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach continues to be very important, so schools and settings must ensure that they have enough tissues and bins available in the school to support learners and staff to follow this routine. Please contact Stuart Jones (Procurement) and Emma Jones (Education) should your stock require replenishment. As with hand cleaning, schools and settings must ensure younger learners and those with complex needs are assisted to undertake this routine correctly. All learners *will need to* understand that this is now part of school life. Learners with complex needs may find it difficult to maintain good respiratory hygiene as effectively as their peers. This should be considered in whole school/individual risk assessments in order to support these learners and the staff working with them, and is not a reason to deny these learners face-to-face education.

What to do if a child or staff member becomes symptomatic

Schools must ensure that they have a designated room/area that is well ventilated and has a door with a window panel (if possible) that can be closed to ensure that isolation of a symptomatic person can occur immediately. Schools are to identify a designated toilet for use solely by a symptomatic person.

The main symptoms to look out for that may indicate the presence of coronavirus are:

- **A high temperature** – this means they feel hot to touch on their chest or back
- **A new, continuous cough** – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if they usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- **A loss or change to their sense of smell or taste** – this means they will have noticed they cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal.

Please only follow the procedures below if any of the symptoms above are present

If a **staff member** becomes symptomatic during the course of the session the following procedures should be followed:

- Any member of staff who develops symptoms will be required to go home immediately, as soon as symptoms present. If they cannot leave the school grounds immediately then they should isolate themselves to a dedicated room until they can safely leave the grounds. If at any time a staff member is struggling to breathe and it is not safe for them to leave the school grounds they should be isolated and 111 or 999 called immediately for further medical assistance
- Staff should be advised to contact their GP to seek medical advice and to visit the gov.uk portal to arrange for a COVID-19 test
- School staff are reminded of the requirement of self-isolation and house hold isolation where required in line with COVID-19 guidelines.

If a **Child** becomes symptomatic during the course of the session the following procedures should be followed:

- Upon presenting with symptoms a member of staff is to ensure that the child is isolated in a safe space away from other pupils and staff (maintaining the social distancing requirements). Staff member to contact the parents/carers immediately and arrange collection of the child as soon as possible. In the interim the staff member responsible for the child's care will need to perform the hand hygiene routine explained in section 2.2 – Handwashing, and ensure that appropriate PPE is used (as per section 2.10).
- Schools must move the child to the identified isolation room in the school until they can be safely collected. Following collection of the child, the room and facilities used should be locked or clearly signposted as not to be used and left for as long as possible before cleaning. All equipment that requires cleaning should remain in the room and a sign displayed on the room not to enter until cleaning has been undertaken. The school must ensure that they inform the cleaning staff if this isolation room has been used and the areas where the symptomatic person has been within the school.
- The parents should be advised to contact their GP to seek medical advice and to visit the gov.uk portal to arrange for a COVID-19 test. Guidelines should be followed with regards to self and household isolation.

In line with government guidelines, all potentially contaminated waste must be placed in a black bag, sealed and placed inside a second black bag and stored in a designated area away from all other waste until 72 hours has passed, when it will be disposed of in the normal manner. The waste bag should be clearly labelled. This waste should not be left for the caretaker to collect unless the caretaker is on site and can assist.

Any equipment which may have been in contact with a symptomatic child /staff member must be cleaned and stored appropriately. If disposal is required, arrangements for the safe disposal will be made in liaison with the Environment Directorate's Waste Services Manager.

Please contact Claire Gardner (Education) and/or Emma Jones (Education) in order to initiate contact with the relevant services.

If symptomatic, staff and/or pupils will need to complete self-isolation in line with the latest Public Health Wales Guidance. All household contacts will be required to self-isolate immediately upon becoming symptomatic. Pupils and staff are required to be free of fever for 48 hours prior to re-entering school/the workplace.

If a pupil or staff member becomes symptomatic during the session, cleaning regimes will need to be implemented and the Cleaning Manager informed of the areas in which the person(s) had been present throughout the day.

Schools are not required to inform parents and staff other than those directly affected that a symptomatic person(s) has been on the school site.

Identification of a positive case

If the school is made aware of a positive case of COVID-19 in a staff member or pupil, then they must ensure that they contact the following people immediately with Environmental Health being the priority:

Environmental Health

This must be via an email to:

- EnvironmentalHealthMailbox@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Followed by a phone call to:

- 01495 357813.

Corporate Health and Safety

This must be via an email and/or phone call to:

- Jim Thomas
Email: Jim.thomas@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk
Mobile: 07966512415
- Steve Martyn
Email: Steve.martyn@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk
Mobile: 07966520584

Education Transformation Team

This must be an email and/or phone call to:

- Emma Jones
Email: emma.jones@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk
Mobile: 07969336066
- Claire Gardner
Email: claire.gardner@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk
Mobile: 07815005333

Should more than one case be identified, the Council and relevant partner organisations will assemble in order to determine the level of response required, to address infection prevention control measures, isolation of identified contacts, further testing, communications etc.

Should a positive case/cases be identified, a group with relevant representatives from within the school, the Council and wider partners will be assembled to agree a communication piece for circulation. Therefore, schools should refrain from undertaking direct communications with third parties until such time as a joint communication has been agreed.

Testing for Coronavirus

In order to provide symptomatic staff and household members with a wider choice of testing centre (including the new centre at Cwm) or a home test, we are now encouraging staff and household members to book their own test via the Welsh Government website at the following link:

<https://gov.wales/apply-coronavirus-test> or by calling free on 119 (between 7am and 11pm). People with hearing or speech difficulties can call 18001 119.

Staff members are expected to keep the headteacher and/or line manager updated throughout the testing process. Schools are required to inform HR when a test has been arranged and when the result has been received by emailing: HR.Management@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

If for any reason a test is unavailable via this method please contact the Civil Contingences team at emergency.planning@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk who will refer directly (Rodney Parade only).

The link is also open to members of the public wishing to book a test. Therefore, can all schools please ensure that parents/carers of pupils are aware of this process for testing of symptomatic pupils and family members.

Finally, can we please remind everyone of the need for the whole household, and any connecting household, to isolate in the event of a member becoming symptomatic.

Up-to-date guidelines are available on the Welsh Government website at the following link:

<https://gov.wales/coronavirus>

Please note: You should only have a test if you are symptomatic or you have been instructed by Environmental Health/Public Health Wales or any other medical profession.

The Welsh Government Guidance states:

'Testing kits

We intend to provide each school and setting in Wales with a supply of home testing kits to ensure there is flexibility in the testing available, further information will follow'.

Environmental Health colleagues are presently liaising with Welsh Government regarding the supply for Blaenau Gwent, along with the guidance around issue and use. Further information will be provided during the last 2 weeks in August 2020.

Test, Trace and Protect

In response to an infection, Blaenau Gwent schools, staff and parents will be asked to engage in the Test, Trace, and Protect strategy if they have been identified as a positive case or a contact of a positive case.

The Test, Trace, Protect strategy is to enhance health surveillance in the community, undertake effective and extensive contact tracing, and support people to self-isolate where required to do so. Actions will be informed by international experience and we will maintain strong engagement with the public throughout.

<https://gov.wales/test-trace-protect.html>

Please see attached the Test, Trace and Protect strategy for educational settings:



test-trace-protect-g
uidance-for-educati

This process will be initiated as soon as a positive result is shared by the laboratory, which will be picked up and managed by the Contact Tracing Team. The team will trace household and wider contacts; Environmental Health would then liaise directly with the school in order to undertake school-based tracing with the headteacher.

Please note that the welsh government guidance states that documentation for test, trace and protect procedures need to be kept for 21 days, however

guidance from the Health and Safety team states that documents need to be kept for 28 days.

2.3 Education Facilities

The Division of Responsibilities Guidance will be in operation from the start of the autumn term 2020, with the TE100 process continuing alongside as the operational maintenance and repair management tool. Repairs and requests will be prioritised in line with the health and safety of staff and pupils and/or to facilitate school operations in order to minimise contractors and work onsite



Final - Division of
Responsibilities Guida

All contractors will be required to confirm that risk assessments are in place, their programme and areas of work are recorded, this should include management of COVID-19 mitigation.

The Council are required to ensure that contractors operating on BGCBC premises have sufficient training, insurance, licenses, checks i.e. disclosure and barring etc. Contractors need to be made aware of health and safety policy and practice relating to Council premises i.e. asbestos registers, fire risk assessments etc. Physical works and alterations also require careful programming in consideration of planned maintenance, school-based activities, access requirements and so forth.

In accordance with the Division of Responsibility Guidance self-help approaches in need to be managed as follows:

'Self-help approaches - this involves the use of external parties approached directly via the school to address minor works identified by the Headteacher and/or a member of school staff. In instances where this is deemed to be the best approach by the school, Technical Services/Corporate Landlord approval must be sought prior to work being carried out in order to ensure compliance with legislation and the Council's policies'.

This guidance does not preclude schools from carrying out works that are cost efficient to the school, they do however ensure that headteachers and governing bodies comply with necessary technical and health and safety precautions/requirements prior to the works being undertaken.

All works carried out must be risk assessed failure to do so could lead to enforcement action or even prosecution by the HSE or Fire Authority.

It is essential that any maintenance work planned to be carried out on school sites is taken forward in line with the requirements of the Division of Responsibilities Guidance and is reported to the Education Transformation and/or Technical Services Divisions via a self-help form prior to any works being initiated.



Schools self help
approval applicator

The responsibility for day to day facilities management within the school setting lies with the head, part of which includes the weekly flushing of rarely used hot and cold water systems (taps, showers, water features etc.) throughout the school premises which caretaker's/site managers normally do, (rarely used would be defined as not used at least once a week). Recent advice of two weekly flushing was only required during the school holidays, this additional measure was due to the implications of the extended lockdown and the water safety issues it created. In the event of extended periods of closure similar advice may be given. This is required to manage the risk of legionella and if the school is not fully occupied the risk will obviously increase so all systems need flushing weekly. If a school's caretaker were to be taken ill or have to self-isolate in the future the head will need to identify staff within their school who would be able to undertake the required flushing, this should already be in the school's business continuity plan, a record will need to be kept showing the date and time of the flushing and the name of the person undertaking the work.

Statutory testing regimes by contractors and caretakers need to be maintained, particularly maintenance during the emergency response period, so this will not affect the safe reoccupation of schools in the Autumn Term.

There are numerous statutory testing/checks that are required as a bare minimum every school will be required to ensure the caretaker/site manager carries out the following:

- 1) Weekly fire alarm tests (if an electrical alarm system is installed)
- 2) Monthly emergency lighting test
- 3) Monthly fire extinguisher check
- 4) Weekly flushing of rarely used water outlets

Toilet Extract Fans

All windows in the toilets need to be closed and not opened.

Fans should run constantly 2 hours before buildings open and 2 hours after buildings have been vacated.

Mechanical

Currently, as per the guidance, schools are required to by-pass recirculating air and ensure 100% fresh air supply/100% or just over extracted air. This will not be a problem in the

summer/autumn months; however, it may become an issue in the winter months when the air temperature is considerably colder. No definitive guidance is available as yet regarding ventilation for the winter period. This will be monitored and the guidance updated in the autumn term 2020 to reflect the necessary changes.

Natural Ventilation/Windows

All school buildings must use as much natural ventilation/open windows as they can (with the exception of toilets) whilst trying to maintain thermal comfort. ****Please note fire doors can no longer be propped open in order to increase ventilation and/or support effective circulation of staff and pupils. The former Fire risk assessments will need to be employed.***

Split Unit/Ceiling Unit Air Conditioning

If the air conditioning unit only serves a single room, it is acceptable to leave it working as it normally would. If the air conditioning unit serves multiple rooms, where there are multiple units or high levels of occupation in rooms it should be switched off. Even with air conditioning working, as much natural ventilation as possible is required.

2.4 Health and Safety and Fire Risk Assessments

The Health and Safety team will resume their annual Health and Safety and Fire risk assessment inspections in the autumn term. There is, however, likely to be a backlog and which will require redress in the first instance. However, if schools have any particular concerns please do not hesitate to contact the Health and Safety team for advice.

Any schools that have had significant alterations during the summer holidays will require a fire risk assessment review. Please contact the health and safety team to arrange this.

The South Wales Fire and Rescue Service have recently confirmed for the autumn term that they will expect the normal standards of fire safety management to be applied in schools. In other words, whatever flexibility was given during the hub provision and summer term this will now cease. ***The primary consideration is that any fire doors that were propped open to reduce COVID-19 touch point risks must now be kept closed.*** The only exception to rule being if the doors are held open with a device linked to or that reacts to (e.g. a door guard device) a fire alarm activation which has been accounted for within the schools Fire Risk Assessment. Fire drills will also be expected to be carried out as normal, in adherence with social distancing guidelines.

There is a potential low fire risk associated with alcohol based sanitisers (those containing 60% or more alcohol), used in line with COVID-19 mitigation. As these products are alcohol

based they are flammable, however, the risk only occurs if there is an ignition source. As the primary COVID-19 hygiene control measure is handwashing with soap and water, there is no need to stock large quantities of sanitiser on school premises. Most schools have small quantities on site (anything from 50ml to 1 litre containers/dispensers). However, it is recognised that sanitiser will be needed where handwashing facilities are not readily available and/or as an additional control measure. Precautionary measure need to be taken as follows:

- Do not store or use hand sanitiser next to an ignition source (cookers, workshop machinery, bunsen burners etc.)
- Do not store large quantities (e.g. 5 litre containers need to be decanted into smaller containers where possible)
- Ensure that stock is stored in an enclosed fire resistant structure with ventilation. Contact Health & Safety for advice if required.

2.5 Re-opening and Individual Risk Assessment Requirements

An updated model risk assessment will be provided prior to re-opening along with associated guidance to assist schools to review their existing risk assessment. The Council and school settings must take all necessary steps to protect staff, learners and others from COVID-19.

As part of planning for full return in the autumn term, schools should revisit and update their risk assessments by building on the learning to date, and the practices they have already developed. This will enable them to consider the additional risks and control measures to put in place for a return to full capacity. School settings, working with their Council, health and safety adviser and trade unions, should also review and update their wider risk assessments and consider the need for relevant revised controls considering the implications of COVID-19.

As a Council, we will be working with the schools and settings to ensure that we implement sensible and proportionate control measures, to reduce the risk to the lowest reasonably practicable level, whilst not negatively impacting on the well-being of learners and staff.

Schools should work with staff, parents/carers and learners so that there is clarity on what and how the revised arrangements will work in practice. They must have arrangements in place to monitor that the controls are:

- Effective
- Working as planned
- Updated appropriately considering any issues identified and changes in public health advice.

The Council, working with their schools and settings should continue to ensure they are complying with their security plans and ensuring that any changes as a result of COVID-19 compliance do not impact negatively on them.

Once completed the risk assessment will be reviewed by the Council who will provide feedback to each headteacher prior to the commencement of the autumn term 2020.

2.6 Catering

Normal legal requirements will apply regarding provision of food in schools, and food provided should be in compliance with the ***Healthy Eating in Schools (Nutritional Standards and Requirements) (Wales) Regulations 2013***. Food provided should be designed to reduce access to food and drink high in fat, sugar and salt, and increase the take-up of fruit and vegetables and oily fish. The Welsh Government's ***Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities and Governing Bodies*** is designed to assist with the implementation of the Regulations.

Free School Meals

The Council has a legal duty with regard to the provision of free school meals. The Council is currently exploring the option of continuing the direct payment methods for the first 2 weeks of the autumn term 2020. Further information will be released week commencing 17th August 2020.

Free breakfast in primary school

Section 88 of the School Standards and Organisation Wales (2013) determines that there is not an absolute requirement to provide a breakfast service unless a school specifically asks that it is provided. However, Government advice and guidance actively encourages the provision where it has been common place previously. This is only advice and therefore, whether it is taken on board or not is a matter for an individual Council. It has therefore been determined that the provision can be relaxed during the first 2 weeks of the autumn term in particular to explore pupil numbers and necessary adjustments. There will however, be an emphasis on returning to this provision as soon as it is safe and practicably possible to do so.

Guidance for the hospitality sector has been developed and is available at the following link, this includes guidance on catering facilities which Councils, schools and settings may find helpful to refer to. Further advice is also available on:

<https://www.food.gov.uk/>

<https://gov.wales/tourism-and-hospitality-businesses-guidance-phased-reopening-html>

<https://www.ukhospitality.org.uk/page/WalesGuidance>

The breakfast club specification (below), which is managed by the catering service, outlines what the catering department will seek to provide to primary schools across Blaenau Gwent during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Primary Classroom
Packed Breakfast Cl

The catering service specification (below) outlines what the catering department will seek to provide to primary schools across Blaenau Gwent during the COVID-19 pandemic in relation to hot meal lunch time service - dining room service.



Primary School Hot
Food Service in the d

The below specification details how the primary classroom packed lunch service will operate and what the catering department will seek to provide to primary schools across Blaenau Gwent during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Primary Classroom
Packed Lunch Servic

The specification below details the grab & go, hot and cold service - dining room and additional service area that the Catering team will provide to secondary schools during COVID-19 pandemic.



Secondary Grab &
Go Service in the din

All of the above will be regularly reviewed in line with school plans or WG guidance.

2.7 Cleaning

Increased cleaning will be implemented, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often using standard products, such as detergents and bleach.

Schools and settings should follow the latest cleaning in non-healthcare settings. Points to consider and implement include putting in place a cleaning schedule that ensures cleaning is generally enhanced and supports the following activities:

- More frequent cleaning of rooms/shared areas after they have been used by different groups
- Frequently touched surfaces being cleaned more often than normal
- Where possible, providing separate toilets for different contact groups. Where this is not possible, using hand sanitiser before entering the toilet and ensuring toilets are cleaned regularly will help. Learners must be encouraged to clean their hands thoroughly after using the toilet.

All primary schools will have an additional 30 hours per week split over two shifts throughout the day as follows: 9am -12pm and 12pm -3pm. Secondary schools will have an additional 60 hours per week with the hours split the same as the primary schools over two shifts. Special schools will have the same cleaning provision as the secondary schools. The cleaning specifications have been provided below:



Final service
standard - Comps = 2



Final service
standard -Primary Scl

2.8 Access and Visitors

Access to the school for pupils

Access to the school should be from one controlled point, with the queueing system and 2 metre social distancing rules adhered to at all times. Schools should consider how to communicate this to parents/carers and remind them about the process that has been agreed for drop off and collection. Some learners with special educational needs (SEN) will need specific help and preparation for the changes to routine that this will involve, so teachers and special educational needs coordinators should plan to meet these needs, for example using social stories.

Parent appointments

Schools should consider communicating to parents/carers that gathering at the school gates or coming onto the site without an appointment is not allowed. If accessing the school for a pre-planned appointment, then social distancing must be adhered to and they should only access the school through the agreed controlled entrance point. Once on the school site, the parent/carer must only access the areas of the school that have been agreed, access to other areas is not allowed. Guidance on social/physical distancing, areas of the school they can access and hygiene should be explained to parents/carers on or before arrival.

Other staff

Supply teachers, peripatetic teachers and/or other temporary staff can move between schools. They should ensure they minimise contact and maintain social distancing with other staff and children.

This includes the Gwent Music team who are on furlough until 1st September 2020. We have been advised that the service will contact the Council imminently to discuss the level of service which Gwent Music is able to offer throughout the autumn term.

Specialists, therapists, clinicians and other support staff for learners with SEN should provide interventions as usual whilst adhering to social distancing guidance, ensuring cleanliness and sanitisation takes place within their dedicated workspace, which is to be agreed between the providers and the schools. Where social distancing is a potential issue

and/or staff from within the above services are visiting multiple sites and pupils, it is advisable that they wear a face covering at each setting.

Other staff should ensure that they follow all the preventive measures and risk assessments which have been put in place by the school.

Visitors

Schools should consider how to manage other visitors to the site, such as contractors and ensure site guidance on social/physical distancing and hygiene is explained to visitors on or before arrival. Where visits can happen outside of school hours, they should. Visits should only be essential at this time and should always be pre-planned so that the relevant precautions can be put in place prior to the visit. All visitors should be limited to the areas that they can access within the school. Essential visitors are defined as those who facilitate effective school operations, which could not take place without their engagement.

The Council recommend that schools ask all visitors to complete the attached questionnaire on arrival prior to them entering the school. This will enable the school to maintain a record of visitors should track and trace be required.



COVID Visitors
Questionnaire 06.08

2.9 Mixing of Groups and Staff

Minimising Contacts and Social Distancing

It is well known that minimising contacts and mixing of groups/individuals reduces transmission of COVID-19. Schools must consider how to best implement this and do everything possible to minimise contacts and mixing while delivering a broad and balanced curriculum. Examples of management methods will include: the creation of learner bubbles, staggered start and finish times, breaks and lunch periods. Limited mixing of year group bubbles, designated toilet provision etc. It is acknowledged and understood that schools will have constraints relating to buildings, staffing and other associated resources, and that flexibility may be required. It is imperative that hygiene, cleaning routines and contact tracing fully underpin school operations.

How to Group Learners

Consistent groups help reduce the risk of transmission by limiting the number of learners and staff in contact with each other to only those within the bubble or group. It is accepted that learners and especially the younger age groups, cannot socially distance from staff or from each other; however, consistent groupings will provide an additional protective measure over and above hygiene and cleaning routines. Maintaining distinct contact groups that do not mix or do so infrequently and only when absolutely required makes it quicker

and easier, in the event of a positive case, to support contact tracing methods which identify those who may need to self-isolate and to keep that number as low as possible.

The use of small contact groups brings a number of educational and operational challenges, which restricts the normal operation of schools. This is the case in both primary and secondary schools, but is particularly difficult in secondary schools.

However, given the decrease in the prevalence of COVID-19 and the plan for the autumn term for the resumption of the full range of curriculum subjects, schools may need to change the emphasis on contact groups, increasing the size of the groups, but staying within their system of controls.

In secondary schools, particularly in the older age groups at Key Stage 3 and 4, the contact groups are likely to need to be the size of a year group to enable schools to deliver the full range of curriculum subjects and for learners to receive specialist teaching. If this can be achieved with small groups, this is recommended. At primary school, and in the younger years at secondary (Key Stage 3), schools may be able to implement smaller groups the size of a full class. If that can be achieved, it is recommended, as this will help to reduce the number of people who could be asked to isolate should someone in a group become ill with COVID-19.

Schools should assess their circumstances and if class-sized groups are not compatible with offering a full range of subjects or managing the practical logistics within and around school, they can look to implement year group (or half year group) sized contact groups. Whatever the size of the group, they should be kept apart from other groups where possible and older learners should be encouraged to keep their distance within groups. Schools with the capability to do it should take steps to limit interaction, sharing of rooms and social spaces between groups as much as possible. When using larger groups, the other measures from the system of controls become even more important; to minimise transmission risks and to minimise the numbers of learners and staff who may need to self-isolate. The Council recognise that younger learners will not be able to maintain social distancing, and it is acceptable for them not to distance within their group.

Both the approaches of separating groups and maintaining distance are not 'all-or nothing' options, and will still bring benefits even if implemented partially. Some schools may keep learners in their class groups for the majority of the classroom time, but also allow mixing into wider groups for specialist teaching, wraparound care and transport. Siblings may also be in different groups. Making efforts to keep these groups at least partially separate and minimising contacts between learners will still offer public health benefits as it reduces the network of possible direct transmission.

All teachers and staff can operate across different classes and year groups in order to facilitate the delivery of the school timetable. This will be particularly important for secondary schools. Where staff need to move between classes and year groups, they should try and keep their distance from learners and other staff as much as they can, ideally 2 metres from other adults. Again, we recognise this is not likely to be possible with younger

learners and teachers in primary schools can still work across groups if that is needed to enable a full educational offer.

Where mixing between groups cannot be avoided, schools and practitioners should operate a risk-based approach with consistent control measures to reduce the risk of transmission between contact groups. It is important that schools and settings have the flexibility to manage and respond to risks in an appropriate way.

Measures within the Classroom

Maintaining a distance between people while inside and reducing the amount of time they are in face-to-face to contact lowers the risk of transmission. Public health advice indicates that staff in secondary schools maintain distance from their learners, staying at the front of the class, and away from their colleagues where possible. Ideally, adults should maintain a 2 metre distance from each other, and from learners. We know that this is not always possible, particularly when working with younger learners, but if adults can do this when circumstances allow that will help. In particular, they should avoid close face-to-face contact and minimise time spent within 1 metre of anyone. Similarly, it will not be possible when working with many learners who have complex needs or who need close contact care. These learners' educational and care support should be provided as normal.

For learners old enough, they should also be supported to maintain distance and not touch staff and their peers where possible. This will not be possible for the youngest learners and some learners with complex needs and it is not feasible in some schools where space does not allow. Schools doing this where they can, and even doing this some of the time, will help.

When staff or learners cannot maintain distancing, particularly with younger learners in primary schools, the risk can also be reduced by keeping learners in the smaller, class-sized groups described above.

Schools should make small adaptations to the classroom to support distancing where possible. That should include seating learners side by side and facing forwards, rather than face to face or side on, and might include moving unnecessary furniture out of classrooms to make more space.

Measures Elsewhere

Contact groups should be kept apart where possible, meaning that schools should avoid large gatherings such as assemblies or collective worship with more than one group.

When timetabling, groups should be kept apart and movement around the school site kept to a minimum. While passing briefly in the corridor or playground is low risk, schools should avoid creating busy corridors, entrances and exits. Schools should also consider staggered break times and lunch times (and time for cleaning surfaces in the dining hall between groups).

Schools and settings should also plan how shared staff spaces are set up and used to help staff to distance from each other. Use of staff rooms should be minimised, although staff must still have a break of a reasonable length during the day.

2.10 Personal and Protective Equipment and Other Resources

PPE is not required for sessional or routine use in schools. Current guidance stipulates that the use of PPE by staff within education settings other than to administer first aid, medical and/or intimate care; should be based upon a clear assessment of risk, taking into account each individual setting(s) and the needs of the individual learner(s).

All staff should understand how to put on/remove PPE in order to reduce the risk of onward transmission of infection. A HSE video on correct donning and doffing is available below, please note that the video is aimed at care workers but the procedures for donning and doffing off PPE is the same for school staff.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-GncQ_ed-9w

Orders for PPE and associated resources to aid school operations throughout the autumn term need to be placed and coordinated centrally and so that appropriate funding sources identified.

Please note, PPE and resource-based orders placed prior to the autumn term will need to be focused on replenishment of stock.

Stock will be available for collection only from the Depot.

There is presently a shortage of gloves on order until October/November, however, Corporate Procurement currently hold a limited supply centrally which can be accessed upon request.





Orders for the following items need to be placed via Stuart Jones (Procurement) and Emma Jones (Education):

- Disposable Gloves Bx 100 (S, M, L & XL)*
- Disposable Masks Bx 50
- Disposable Aprons Bx 250's
- Visors
- Anti Bac Wipes (Pk 72/100/200)*
- Anti Bac Spray 750ml
- Anti Bac Hand Soap 5Ltr
- Hand Sanitiser 5Ltr
- Hand Sanitiser 100ml*

*Sizes may differ subject to availability

Initial orders need to be placed ***no later than 24th August 2020 via email to the aforementioned parties.***

PPE: Availability, Ordering and Use

<p>Respiratory protection</p>		<p>For first aid with a pupil or staff member who has become unwell with symptoms of COVID-19 and needs direct personal care a fluid resistant surgical mask is required.</p> <p>If a pupil’s risk assessment requires intimate care and there is a risk of splashing to the eyes from coughing, spitting or vomiting a fluid resistant surgical mask is required.</p>
<p>Gloves</p>		<p>For first aid with a pupil or staff member who has become unwell with symptoms of COVID-19 and needs direct personal care disposable gloves are required.</p> <p>For intimate care disposable gloves are required.</p> <p>For cleaning equipment or surfaces that might be contaminated with body fluids such as saliva or respiratory secretions disposable gloves are required.</p>
<p>Eye protection</p>		<p>If a pupil’s risk assessment requires intimate care and there is a risk of splashing to the eyes from coughing, spitting or vomiting, safety goggles, safety spectacles (these can’t we worn over prescription spectacles) or visor are required.</p> <p>For first aid with a pupil or staff member who has become unwell with symptoms of COVID-19 and needs direct personal care and there is a risk splashing to the eyes from coughing, spitting or vomiting safety goggles, safety spectacles (these can’t we worn over prescription spectacles) or visor required.</p>
<p>Body protection e.g. Disposable aprons</p>		<p>For first aid with a pupil or staff member who has become unwell with symptoms of COVID-19 and needs direct personal care a disposable apron is required.</p> <p>For intimate care a disposable apron is required.</p> <p>For cleaning equipment or surfaces that might be contaminated with body fluids such as saliva or respiratory secretions a disposable apron is required.</p>

Donning or Putting on PPE

Before putting on the PPE, perform hand hygiene. Use alcohol hand rub or gel or soap and water. Make sure you are hydrated and are not wearing any jewellery, bracelets, watches or stoned rings.

- Put on your plastic apron, making sure it is tied securely at the back
- Put on your surgical face mask, if tied, make sure securely tied at crown and nape of neck. Once it covers the nose, make sure it is extended to cover your mouth and chin
- Put on your eye protection if there is a risk of splashing
- Put on non-sterile nitrile gloves
- You are now ready

Doffing or Taking off PPE

Surgical masks are single session use, gloves and apron should be changed

- Remove gloves, grasp the outside of the cuff of the glove and peel off, holding the glove in the gloved hand, insert the finger underneath and peel off second glove
- Perform hand hygiene using alcohol hand gel or rub, or soap and water
- Snap or unfasten apron ties around the neck and allow to fall forward
- Once outside the patient room. Remove eye protection
- Perform hand hygiene using alcohol hand gel or rub, or soap and water
- Remove surgical mask
- Now wash your hands with soap and water.

Please see below a link to HSE guidance on the difference between the use of face masks and face coverings whilst at work;

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/ppe-face-masks/face-coverings-and-face-masks.htm>

2.11 ICT

The SRS Education team have successfully completed several key and very intensive projects over the last few months to help schools cater for the needs of digitally disadvantaged students; help schools move towards the blended learning approach and progress Welsh Government's EdTech programme.

The Council have been in discussions with Welsh Government colleagues over the past few weeks and it has been concluded that we maintain the existing distribution, licencing and revenue arrangements associated with devices and Mi-Fi units which have been allocated until further notice. This will allow us to effectively respond to the unknown/ongoing risks around further COVID-19 outbreaks. The ability to react to local lockdowns would be

severely impacted if we ceased these services now. In addition, there is a small supply of devices held locally, which can be drawn upon to further support digitally disadvantaged learners should this be required.

SRS emphasis has always been on support as staff and students return. Schools should log calls via VFire where support is needed and liaise with their engineers in the first instance. SRS aim to provide support remotely wherever possible to minimise the need for onsite visits in line with current guidance for schools. Where this is not possible, they can attend site, engineers will need to be advised of the school's protocol for visitors. If equipment needs to be taken away for any reason, SRS requests that device collection takes place at the school's reception in order to minimise time on site.

The Council and SRS are mindful of the need to build and deliver equipment that has been purchased for schools from Welsh Government HWB EdTech funding. Originally, Councils were advised by Welsh Government that lead times could be extensive and that 5 or 6 months could be expected. We know that Welsh Government continue their efforts to bring this forward and SRS has worked with Blaenau Gwent officers to place orders as early as possible to minimise the impact upon teaching and learning in schools and ensure Welsh Government have the best chance to fast track orders. SRS will receive these devices in waves, and as these waves start to arrive they will be a key priority.

2.12 Co-located Provision and 3rd Party Licensing

Co-located provisions operating under license on school premises must be provided with a copy of the schools re-opening risk assessment. They will be required to agree to abide by and sign a copy of this risk assessment, along with any subsequent reviews. In addition, licensees are required to complete their own risk assessment associated with delivery of the provision for which they are responsible, and share this with the school. Key considerations for each risk assessment include:

- The use of shared spaces
- Access and visitor control measures
- Contact tracing
- The management and mixing of groups

3. School Management and Support Functions

3.1 EAS, School Improvement and blended learning offer

Support for School Improvement

The Directorate will continue to work closely with our commissioned school improvement service the EAS, to ensure that agreed principles and practices continue to be aligned. The EAS Playlist continues to be the main conduit for communicating school improvement activity to our schools.

[Supporting Our Schools Playlist](#)

Moreover, the following arrangements are in place for the commencement of the new academic year 2020-21.

Appointment of Additional Capacity within School Improvement.

The Council's Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) agreed a temporary structure for the Education Directorate in the summer term 2020. The interim structure report also made the point that there needs to be consideration of the Education Directorate's permanent structural and financial requirements at a later point to address capacity, particularly in the school improvement aspects of work. To support the interim structure with strategic capacity and skills in school improvement, it has been agreed to introduce an interim fixed term post of Lead Officer - School Improvement for a period of 12 months – subject to review by the newly appointed Corporate Director of Education. Importantly, the role will facilitate a continuation of the Education Directorate's improvement journey, supporting schools with re-opening and continuing to develop, whilst also responding to COVID-19 and delivery of priorities identified within the Corporate Improvement Plan. The recruitment process is underway to appoint to this new position for the new academic year.

Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP)

Welsh Government has now released the principles of the ALP. It is clear that during the COVID-19 emergency crisis that many learners have not progressed as much as they might in terms of their progress in learning, some having been impacted more seriously than others. Evidence from a range of reliable sources, including those focusing closely on Wales, suggests that most or all learners have been affected, and that the most vulnerable have been affected the most. The comments in this paper should be read in the context of the Welsh Government Learning Guidance, designed to inform practice as we return to school in September 2020. See the following link for more information:

<https://gov.wales/guidance-learning-schools-and-settings-autumn-term-covid-19>.

Blaenau Gwent planning meeting will be circulating further information regarding the localised approach to schools by the end of week commencing 17th August 2020.

Principle 1: Learners in Greatest Need: Affected Cohorts

The most affected cohorts currently appear to be:

- Pupils preparing for examinations in the forthcoming academic year (years 11, 12 and 13) who have relatively little time between returning to school and taking life-changing public examinations
- Vulnerable and disadvantaged children, as defined by a range of approaches, but including the poorest children and families, learners with special educational needs, learners from BAME communities and learners in Welsh medium schools who live in non-Welsh speaking households
- Year 7, because of the disruption to the transition from primary to secondary schools

The cohort analysis above, which is in line with the findings of many other countries and territories with similar characteristics to Wales, has informed the allocation of funding, and will inform the priority groups we expect to be addressed by the work we do. We should note, though, that there will be individuals not in these groups who will need support, and it is an important principle that head teachers will decide which groups and individuals will get additional support.

Principle 2: The Recruit, Recover, Raise Standards Curriculum: Areas of Support Learners Should Receive

Curriculum reform remains our central priority for education in Wales, and indeed, Blaenau Gwent. It is essential that all our work with the education system in the context of COVID-19 aligns with international best practice, which is also the basis of our curriculum reform proposals. The focus for the coming year will be:

- Literacy, numeracy and digital competence within a broad and balanced curriculum – for the examination years, this will include higher order reading and writing skills, high level mathematics where relevant, and digital competence at the appropriate level and as relevant to learners progressing with their qualifications
- Development of independent learning skills, to enable and motivate learners in all groups to make accelerated progress by working more effectively alone and out of school
- Support and engagement through coaching – this in recognition that the most disengaged learners will need coaching and emotional support as well as support for examination preparation and skills

This focus will be particularly relevant for the priority cohorts. It is intended to work closely with Qualifications Wales to ensure our approach to curriculum and learning is consistent with and promotes the credibility and validity of the 2021 exam series.

Principle 3: Growing Capacity: What the Funding is designed to provide

The Welsh Government response to the situation is to dedicate financial resources to the creation of new capacity in the system. The investment amounts to almost £29 million and will be enough to grow capacity in the system by the equivalent of 600 teachers and 300 teaching assistants. Alongside this, Blaenau Gwent will use our current investment in Professional Learning, digital infrastructure, connectivity, devices and content to enrich the experiences schools make available to learners. Welsh Government and this Council do not want to place restrictions on head teachers in how they go about appointing and deploying this new capacity and recognise that:

- Schools may appoint teachers, teaching assistants and other roles in the school designed to provide coaching, in line with the school's understanding of its learners
- The new capacity may be full time or part time
- The new colleagues might work across more than one school
- Head teachers may appoint new teachers to the school in order to release those who know their pupils best to work with them to accelerate their progress
- There may be instances where a group of new colleagues is recruited to work across a whole cluster or collaborative partnership
- The skill-sets of new colleagues will need to reflect the needs of groups and learners
- The delivery model within which new colleagues work will be specific to the needs of the school and its learners

Principle 4: Reducing Bureaucracy and Ensuring Transparency

The allocation of nearly £29 million across Wales to a project at a time of severe financial stress across the education system and beyond means that there is a need to ensure that such resources are used well. Whilst at the same time, keeping the paperwork to a minimum, so we are proposing:

- The school should set out what it intends to do with the resources in a simple way, indicating the number of pupils included and an outline of the curriculum and staffing solution
- This should be agreed by the school's CA in the case of schools currently designated as requiring red and amber levels of support
- The intention should be signed off by the Governing Body and made available to the school's parents and community
- Welsh Government are advocating a 'learning brief' as part of the education system, by sharing intelligence and insights in respect of the impact of the programme as it develops.

Principle 5: The Principle of Collaboration

Regions, Local Authorities, Universities and Other Partners

Nationally, Welsh Government want to encourage strategic education partners to collaborate in support of this work. Welsh Government are already seeing examples of this

emerging across the system, and this activity will provide further opportunities for the regions, Councils, Universities, FE Colleges and other partners to support children, families and schools in returning to school.

School Level Collaboration

Blaenau Gwent's Vision for Education is formed around a school-led, self-improving system, which is in line with Welsh Government's desire to encourage clusters and collaborative working of schools to pool their resources and achieve critical mass in growing capacity. This include cross-phase collaboration, collaboration between schools in the same phase and collaboration based on partnership delivery e.g. Post 16 provision. In Blaenau Gwent, we are establishing a Post 16 Partnership Board in collaboration with Coleg Gwent and key stakeholders to drive this agenda forward. The Partnership Board will be formally constituted in the new academic year.

From a Blaenau Gwent context, we advocate this school to school approach and have experience of how this operated through the supply cluster project, but we await confirmation as to the level of funding that we are to receive and we will be in contact as soon as this is known so that we can support schools in securing the additional capacity as soon as possible.

INSET Days.

Should schools wish to seek the support of the EAS staff in their INSET days they should contact Sarah Davies PCA to discuss their requirements.

Staff Visits

The schools' Challenge Adviser will make contact with schools early in September to gain an understanding of their operating model and to discuss priorities and support needs. Consequently, EAS staff will not visit a school without first having received a copy of the school's risk assessment; this is to ensure it is safe to do so within the context in which the school is operating.

Blended Learning

Headeachers will have received the guidance that has been developed by Estyn and the EAS that provides information related to how they may consider developing integrated approaches to support blended learning for the opening of schools in September 2020. The guidance support schools as they re-evaluate learning for the foreseeable future in response to a range of challenges:

- Supporting learners to return to 'learning fitness'
- Developing learning which allows learners to continue to progress
- Ensuring coherence for learners between in school and remote learning

- Develop appropriate learning while current curriculum requirements have been *dis-applied
- Use the ethos, principles and guidance of the new Curriculum for Wales as support to the current challenges, rather than this being an additional burden
- To encourage practitioners to use and develop their professional judgment to best benefit learners



**Developing
Integrated Approach**

Autumn term PL events:

Virtual professional learning activities will continue to be offered during the autumn term. There will also be opportunities for bespoke PL for individual schools to be delivered in this way. The dates of all PL activities will continue to be shared through the EAS Playlist.

SDP/Grant: A Readiness Approach

Headteachers will have received the EAS document entitled a Readiness Approach and will be aware of the timeframe for updating SDP's by October half term. In line with the agreed approach and mindful of the demands placed upon the education sector in the current circumstances, coupled with the start of a new academic year, Blaenau Gwent will be looking to hold virtual SDP and grant planning meetings with those schools selected on either 19th or 21st October 2020 just prior to the Hwb deadline date of October half term for final submission.

As part of this process the Council will write to those schools that have been selected week commencing 7th September 2020 and invite the head teacher and Chair of Governors to the virtual meeting where their SDP and grant plan will be reviewed. During this meeting, appropriate additional support and guidance to schools that can be provided will be discussed.

This regional review and evaluation process aims to support all schools in ensuring that the processes for school improvement planning are effective. There is an expectation that within the current context that plans address emerging needs. These include:

- The school's distance learning strategy and blended learning offer
- The targeted provision to support all groups of vulnerable learners
- The school's communication and support strategies with parents/carers/learners.



**A Readiness
Approach to Approv**

Schools Causing Concern

For those schools identified as a School Causing Concern (SCC) headteachers will already know that the formal SCC meetings were suspended during our emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic and meetings were replaced with informal supportive check in and catch up meetings towards the latter part of the summer term. However, whilst being mindful of the demands placed upon headteachers at this time, it is intended that for the year ahead as we shift towards a business as usual approach, this will see the re-establishment of the half termly schools causing concern meetings that are convened in line with the agreed regional policy. The dates of these meetings for the year ahead will be communicated to relevant Chairs of Governors and schools at the start of the 2020/21 academic year.

Governing Body Meetings

Almost all schools have now undertaken governing body meetings 'virtually' at one point or another over the past few months. These have been, in the main, implemented successfully. If schools feel that during the autumn term (or beyond), to avoid any unnecessary meetings and additional people in your schools, the wish to carry on with virtual meetings the EAS will facilitate these. To ensure that the team can provide schools with support for governing body meetings in the autumn term if schools haven't already done so please complete the following below:

[Form to provide meeting dates.](#)

If schools have already provided future dates, through a clerked ordinary / AGM meeting, these will already be held on the database and there is not a need to re-submit, unless schools wish to amend dates.

For all except urgent meetings, the statutory timescales detailed in the SLA will apply. If a school intends to hold a 'face to face' governing body meeting, then the school will need to ensure appropriate risk assessments are in place that are in the line with the latest Welsh Government guidelines.

Please do not contact GB clerks directly, as the team will manage availability, send out Microsoft Teams meeting invitations, along with the agreed agenda and latest guidance. If individual governors or the whole governing body require support to use MS teams, please get in touch governor.support@sewaleseas.org.uk and the EAS team can arrange support. The Council's LA Governor Appointment Panel is now meeting virtually to process applications for LA governors and are considering applications for those LA governors whose term of office is due to end in the autumn or spring terms. Headteachers and Chairs of Governors are encouraged to provide the following application form to those LA governors whose term of office is due to lapse within the timeframe specified above.



Should schools require further advice regarding the filling of other governor vacancies, this can be accessed by contacting the EAS governor support team.

3.2 HR Guidance

Risk Assessment

Covid-19 Individual Risk Assessment

A risk assessment, which is available via this link: [Covid-19 Individual Risk Assessment](#) should be used for all workers within the Authority, who fall into the following categories:

- All workers who have previously received a shielding letter from the Government (“the Extremely Vulnerable”)
- Vulnerable Workers (to include all pregnant workers) as previously defined by Government guidelines
- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) workers (reported as being most affected and at risk of the COVID-19 pandemic)
- Workers who live with the Extremely Vulnerable

For all categories to whom this risk assessment applies, where workers have been absent from the workplace and a return is being considered, this risk assessment **must** be carried out **prior** to staff entering the workplace. This risk assessment should also be reviewed regularly, and whenever anything material changes e.g. in relation to an individual’s health or working environment, to ensure it is up to date and fit for purpose.

This risk assessment should be carried out in conjunction with the All Wales COVID-19 workforce risk assessment tool available via this link: [Self-Assessment Tool](#). The self-assessment tool should then be discussed with managers and will inform discussions relating to the COVID-19 Individual risk assessment.

If headteachers/business managers require further advice, please contact their Senior HR Business Partner.

Pregnant Workers

During the outbreak, pregnant workers have been advised to follow stringent social distancing to reduce the risk of severe illness from coronavirus. There is a long-standing requirement for employers to put in place measures to ensure workplace safety where a significant health and safety risk is identified for a new or expectant mother. *Please refer to the Staff*

Guidance from Organisational Development for detailed information and advice in relation pregnant worker using the link below:

<http://intranet/coronavirus-staff-information.aspx>

Staff Well Being

The Council recognises that employees may face increased pressures at work, as well as potentially their own personal illness or caring responsibilities. Supporting employee health and wellbeing will be critical for the Council to support an extended response. Heads/Business Managers are encouraged to provide opportunities for staff to discuss any concerns with them and consider the Council's provisions for leave and flexible working and the use of the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).

Details and useful information from our EAP, Care First, can be accessed at the below overleaf.

Employee assistance programme (Care First)

Care first is free to use 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year and staff don't need to ask their manager to use the service. Call 0800 174319 to speak to a professional counsellor or information specialist in confidence about a range of issues such as well-being, family matters, relationships, debt management, workplace issues, and much more.

For additional support during this time, a number of webinars are also available on the Care First Lifestyle website. The details are circulated to all e-mail users on a regular basis with a variety of webinars relating to the difficulties of COVID-19, such as managing stress in uncertain times, how to manage change, etc.

The Organisation Development Division also provides regular advice and guidance to managers and staff and the latest guidance can be found here:

<http://intranet/coronavirus-staff-information.aspx>

In addition, free help and support for education staff is also available through the Education Support Partnership:

www.educationsupportpartnership.org.uk

Occupational Health Service

The Authority's OH service will continue to provide a service and the following will apply:

- Only electronic referrals will be accepted during this period. All referrals must be emailed to occupational.health@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk
- In the absence of an employee signature on the referrals, Heads/Business Managers must confirm that they have discussed the content with the individual

- Referrals must include a contact email address for the employee
- All appointments will be held remotely via telephone call.

3.3 Home to School Transport

The Council has a statutory duty to provide free home to school transport for all eligible learners of compulsory school age, in line with the Blaenau Gwent Home to School and Post 16 Transport Policy (2020).

- Social distancing guidance to passengers on public transport (<https://gov.wales/travelling-safely-during-coronavirus-pandemic-guidance-public-html#section-42710>) will not apply **on dedicated** home to school transport from the autumn term because:
 - The overall risk to learners from COVID-19 is very low
 - They do not mix with the general public on those journeys
 - Dedicated home to school transport often carries the same group of learners on a regular basis, and those learners may also be together in school
 - The predictability, which public transport does not offer in the same way, will allow for planning so that protective measures can be put in place.

Key Principles

- Vehicles will be confined to individual journeys with the same groups of pupils each day, as opposed to multiple journeys conveying different groups of pupils.
- It is expected that transport providers use PPE at all times and have effective and agreed cleaning regimes in place, pre and post each journey.
- Screens should be provided on vehicles where possible in line with the required standards.
- Escorts and drivers who provide assistance to learners whilst on transport should where appropriate levels of PPE in line with the needs of the child, young person and current Welsh Government guidance ([as detailed in section 2.10](#)).
- Transport providers must maintain daily records of pupils on each journey and ensure that they comply with the Test, Trace and Protect strategy.
- Providers must ensure that they complete risk assessments, which **must be** submitted to the Council for review prior to operation commencing, to ensure safe and effective operation in compliance with Welsh Government and Public Health Wales Guidance.

- Seats will be allocated where possible with no movement permitted on the bus.
- Providers will be expected to implement sanitising stations on the vehicles and comply with Welsh Government guidance to support respiratory hygiene – catch it, kill it, bin it.
- There will be a zero tolerance policy for those who do not abide by the rules and or exhibit poor behaviours during a journey. Therefore, operators will have the right to exclude pupils and refuse transport for 5 days pending a review by Transport, Education and the School.
- Parents must be advised that learners must not board home to school transport if they or a member of their household has any of the four identified COVID-19 symptoms (a new continuous cough, a high temperature or loss of taste or smell). Learners should also not attend school if they are in a household that is required to self-isolate as contacts of a case under TTP or in quarantine if returned from a country specified by the FCO. Learners should not routinely have their temperature taken. This is not a reliable method for identifying COVID-19.
- If a learner develops symptoms whilst at school/setting or their educational institution, they will be sent home. They must not travel on home to school transport. The school or setting should contact the parent/carer who should make arrangements for the learner’s journey home.
- This equally applies to drivers and escorts.
- Anyone with symptoms must follow the guidance: <https://gov.wales/self-isolation-stay-home-guidance-households-possible-coronavirus>
- Learners, drivers and escorts who have been in contact with someone that has developed symptoms whilst at a school/setting or education establishment or on home to school transport do not need to go home to self-isolate unless they develop symptoms themselves (in which case, they should arrange a test) or the symptomatic person subsequently tests positive (see below) or if they have been requested to do so by NHS Test and Trace.
- All parties must perform hand hygiene by washing their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with soap and running water or use hand sanitiser after contact with someone who has symptoms before boarding and after leaving the transport.
- If a person with symptoms has been in a vehicle that provides home to school transport, the vehicle must be cleaned and disinfected with appropriate disinfectant with special attention to touch points e.g. rails, arm rests etc. to reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people. See the COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance for information, including carrying out cleaning procedures and adjusting ventilation

- Wherever vehicle capacity allows, distancing between individual passengers, or groups of passengers, will be employed. In particular, distancing will be considered where children attending different schools travel on the same vehicle and for certain children with complex needs e.g. those that spit uncontrollably. In these cases, alternative dedicated transport may be considered to be more appropriate.
- Where schools/parents procure their own transport for pupils, the responsibility of the risk assessment and COVID-19 mitigation lie with headteacher/parent and **not** the Council.

4. Pupils

4.1 Attendance, Inclusion and Vulnerable groups

In addition to the Operational Guidance for Schools and Settings from the Autumn Term, Welsh Government has also issued Guidance for Supporting Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Learners. The Guidance for Supporting Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Learners is intended to supplement the Operational Guidance and should be read alongside it. The two guidance documents have been written to assist schools to put in place proportionate protective measures for children and staff but also enable learners to receive an inclusion education that offers a broad and balanced curriculum allowing them to thrive and progress.

The Guidance for Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Learners reaffirms the responsibility of all schools and the Council to adhere to existing Welsh Government Inclusion guidance as well as the SEN Code of Practice and other relevant legislation.

The two guidance documents acknowledge that schools will need to make judgments about how to balance and minimise any risks from COVID-19 with providing a full educational experience for children and young people as has always been the case with other Health and Safety risks. It also acknowledges that there cannot be a one size fits all approach and that each school will have local challenges to address.

As such, in terms of managing the needs of pupils as they return to school full-time, the local context, individual pupil need and background will all contribute to how each pupil will need to be supported.

Over the past weeks, a range of information has been circulated to schools from the EAS, the Educational Psychology Service and the Gwent Attachment Service which have highlighted the importance of emotional wellbeing and the importance of a pupil centred approach to understanding and managing pupil need at this time.

Education teams are available to support schools in discussing individual pupils and considering how to reduce risk and support learner well-being.

Attendance

Attendance guidance from 1st September 2020 until further notice.

Following consultation, the Welsh Government has revoked the School Performance and Absence Targets (Wales) Regulations 2011 (in force from 7 August 2020). As a result, schools are not required to set targets for the academic year 2020 but correct coding will enable WG and LA to track any COVID-19 related absences and support any 2nd wave concerns, as well as ongoing welfare of pupils.

All learners, including those that were previously shielding, will return to their school or setting from 1st September 2020. Those learners who have been advised that they no longer have the need to shield should be supported in returning back to school. Support to transition back to school will be crucial for this cohort, as their level of anxiety may be greater due to the length of period many have had to shield.

The Welsh Government's view is that it would not be appropriate for a Council/school to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) or commence proceedings for non-attendance at the school. The Welsh Government will monitor the situation over the first half term before reviewing its position.

If a learner is unable to attend the physical setting of the school for any reason it is vital the school continues to engage regularly with the learner remotely. Learning guidance is available to support schools and settings in doing so.

Schools and settings should keep a record of attendance and families should notify their school if their child is unable to attend and explain the reason for this to enable the school to record attendance correctly. This will help schools, settings and Councils plan for, and understand any barriers to, learners returning to school and identify any further support needed. It will be critical that all learners engage with the school and any concerns about engagement, or the welfare of a learner, are followed up immediately by the school. Concerns should only be escalated to the Education Welfare Service after the school has made every attempt to engage the family.

The Education Welfare Officers (EWOs) will continue to be based either at home or at their secondary school. Contact with primary schools will be by telephone, email etc. however, should the primary school require a face to face meeting this will need to be arranged in advance to restrict the number of schools being visited on any one day.

Public Health Wales advice on learner attendance

HPA ‘Guidance in infection control in schools and other childcare settings’ must be followed along with the additional advice below, which specifically relates to COVID-19:

Under no circumstances should learners attend schools/settings if they:

- Feel unwell, have any of the three identified COVID-19 symptoms (a new continuous cough, or a high temperature or loss of or change to their sense of taste or smell) or they have tested positive to COVID-19 in the past 7 days
- Live in a household or are part of an extended household with someone who has symptoms of COVID-19 or has tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days.

Guidance on Recording Attendance

Schools should record attendance and absence in keeping with the codes below until further notice.

What code should be used?

Code	Meaning	Statistical Category
/	Attending school in the am	Present
\	Attending school in the pm	Present
C	Unable to physically attend the school due to medical/health risks or caring responsibilities agreed with the school. Also for a staggered return in the first 14 days when some age groups return.	Authorised absence
#	Planned school closure for all pupils which may take place in the first 14 days, e.g. planning days.	Not required to attend
Y	Not expected to attend due to school closure (in the event of subsequent school closures).	Not required to attend
I	Illness, including COVID-19	Authorised Absence
All other codes apply as per the guidance on school attendance:	https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-03/guidance-on-school-attendance-codes.pdf	

/\: The code for learners who attend school

All children in the expected intake for that day or in a priority group (children of critical workers and vulnerable children) should be recorded as present / \ upon arrival at their school or education setting.

C: The code for learners who are unable to attend

This includes learners who are unable to physically attend school for reasons understood and agreed by the school. They should be recorded as **code C** (Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)).

This code would be used for learners who have medical or health reasons preventing them from physically attending or they may have exceptional circumstances such as caring responsibilities.

- This code would be used for learners who are self-isolating as set out in the preventative section of this guidance
- This code will also be used during the first 14 days of term when some year groups will have staggered returns
- This code should not be used if the learner is unwell with COVID-19 symptoms where the I code should be used.

Schools must engage with parents/carers to understand why they are not attending and ensure there are not any concerns about their well-being or alternative support options that could be arranged to enable them to attend. Any concerns should be followed up by the school or education setting and where relevant the council.

The school should review the situation with the learner and parents or carers on a regular basis to avoid any prolonged absence.

#: The code for planned school closures for all pupils

Should be used for planned days where pupils are not required to attend such as planning days in the first weeks of term.

Y: The code for partial openings or enforced school closure.

Should be used for enforced school closure in the event of further requirements due to COVID-19.

Using other authorised absence and attendance codes

Where other specific authorised absence and attendance codes are more appropriate schools should use these as usual.

Children Missing from Education (CME)

Due to COVID-19 there may have been a number of pupil movements since March 2020 resulting in pupils moving within or out of the County Borough. There have also been a number of in-year transfers that have been processed just before, during or after lock down. If you are unable to contact any of these parents, please follow your CME processes and refer to your EWO as soon as possible.

Elective Home Education (EHE)

Where parents are anxious about their child returning to school, there could be an increase in the number of parents deciding to EHE their child. If you become aware of any parents thinking about this, please can you discuss this with your EWO immediately so that they can make contact with the parent.

EWS Welfare Check Request

COVID-19 2020 - 1st September 2020 onwards until further notice.

Please complete this and email to your EWO if you wish to escalate concerns re non-contact or non-school attendance.



EWS Welfare Check
Request Form.docx

The EWS must also adhere to social distancing and risk assessment requirements but where a school has used a variety of methods to engage with a pupil and carer they are able to attempt “door knock” sightings and contact with pupils and carers. They can also advise re escalation or CME/EHE issues that may arise.

ALN Panel

ALN panel dates have been circulated and will commence via Microsoft TEAMS. The first Panel is scheduled for 15th September 2020. This panel will not be considering new requests but those outstanding from the summer term in the first instance.

Support for Vulnerable Groups

GEMS

GEMS staff will be available to start back in schools from 14th September 2020; however, this will be subject to receiving guidance from schools as to how GEMS staff will be able to work safely in schools in line with current Welsh Government guidance. GEMS staff will contact all timetabled schools during the first week back to see when they are able to go to school and ask what risk assessments are in place to ensure the safety of all concerned.

Working practices, and the way GEMS supports pupils is unlikely to be the same as it was prior to the school closures but arrangements will be looked at further in September.

SenCom

Welsh Government Operational Guidance for schools and settings states that peripatetic services such as those provide by SenCom to learners with speech, language and communication needs or a hearing, vision or multi-sensory impairment should look to resume interventions as usual. To allow schools the initial time required to fully re-open, SenCom will initially continue to provide their remote offer and will not begin a full programme of physical visits from the start of the autumn term.

Early in the autumn term SenCom will be in contact with all schools to share their risk assessments and discuss the best approach to adopt for children on their caseload in each school. In the interim should you require support on specialist equipment, advice or a training need then please contact SenCom directly.

SenCom - Getting in touch

- If a child or young person, who staff believe should be known to SenCom is returning to school or struggling to access school work from home, please get in touch. SenCom can offer remote advice for children and young people with Sensory Impairment or Speech, Language and Communication Needs, to support them in these settings. If you would like to take up this offer, please contact SenCom via **01633 648888** or by the email addresses:

sencom@torfaen.gov.uk / ComIT@torfaen.gov.uk / HIS@torfaen.gov.uk / VIS@torfaen.gov.uk

As part of the service offer whilst SenCom works remotely, the Hearing and Vision Impairment Services have developed temporary websites for parents and education staff to find a wide range of resources. We are now making these sites widely available and they can be accessed via the following links

- <https://sites.google.com/view/sencom-vis>
- <https://sites.google.com/view/hi-service-sencom/home>

SenCom - Hearing Impairment Guidance – Face Masks

The evidence remains clear that maintaining social distancing and good hand hygiene is the most effective way to protect yourself and others from contracting coronavirus. In Wales, teachers are not expected to wear face masks although we have to appreciate some staff will want to wear a face covering for their own reassurance. The safety measures that are recommended to keep people safe can mean that those with a hearing impairment feel particularly anxious about a return to school.

The service would therefore like to take this opportunity to share a clear message about the impact this may have on children and young people with a hearing impairment. Hearing equipment such as hearing aids and cochlear implants are vital pieces of equipment in enabling the user to access spoken language. However, they have limitations. Typically, they

will work well when the speaker is up to two metres away from the hearing impaired child/young person.

We would like to raise awareness of the steps that can be taken to support communication. This might include:

- temporarily removing the face mask and communicating within the current safety guidance (e.g. ensuring hand washing before and after, not touching the face when the mask is removed, remaining within the social distancing guidelines of staying 2 meters apart)
- using alternative forms of communication – such as writing things down or via text messages, depending on the individual needs of the child
- [dictation or translation apps](#) can sometimes provide a speech to text option when out and about
- ensuring the listening environment is as quiet as possible
- communicating through a window/glass panel – portable screens have been used by some services
- considering the need for face-to-face meeting, and whether a video call could work as an alternative for individual deaf children
- The National Deaf Children’s Society have produced an [infographic video](#) that summarises the above top tips
- Following Welsh Government guidance children and young people in class are seated facing forwards at a two metre social distance. This means that they will not be able to see the faces of their peers in order to access lip pattern and facial expressions to aid their understanding of what is said. It will therefore be important that the class teacher repeats, rephrases and clarifies what others say so that the child/young person can follow a discussion
- If a child/young person has been issued with an additional listening device, it is important that it is used in school and also at home to support online learning, if appropriate. This equipment can help to reduce the effects of background noise, distance and reverberation. It can also be connected to devices such as laptops and tablets to improve access to audio for supporting online learning and to help the child or young person to connect socially with family and friends

If a hearing impaired child/young person is experiencing difficulties accessing their learning, please contact the service to discuss.

Some people have also asked about clear face masks – where you can see someone’s mouth. If face masks are going to be used, these would be preferable.

<https://www.theclearmask.com/product>

Face masks which are washable and can therefore be reused;

<https://www.friendlyfacemasks.co.uk/>

The National Deaf Children's Society have a blog about [how to make DIY clear face masks at home](#) for those that would like to do so. Such DIY face masks would obviously be for use by the general public, and not for use in health settings.

You do need to be aware that condensation can be an issue with such masks that are worn close to the face. There are a number of solutions to this, from rubbing an unscented bar of soap on the inside and polishing off to products such as Muc-Off Anti-Fog Treatment which can be bought from Amazon has been recommended.

There has also been discussion over whether face visors or shields might be better still, particularly for professionals working in services for deaf children. School could consider face shields for staff that require the reassurance of a face covering whilst working. These have been produced by the Design Technology Departments in many schools.

In addition to this additional advice, it is essential that all the strategies that would usually be in place to ensure a deaf friendly environment are adhered too. Virtual Deaf Awareness training opportunities are available that staff should complete to raise awareness or remind them of the important things to consider. Please contact the service to discuss on 01633 648888 or email joanne.plant@torfaen.gov.uk.

4.2 Youth Service

Counselling Service

Counsellors will return to school in line with BACP Guidance. Counsellors will continue to support young people with their mental health and emotional wellbeing in schools for year 7 to 11 and in the community for year 6 and post 16. There is a deficit in counselling days in some schools due to counsellors reducing hours and moving settings. The process of identifying additional counsellors is underway. It is anticipated that these will be in place early September 2020. There has also been additional funded awarded until March 2021 to provide additional counselling hours to address the anticipated 'spike' in referrals post lockdown and the return to schools.

Funding has also been afforded for play therapy up until March 2021. The service is currently in the process of identifying an appropriate venue and therapist to undertake this work with children below year 6. As soon as the service is in place then the appropriate agencies will be informed with referrals being taken from SPACE Wellbeing Panel in the main.

A psychologist will also join the Youth Service in the autumn term. Youth Workers will have access to the psychologist for consultation and support in their roles when supporting young people in a variety of settings.

Youth Engagement and Progression Framework

Schools and professionals will continue to work closely with the Youth Engagement and Progression Coordinator (EPC) to facilitate the Early Identification Tool (EIT) and the Vulnerable Learners Transition Group. These processes can help identify individuals who are at risk of being Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). Through the continuation of this work we can ensure children and young people receive early intervention and appropriate support.

School Linked Staff (Inspire 2 Achieve)

Inspire 2 Achieve (I2A) continues to offer support to young people aged 11 – 16 across all secondary provisions within Blaenau Gwent. The staffing teams consists of 2 x Year 6-7 Transition Workers, 2 x Year 11 Transition Workers, 1 x Health and Wellbeing Worker, 4 x Youth Workers (linked to mainstream secondary provision), 1 x Alternative Education Worker, 1 x Group Delivery Worker. Referrals come via I2A Team Lead and EPC. Support is delivered via 1:1 and group work, via the development of action plans with young people. Termly plans are shared with key school links outlining projects and activities for each provision. I2A is a rolling project, meaning staff support young people during the school holidays, in addition to the school term.

Positive Futures

Positive Futures will continue to provide an alternative education programme off-site for those referred. The project will liaise closely with schools to determine the most appropriate method of delivery ensuring that each referring school and pupils attending are not compromised. Young people referred will attend the provision and work through a programme that addresses their behaviour concerns and puts interventions in place in order to maintain their full time educational status.

4.3 Safeguarding, Children Looked After Mentors and Operation Encompass

Wales Safeguarding Procedures

The Wales Safeguarding procedures guide safeguarding practice for all practitioners. Please refer to these procedures. They are available to download as an app or use the web based version <https://safeguarding.wales/>

The Welsh Government has produced non-statutory guide to remind practitioners working across agencies of their responsibilities to safeguard children and to support them in responding to concerns about children at risk.

<https://gov.wales/keeping-children-and-young-people-safe-non-statutory-guide-practitioners>

During the COVID-19 outbreak the Information, Advice and Assistance Team (IAA) continue to be fully operational, the office hours remain as 9am - 5pm Monday – Friday.

The IAA Team will be able to offer advice if you have concerns for a child: **01495 315700**

Referrals can continue to be made to Blaenau Gwent Children’s Services using a multi-agency referral form (MARF) [here](#).

The MARF should be sent to: **DutyTeam@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk**

After 5pm, on weekends and Bank Holidays

Contact the South East Wales Emergency Duty Team (EDT): **0800 328 4432**

If you think a child or young person is in immediate danger, contact the Police on 999

Advice in relation to safeguarding in education is also available:

- **Sarah Dixon, Safeguarding in Education Manager**
Sarah.Dixon@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk Tel: **07815 005241**

Children Looked After (CLA) Mentors in Schools

CLA education mentors provide 1:1 support to a small number of CLA pupils. The service works on a referral/priority needs basis and is not a service available to all CLA pupils. This is considered to be an essential service. In preparation for the start of the autumn term Social Services have undertaken the following preparations for this work to be delivered in schools:

- RAG rated the children who we believe are in priority need for this service from September.
- Minimised the number of children who will receive this support in school (to put this into perspective, we have prioritised 9/10 pupils to receive the 1:1 support in school, most of whom were already receiving the service prior to lockdown).
- Ensured that the service will only be delivered in BG schools (not in neighbouring LA’s)
- Our planning has been such that mentors will not be attending multiple sites in one day. We are able to restrict the sessions to no more than one school in any one day.

At present Social Services are not able to provide a timetable of when the mentoring sessions will take place as this has to be done in conjunction with the CLA designated member of staff for the school that each pupil attends. The sessions have to be planned around each pupil’s individual school timetable (and room availability within the school).

Mentors work term-time only and will liaise with the small number of schools that the identified pupils attend upon their return in September 2020. The mentors will not start

these sessions until those discussions have taken place with each of the relevant schools and the relevant planning has been completed. Mentoring sessions will not commence until after 14th September 2020.

At the moment, there are only 6 BG schools that the mentors will be linking with and there will be no more than one mentor attending an allocated school.

Operation Encompass

A summary of the current processes associated with Operation Encompass is detailed below:

Interim Process:

- Police will e-mail Operation Encompass information to the nominated education safeguarding representative(s) in each Council area via a secure, designated Operation Encompass e-mail address
- This designated e-mail address is monitored and managed Monday to Friday by nominated education safeguarding representative(s) before the start of the school day
- The representative who receives the information will check or add the school name(s) for the stated child or children on the PPN
- This representative will securely email the information to the school's Designated Safeguarding Person (Key Adult), prior to the start of the school day. The email will have a 'read receipt' attached. The DSP will take the necessary action to support the child or young person (see below for further advice)
- All information will be recorded, stored and secured in line with existing child safeguarding process.

Weekend notifications

- To ensure that schools are aware of any children that have experienced domestic abuse over the weekend, the operation encompass process will continue as stated above.
- Councils will be emailed alerts on a Saturday and Sunday morning
- On a Monday morning, Councils may have alerts from Saturday, Sunday and Monday to email to the relevant schools. These emails will include any incidents that have occurred between 7am Friday - 7am Monday.

For more information, please refer to the following updated detailed guidance:



OE School 'interim'
guidance Jan 2019 B

4.4 Wellbeing and Healthy Schools

Health and Wellbeing of Learners

In the run up to school re-opening, a range of information has been shared with schools both via the EAS and directly. These included from the EAS:

- 'The 5 R's to Recovery' playlist
- 'W.E.L.L. Plan'
- 'All Together Now' playlist

And from the Educational Psychology Service:

- 'Psychologically-informed support for when schools re-open'. (This was developed as a joint piece of work with Health and Social Services and will be promoted further by your Educational Psychologist in September.)
- 'Managing Our Worries'
- 'Home School Communications'
- 'Transition Back to School'

Learning should support learners' mental, emotional, physical and social wellbeing as well as recognising the importance of outdoor learning and play. Well-being is a critical enabler of learning: learners who are not content, safe and secure will not learn effectively.

As learners spend more time at their school or setting, learner and staff well-being will continue to be a key concern. The ongoing pandemic means that learners may continue to spend varying amounts of time learning remotely. Learners who are not content, safe and secure will not learn effectively. Practitioners should continue to focus on supporting well-being as a foundation for learning.

Practitioners will need to have particular regard for learners who are unable to attend a school or setting at any point in time and how they can be supported remotely.

Education Psychology Service

Educational Psychologists will be in touch with ALNCos in September 2020 to arrange planning meetings which will take place via Microsoft TEAMS. The agenda for the planning meetings, currently being finalised, will be provided to ALNCos at the start of autumn term. The work to be undertaken during the year will be agreed at the planning meeting. Given present uncertainty about the practicalities of school visits, it is likely that, for the first term, this will consist of a blended approach, determined by the nature of the work agreed.

Please see attached psychologically –informed support for when schools re-open:



BG
Psych_Support_Schc



GSABG_cefnogi_ail
agor_ysgolion.docx

Healthy Schools

Healthy Schools Officers nationally, working with Public Health Wales, have identified three areas of focus for September 2020 and three working groups have been established to prepare for September 2020. The three areas of focus are:

- Infection Prevention Control Working Group
- Mental and Emotional Health and Wellbeing Working Group
- Physical Activity (Active travel, outdoor learning) Working Group

The role of each group will be to start pulling together a 'road map' of priorities to support a whole school/setting approach in that focus area, along with collating information about resources/programmes from teams across Wales. More information will be available as this work progresses and Shan Palmeria will be able to provide a full update in September 2020.

4.5 Childcare

Firstly, it is important to note that there is no requirement for schools to offer keyworker childcare provision during the autumn term 2020. Welsh Government has, however, indicated that this could be subject to review in line with the potential for a second outbreak.

Welsh Government issued guidance to the childcare sector to enable them to re-open and extend their provision from keyworker only provision in June 2020. The guidance, which has subsequently been updated this month (August 2020), outlines the measures childcare providers need to put in place to ensure their provision is safe for children, staff and parents and includes advice on: prevention; minimising contacts; use of outdoor space; infection prevention and control; hand hygiene; PPE; risk assessment; action to be taken in the event of a child becoming ill; decontamination and cleaning.

The former requirement that children were to be cared for in bubbles of 8 has been removed, but settings will have to be able to demonstrate that children are cared for in consistent groups to minimise social contacts. Providers can decide for themselves how many children they feel safely able to care for, taking account of their registered numbers, the space available to them and the need for staff to socially distance from one another. There is flexibility under this guidance for children to attend more than one setting, so wraparound care is now allowed, however, there is an expectation that providers will work with parents, schools and potentially other settings to measure and mitigate against risks with an expectation that children will be cared for in consistent groups. The guidance suggests ways consistent groups could operate within childcare settings by organising children into groups related to their class, year group or school and suggests providers need to work with parents and schools to discuss risks and how to manage them.

Settings providing care to school-aged children are also required to consider the guidance for schools and form a judgement on which measures are most appropriate and relevant to their particular operating model.

All childcare settings will have risk assessments to show how they are operating under the current restrictions, taking account of guidance available, outlining measures they are taking to keep their provision safe. The Early Years Childcare and Play team offer advice and support to the sector and can assist with any identified issues.

<https://gov.wales/protective-measures-childcare-settings-keep-childcare-safe#:~:text=Although%20the%20protective%20measures%20recommended%20in%20this%20guidance,school%20and%20holiday%20schemes%2C%20both%20registered%20and%20unregistered.>

4.6 Educational Trips and Visits

Outdoor Learning and Educational Visits

It has been advised for schools not to use venues which involve travel. However, learning outdoors has many educational and health benefits. During the pandemic, it also provides opportunities for 'social distancing' and fresh air, and so schools should consider how they can maximise the amount of time that children and young people spend outdoors.

In addition to using their own playgrounds and gardens, many schools routinely use outdoor areas adjacent to and nearby the school for educational activities, sometimes designated as a 'Local Learning Area'. It should be possible to continue to use most venues that are in walking distance, within current limitations. It might also be possible to negotiate temporary exclusive use of an outdoor area close to an establishment, with the landowner.

Planning and Managing Activities during the Pandemic

Schools should consider avoiding activities which have a high likelihood of minor injuries, so as to reduce the need for first aid, close contact with participants, or visits to hospital.

If the planned activity is in an area open to the public, schools should consider carefully how they will ensure that the group is isolated from the public. Venues should be selected to minimise any possible interaction with the public.

During some activities, it may be possible to designate or mark out 'zones' within which individual participant's work, to avoid contact between them.

It is important to keep parents informed about plans and the precautions schools are taking, both indoors and outdoors, as they will naturally be concerned.

Hygiene and Outdoor Learning

The same attention should be given to hygiene when outdoors as when indoors. For example:

- Regularly washing/sanitising hands including when going outside, before and after touching shared objects such as activity equipment, before eating and after using the toilet
- Avoiding touching objects shared by the public – for example, a member of staff could hold a gate open to avoid everyone touching it
- Avoiding activities which involve touching each other (e.g. holding hands)
- Sanitising equipment before it is used.

Consider carrying, or having easily available, antiseptic hand gel, antiseptic wipes, tissues, bags for waste, gloves and face masks and possibly disposable aprons and eye protection, in case staff need to administer first aid or give direct support or personal care to a participant.

Be aware that antibacterial hand gel usually contains a high proportion of alcohol, and could therefore be a temptation for abuse by some young people. It should be used under close staff supervision.

Overseas and Domestic Visits

Current government travel guidance for educational settings advises against all overseas and domestic visits for children under 18. Government advice is also to avoid public transport and unnecessary journeys. It is, therefore, not advisable to use venues which involve travel.

When booking future visits schools are asked to please ensure that they consider insurance, the Council can advise on this. For more information, please contact:

Penny Jones: penny.jones@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

4.7 Use of Leisure Facilities

Leisure Supporting Education

Sport Centres across Blaenau Gwent have been closed since 23rd March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and are now in the first phase of reopening. The Leisure Trust has worked to create a flexible reopening model which will allow leisure services to start the rebuilding phase whilst not hindering access to schools for their physical education requirements.

One way systems have been created throughout the centres and whilst we continue to live with the threat of COVID-19 this will need to be adhered to by both the public and all school

attendees. Sanitising stations are situated in every section of the building and strict cleanliness rules have been put in place to ensure that the equipment is placed back in the correct position and kept as clean and sanitised as possible. These measures will be shared with the schools and there will be an expectation that everyone will abide by them for the safety of all the centre users. If and when schools are allowed to use sports centres the responsibilities for COVID-19 risk management will have to be clearly defined, for example the supervision of pupils will fall entirely within the school's responsibility.

Whilst the majority of equipment is readily available the Trust has had to decommission some to allow for social distancing within the facilities, however, the Trust will be reviewing the latest Welsh Government guidance on a weekly basis to return to full activity as soon as possible.

By the time the schools return for the new academic year the trust will be in the 4th week of reopening. Further guidance on activities including swimming is anticipated within the next 2 weeks. A further update will be provided once arrangements have been confirmed.

Agenda Item 23

Executive and Council Only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 24.11.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 24.11.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**
Date of meeting: **9th December 2020**
Report Subject: **Update on Strategy to Safely Reduce the Numbers of Children Looked After**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr John Mason, Executive Member Social Services**
Report Submitted by: **Damien McCann, Corporate Director Social Services**

Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
17.9.20	22.10.20	24.11.20			05.11.20	09.12.20		

1. Purpose of the Report

The Purpose of this report is to update the Executive Committee on the progress made in relation to the implementation of the Safe Reduction of Children Looked After Strategy 2017-2020.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The end of 2015 saw a significant increase in the numbers of children looked after. The numbers continued to increase at a steady rate peaking at an all-time high of 237 in July 2018.
- 2.2 Blaenau Gwent recognised the need to develop a 3 year “Safe Reduction in Children Looked After (CLA) Strategy” which was implemented in 2017.
- 2.3 The Strategy has three clear objectives which are:
 1. To support families to stay together;
 2. To manage risk confidently and provide support at the edge of care;
 3. To provide affordable high quality placements.
- 2.4 Each of the objectives has a number of actions aligned to them and these actions are embedded in our business planning process which is reported on quarterly basis.
- 2.5 Since the implementation of this strategy the local authority has seen a very slow but steady decrease in the numbers of children becoming looked after. More detailed analysis of this can be found under the performance section 6.1 of this report.
- 2.6 Welsh Government has also recognised the need to safely reduce the number of children coming into care and has identified this as a priority area. In light of this Integrated Care Fund (ICF) grant money was allocated to each local authority in Wales via the Regional Partnership Boards in April 2019 to invest in, and develop services to safely reduce the numbers of children coming into care.

2.7 The following services were developed as a result of this ICF grant funding

- Family Group Conference / Meeting service
- Support to Special Guardians
- Enhance resources in our Supporting Change Team
- Enhance the Young Person's Mediation Service

Details of how these services have performed are included under the performance section of this report 6.1.

2.8 The Blaenau Gwent Safe CLA Reduction Strategy has been independently evaluated by Worcester University. This evaluation was completed just prior to the COVID 19 lockdown. The strategy is in the process of being reviewed and refreshed. This work will provide a detailed overview of the progress made under each of the 3 objectives over the past 3 years and refresh the actions required to continue to deliver these 3 objectives. It is hoped the review will be completed by the end of 2020 provided the department does not have to deal with a second wave of COVID 19 in which case the focus will revert to prioritising service delivery.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 Option 1

- Consider the information contained within the report and accept the report

Option 2

- Consider the information contained within the report and provide comment on any amendment or recommendations

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

The implementation of the Safe Children Looked After Reduction Strategy supports the following priorities for Social Services under the Corporate Plan:

- To intervene early to prevent problems from becoming greater;
- To work with our partners including Aneurin Bevan University Health Board and neighbouring authorities to deliver integrated responsive care and support;
- To promote and facilitate new ways of delivering health and social care involving key partners and our communities.

The Safe CLA Reduction Strategy provides evidence that the local authority is delivering the requirements under the Social Service and Wellbeing Act in relation to the following areas

- ***Voice and control*** – putting the individual and their needs, at the centre of their care, and giving them a voice in, and control over reaching the outcomes that help them achieve well-being.

- **Prevention and early intervention** – increasing preventative services within the community to minimise the escalation of critical need.
- **Well-being** – supporting people to achieve their own well-being and measuring the success of care and support.
- **Co-production** – encouraging individuals to become more involved in the design and delivery of services.

5. Implications Against Each Option

5.1 Impact on Budget

Figure 1

	Budget 20/21	Forecast 20/21 Q1	Favourable/ (adverse)
Children’s residential placements	2,403,250	2,363,581	39,669
Foster Parent Payments In house	1,650,690	1,650,623	67
Independent Fostering Agencies	1,686,930	1,606,711	80,219
Legal Costs	381,620	781,319	(399,699)

Figure shows the position at the end of Qtr 1 in relation to the budgets connected to our children looked after. It is important to note the residential budget is forecasting an underspend at this time. This is due to the numbers of children in residential care reducing from 18 in 2019 to 13 in September 2020. The work the My Support Team (MyST) and our 14 plus Team has led to this decrease of numbers in residential care to foster care and in some cases returned home to parents. It should also be noted that the costs of the MyST has also been achieved by the savings made in the residential budget, as a separate budget line of £300,000 has been created to meet the costs of that team.

It is also important to recognise the underspend in the independent fostering agency budget line. This demonstrates we are becoming less reliant on independent fostering providers and finding more local placement solutions with our local authority foster carers or family members

5.3 Legal

Children’s Legal Services in Blaenau Gwent are currently provided by an independent law firm. This is due to continued difficulties in recruiting Local Authority Child Care Solicitors. Over the past few years the legal budget has been significantly overspent due to the number of court applications made. The Head of Service receives monthly information on the number of court

applications for section 31 care orders. Year to date we have made the same number of court applications as this time last year, 10 to date. This demonstrates this area of work has (to date) not increased this year.

Prior to the COVID 19 lockdown the Head of Children’s Services and the Head of Legal Services started exploring the possibility of neighbouring authorities providing our legal support. This work came to an abrupt halt but will need to be restarted when possible.

5.4 **Human Resources**

Maintaining a stable workforce is key to achieving the objectives of the safe CLA reduction strategy. Just prior to COVID 19 children’s services had 10 social work vacancies across the various teams. This had a significant impact on the workload on the Teams. A combination of Blaenau Gwent staff finishing their secondments on the Degree in Social Work Course and appointing 3rd year SW degree students who had their final year placement in Blaenau Gwent, has resulted in nearly all these vacancies being filled. A package of support is in place for this new cohort of staff, who, report (even in the throws of a pandemic) they feel very supported and safe in their practice.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Figure 2**

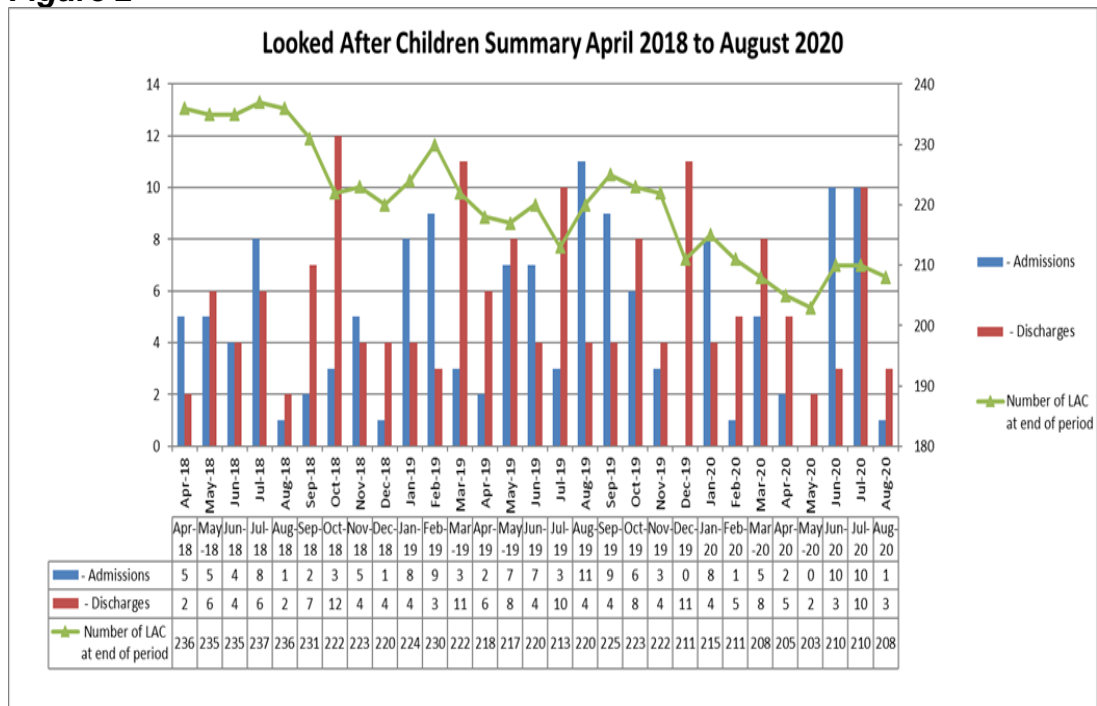


Figure 2 demonstrates the continued slow but steady decline in the numbers of children looked after in Blaenau Gwent during the implementation of the Safe CLA reduction strategy. It is interesting to note the significant decrease in numbers at the beginning of 2020, reaching a low of 203 children in care in May 2020. As a department we continue to be committed to reducing these numbers further over the lifespan of the new/refreshed strategy.

The performance information below evidences the positive impact service developments have achieved as a result of the ICF grant money, in relation to reducing the numbers of children looked after.

Family Group Conference (*service active from July 2019*) – held a total of 37 Family Group Conferences for 37 families with 68 children. Out of the 68 children subject of a Family Group Conference: 52 were prevented in becoming looked after, 8 were already looked after and were rehabilitated into their birth families and 8 children became looked after.

Mediation service (*service active from October 2019*) – mediation services were offered to 24 children and young people and their families with 22 children supported to remain with their birth family (one became looked after and one moved into independent accommodation)

SGO support team (*service active from September 2019*) – staff within the team completed 5 SGO assessments for 8 children ending care episodes and 2 SGO assessments for families preventing 2 children to become looked after. 51 families (Special Guardians and children in their care) received support from this team since September 2019. At 31st March 2020 in Blaenau Gwent there were 118 children subject to an SGO. Most of these families receive support and/or financial assistance from the Local Authority in order to maintain these placements on a permanent basis.

Figure 3

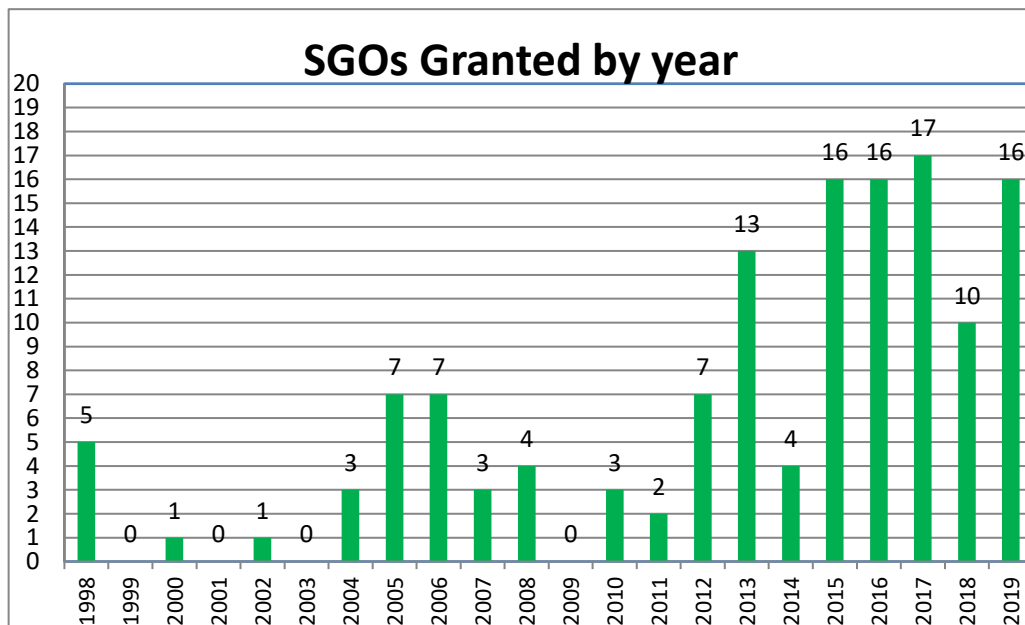


Figure 3 above shows a consistent increase in use of Special Guardianship arrangements as an alternative to children coming into the care of the Local Authority. While the numbers of children subject of SGO is growing in Blaenau Gwent, SGO support team is becoming vital in supporting these placements in the long term by preventing family breakdown and children returning into the care system.

Enhanced Edge of Care – The new Community Connector, Education Support Worker and part time psychologist funded through ICF were aligned in the Supporting Change Team. During FY 2019/2020 this team delivered services to 175 children to prevent them coming into the care of the Local Authority and 23 children being rehabilitated from care to their birth family

6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***

The successful implementation of the safe CLA reduction strategy will lead to more positive outcomes for children on a number of levels. It will prevent children coming into care in the first place due to the work under the strategy. For those children who do come into care they will have more local placement choices enabling them to maintain attendance at their local school and contact with family and friends

6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***

There is extensive involvement with the children and families we work with and individual feed-back was offered as follows:

Family Group Conference:

“I was very happy with the support; the meeting couldn’t have gone any better.”

“The Family group conference was very good in that it brought the family together and enlightened their understanding of the risks and how they can support. There are so many strengths in this family and I believe if they work together the children will have better outcomes.”

13 year old *“things are better because of what we have spoke about and I will listen more and communicate”*

Professional - *“well planned and executed family group conference – workable family plan developed to enable child to return home”.*

Parent – *“I feel a lot more confident now a plan has been put in place”*

Social Worker – *“The family were able to leave the FGC with a safety plan in place to ensure all family members had a plan to keep her safe and to communicate with one another, which is something they have not been able to do until now”*

SGO support team

“I’m feeling much more positive now that I have been referred for some support, thank you so much you have been very helpful”

‘I think the service is fantastic, it is so reassuring to know someone is there when you need them. This should I have been set up years ago.’

‘It is lovely to know that there is a service, it can feel isolating after you are granted the Special Guardianship Order.’

“It’s nice to know people are willing to listen and nice to have the support around us”

“It’s a comfort to know someone is there if I’m honest during these times [COVID 19- Pandemic]”

“Thank you, it’s very reassuring to know the support is there, thank you for continuing to work and help us”

“Thank you for everything you’re doing, feel like finally the girls are getting the support they need”

Enhanced Edge of Care

Education Support Worker - Feedback from Teacher: *“(Child) is doing amazing! She's going to all her lessons, working well in class, going to her red card detentions if she's late to school, I hardly see her now if I'm honest. Before when there was an issue she would have roamed around the school looking for me and probably truanted. The pastoral team were saying this morning how incredible she is working and behaving at the moment and hardly hear her name any more. “*

Psychologist: *“The consultation gave me some reflective space and helped me to see the bigger picture of what is really going on in the family. It gave me insight into things I wouldn't necessarily have thought about without the psychology consultation. It gave me a focus of the work needed with the family and children and a plan for me to follow”*

6.4 Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)

The initial safe CLA reduction strategy was a 3year strategy and is due to end this year. It is recognised that the refreshed strategy needs to be longer term in recognition of the significant work required to continue and maintain the downward trend in numbers of children looked after. Therefore, the next strategy will be for 5 yrs.

6.5 Preventative focus

A large part of the Safe CLA Reduction Strategy has a preventative focus

6.6 Collaboration / partnership working

A number of the actions under the Safe CLA Reduction Strategy rely on partnership working. Senior managers and staff have good working relationships with our partners which will support us in achieving the actions. However, the refreshed strategy will focus heavily on improving our partners understanding of the 3 objectives that sit under this strategy and the part they need to play to achieves its success.

6.7 Integration (across service areas)

As above

6.8 EqIA

The safe reduction of children becoming looked after involves supporting and engaging with children and families covered by protected characteristics from the Equality Act 2010. It has not been identified that this strategy will have a negative impact on those with protected characteristics

7. Monitoring Arrangements

7.1 The actions aligned to the 3 objectives under the strategy are incorporated under the children's services business plans. Progress on actions is reported quarterly and contributes to the Directors Annual report

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- N/A

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 24

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 23.11.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 24.11.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **9th December 2020**

Report Subject: **Regional Partnership Update**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr John Mason, Executive Member Social Services**

Report Submitted by: **Damien McCann, Corporate Director of Social Services**

Reporting Pathway (Dates to be Entered)								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
15.10.20	15.10.20	24.11.20			05.11.20	09.12.20		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the Report is to update the Executive Members on the work and decisions taken over the last 9 months by the Regional Partnership Board, developed under statutory guidance Part 9 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWB Act). A previous report had been prepared for the Social Services Scrutiny Committee of the 6th April 2020 which was subsequently cancelled because of lockdown due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The SSWB Act came into force in April 2016, Part 9 of the Act sets out statutory requirement for a Regional Partnership Board (RPB), along with the required minimum membership and a regional Citizen Panel, regional Provider Forum and regional Leadership Group (senior officer group) which have all been established.
- 2.2 The Regional Partnership Boards has been established on current local health board footprints – so the Gwent regional partnership board includes Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) and Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen local authorities.
- 2.3 The regulations also set out required membership of Regional Partnership Boards. The Executive member in each local authority, with responsibility for health and social care, sits on the Regional Partnership Board. In a similar vein, non-executive members of the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board also sit on the Regional Partnership Board.
- 2.4 The Regional Partnership Board is an advisory body, that does not take away the existing responsibilities of the individual statutory bodies, but it is expected

to take oversight of and provide direction to, any areas of integrated working across health and social care.

- 2.5 Social Services Scrutiny Committee on the 13th March 2017 agreed for the Executive Member of Social Services and Director of Social Services to report back to Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis. This approach was endorsed by Executive Committee on the 15th March 2017.
- 2.6 The Regional Partnership Board has met on four occasions since the last report to Scrutiny Committee on the 13th January 2020. There were a number of areas which have occupied the Regional Partnership Board at these meetings. Firstly, the Coronavirus outbreak across partner agencies and the effect on services. Secondly, the continuation of the Transformational Offer beyond 2021, in response to the Welsh Government's new long term plan for health and social care 'A Healthier Wales'. Thirdly, the reallocation of underspend for 2019/20 and the continuation of the Integrated Care Revenue and Capital Funds. Finally, it had considered the Integrated Winter Plan for 2020/21.
- 2.7 The first meeting in May 2020 of the Regional Partnership Board very much focused on how organisations had worked collectively during the Coronavirus pandemic and what had worked well, not so well and any future lessons should we have a further wave. This included feedback from the Citizen Panel on some of the issues that had been raised with them concerning access to healthcare. The Board were reassured that the pandemic had not reached its worst case scenario regarding hospital capacity and support in the community and the system had been able to cope with the initial outbreak locally and regionally which was very much due to collaborative working by all partners.
- 2.8 Members may recall from previous reports that the Regional Partnership Board had successfully submitted a 'Gwent transformational offer' to Welsh Government which granted the Gwent RPB £13.4 million of new limited funding over a two-year period. Members may also recall that this was in response to 'A Healthier Wales' which set out a new £100 million transformational programme. The new transformation fund was intended to provide additional funding to catalyse 'whole system change', driven through the Regional Partnership Boards with an expectation that each region develops a 'transformational offer'.
- 2.9 The offer in Gwent related to four areas, derived from the priority areas within the Area Plan and the considered directions of the Regional Partnership Board. These include:
 - The development of early intervention and prevention services (Integrated Wellbeing Networks);
 - The development of primary and community care services (Compassionate Communities);
 - The redesign of child and adolescent emotional and mental health services (Iceberg model);
 - The development of an integrated 'Home First' discharge model;

- The development of workforce planning and organisational development to underpin transformational activity.

A summary of the different projects was previously provided at the 24th January 2019 and 17th October 2019 and 13th January 2020 Scrutiny Committees.

- 2.10 The Gwent Transformation Programme has continued to make good progress, with the programmes adapting their scope and focus to ensure they are able to support the local response to COVID-19. The transformation programme continues to deliver at pace, given the extremely short and testing time frame provided by Welsh Government of 2 years. The Board has heard that Welsh Government had agreed to roll over some of funding to allow for some of the projects to continue until March 2021 rather than finish in December 2020. However, during the Coronavirus pandemic some of the projects under the transformation programme had to stop, reduce their offer to the public or redirect towards helping fight the Coronavirus. This has delayed the time available for these models to evidence success and for their evaluations to be completed.
- 2.11 At the time of writing we have been told verbally by Welsh Government that transformation funding will continue for a further transition year in its current format until March 2022, each programme is developing a programme of work around financial sustainability, making clear the value of the programmes in line with the wider strategic improvement objectives of the Regional Partnership Board. To support this work, Welsh Government are working with the regions to develop Communities of Practice, to share the learning and support pan regional scaling and also economic demand and management modelling, to demonstrate where longer term system efficiencies can be secured.
- 2.12 All four programmes had commissioned evaluation of the models, with the Institute of Public Care being successful for place based care, integrated wellbeing networks and Homefirst and Cedar Associates are leading the evaluation of the ICEBERG model. These had started but again fell victim to the pandemic and are currently being restarted.
- 2.13 One of the difficulties with the Transformation funding continues to be recruitment to specialist posts, with staff reluctant to leave existing posts for a short term funded post. This has been fed back to Welsh Government and hopefully will be taken on board for future funding streams.
- 2.14 The Regional Partnership Board is the body who sign off and agree the Integrated Care Fund revenue and capital proposals. We do not intend to go into detail of the funding obtained and the bids made as these will be subject to a further report at the December Scrutiny Committee meeting at which point we hope to be clear about the level of funding provided to continue to deliver existing projects during the transition year of 2021/22.

- 2.15 During 2019/20 Local authorities across Gwent had requested that any slippage funding within existing projects be used for Children with Complex Needs to meet demand for the remainder of this year. Regional Leadership Group endorsed the approach for any ICF revenue slippage to be utilised for Children with Complex Needs. At the end of the Financial year 2019/20 an updated slippage figure of £956,000 was shared on an equal basis with all Local Authorities in Gwent which has resulted in an additional £191K for Blaenau Gwent.
- 2.16 An additional £10 million across Wales was announced by the Minister for Health and Social Services on the 24th January 2020 for Regional Partnership Boards, the Board agreed that this funding be equally split between Health and Social Services on a 50:50 basis and subsequently was shared equally between the Gwent local authorities. An additional £191K was allocated to Blaenau Gwent on top of the £133K from the Winter Plan to flexibly spot purchase step up/step down beds, to purchase additional domiciliary care packages, to purchase additional social work capacity over bank holidays and weekends and funding for hiring an additional 4x4 vehicle for adverse weather conditions. There were also some separate bids for additional health capacity locally and some Gwent wide bids for equipment e.g. single handed hoists.
- 2.17 Winter Planning is an integral part of the Health and Social Care system responsibility and this year's plan has been developed, in line with Welsh Government guidance, with all partners within the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) who have agreed to recommend a number of the activities in order to support patients within the Gwent area. The plan has been developed with colleagues across the Health Board and partners in Social Care, third sector and Welsh Ambulance Service. The RPB will need to sign off and agreed to submit the RPB Winter plan to the Welsh Government by the end of October 2020. At the time of writing work is being finalised before sign off and submission of the 2020/21 Winter Plan to Welsh Government.
- 2.18 The purpose of the plan is to demonstrate by region, the agreed partnership activity, to support the provision of care and support services during this winter period, to outline the safe and integrate management of 'winter pressures' and to provide assurance of a whole system approach to the winter period. The plan is structured around the 'Six goals' and 'Four harms' identified in the National Winter Protection plan.

GOAL	OBJECTIVE
Goal 1: Co-ordination, planning and support for high risk groups	Planning and support to help high risk or vulnerable people and their carers to remain independent at home, preventing the need for urgent care
Goal 2: Signposting, information and assistance for all	Information, advice or assistance to signpost people who want - or need - urgent support or treatment to the right place, first time.

Goal 3: Preventing admission of high risk groups	Community alternatives to attendance at an Emergency Department and/or admission to acute hospital for people who need urgent care but would benefit from staying at, or as close as possible, to home
Goal 4: Rapid response in crisis	The fastest and best response at times of crisis for people who are in imminent danger of loss of life; are seriously ill or injured; or in mental health crisis.
Goal 5: Great hospital care	Optimal hospital based care for people who need short term, or ongoing, assessment/treatment, where beneficial
Goal 6: Home first when ready	Capacity to ensure effective and timely discharge from hospital, when individual is ready to most appropriate location

For Members information the four harms relate to the Coronavirus pandemic these are:

- The harm of COVID-19 itself;
- The harm from overwhelming the NHS and Social Care system;
- The harm from the reduction in non COVID activity;
- The harms from wider societal actions/lockdowns.

2.19 The plan sets out a coordinated whole systems approach to the delivery of health and social care services across Gwent, in partnership with both housing and Third sector partners. It sets out the required capacity necessary to protect the system in Gwent during the winter period, within the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. It demonstrates the depth of partnership working across the Regional Partnership Board providing a clear statement of system wide activity in line with the 'Six goals' and 'Four harms'.

2.20 The outlined activity is funded from a range of funding sources provided to the Health Board and Local Authority. At the point of writing it is not expected that any further funding will be forthcoming.

2.21 One of the challenges continues to be the recruitment of medical, social care and nurse staffing to enable the increase in the Health Board's bed capacity and enhance community services. The current staffing gaps and high numbers of unfilled nursing posts presents a real risk to effective delivery of this part of the Winter Plan.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 The options for consideration are:

3.2 Option 1 – to note the report and to support the decisions of the Regional Partnership Board

3.3 Option 2 - not to support the decisions of the Regional Partnership Board.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan
The report is fulfilling our statutory functions under the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014 and accompanying regulations.

4.2 The report is also fulfilling a number of the Social Services aims within the Corporate Plan:

- To improve accessibility, provision of information and advice to enable people to support their own wellbeing;
- To intervene early to prevent problems from becoming greater;
- To work with our partners including Aneurin Bevan Health Board and neighbouring authorities to deliver integrated responsive care and support;
- To promote and facilitate new ways of delivering health and social care involving key partners and our communities.

4.3 A number of the areas being progressed by the Regional Partnership Board will support us to achieve two of the Wellbeing Plan objectives:

- The best start in life for everyone;
- To encourage and enable people to make healthy lifestyle choices in the place that they live, learn, work and play.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

Option 1 - The Regional Partnership Board have statutory responsibilities laid out within the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014 and Ministers expect to see the Regional Partnership Boards, maturing into a vehicle for more integrated commissioning, transformation and improvement across health and social care, with an emphasis on providing more care closer to home, maintaining independence and reducing unnecessary hospital admissions. Therefore, by implementing the Gwent transformation offer the Regional Partnership Board are complying with the legislation and Ministerial expectations.

Option 1 – Welsh Government have also determined that the use of the Integrated Care Capital and Revenue Fund, the new Transformational fund and any Integrated Winter Planning funding will have oversight by the

Regional Partnership Board. All these funding sources are to assist with the integration of health and social care across the Gwent Regional footprint. It is essential that the Regional Partnership Board has oversight of funding proposals and subsequent use of these funding streams, and have approved the proposals before they were submitted and agreed by Welsh Government.

Option 2 – The Regional Partnership Board are made up of a number of organisations who collectively make decision for the good of the region. If Scrutiny were to recommend alternative approaches, then it would need the support of neighbouring authorities and the health board to obtain consensus. Failure to do this would mean being in breach of legislation and could result in Welsh Government intervention. Whilst failure to comply with the requirements of the Integrated Care Capital Fund and Revenue Fund, Transformational fund and Integrated Winter Planning fund could result in the withdrawal or ability to receive funding for the Blaenau Gwent and Gwent region respectively.

5.1 ***Impact on Budget*** (short and long term impact)

There are no immediate impacts on the budget, the Integrated Care Capital Fund is provided on an annual basis to fund innovative projects within Health and Social Care which has been extended for a further 12 months during a transition year. The transformation fund is to develop new models of transformation at pace and has been agreed for a further 12 months during transition as well. These are all additional funding coming into the system.

The Integrated Care Capital and Revenue Fund provides significant investment to develop a number of projects across Blaenau Gwent and Gwent as a whole and should this funding be removed at the end of the proposed transition period will have significant consequences going forward. In addition, the transformation fund is a time limited fund intended to replace or reconfigure existing services not adding an extra layer; therefore, there is an expectation that these models will be funded from core budgets going forward.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

5.3 ***Legal***

The Legal department becomes involved in considering and advising on any legal agreements before signing such as the Section 33 Agreement.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

The Gwent Transformational Team support senior officers and elected members to deliver and implement the priorities of the Regional Partnership Board. In addition, they administer the Regional Partnership Board and Leadership Group. The Gwent Transformation Team is hosted by Torfaen County Borough Council.

6. **Supporting Evidence:**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

Not applicable.

6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***

The role of the Regional Partnership Board is to ensure more seamless provision of health and social care services across Gwent.

6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***

The Regional Partnership Board has involvement from the third sector and representation from the Citizens Panel to ensure engagement and involvement in its direction.

6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

The Regional Partnership Board provides the opportunity to work collectively and have a long term vision to progress integration and partnership across the Gwent region.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

The Regional Partnership Board within its strategic intent statement will be considering how Health and Social Services can work together in a more preventative way.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

The role the Regional Partnership Board is to work collaboratively across boundaries to benefit citizens requiring health and social care services across Gwent.

6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***

The purpose of the Regional Partnership Board is to foster integration between Health and Social Services.

6.8 ***EqIA***

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The monitoring arrangements for the Regional Partnership Board are through the Social Services Scrutiny Committee and the Executive Committee on a quarterly basis.

Background Documents / Electronic Links

N/A

By virtue of paragraph(s) 14 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 14 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank