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Contact:/Cysylltwch â: Democratic Services



THIS IS A MEETING WHICH THE PUBLIC ARE ENTITLED TO ATTEND

8th March 2022

Dear Sir/Madam

EDUCATION AND LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee will be held as a Hybrid Meeting: Via MS Teams/Abraham Derby Room at the General Offices, Ebbw Vale - if you would like to attend please contact committee.services@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk on Tuesday, 15th March, 2022 at 10.00 am.

Please note that a pre and post meeting will be held 30 minutes prior to the start and following the conclusion of the meeting for members of the committee.

Yours faithfully

Michelle Morris
Managing Director

AGENDA

Pages

1. SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION

You are welcome to use Welsh at the meeting a

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

minimum notice period of 3 working days is required should you wish to do so. A simultaneous translation will be provided if requested.

2. **APOLOGIES**

To receive.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS**

To consider any declarations of interests and dispensations made.

4. **SPECIAL EDUCATION & LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES** 5 - 14

To receive the Minutes of the Special Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee held on the 26th January, 2022.

(Please note the Minutes are submitted for points of accuracy only).

5. **ACTION SHEET - 26TH JANUARY 2022** 15 - 18

To receive the Action Sheet.

6. **EDUCATION & LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES** 19 - 26

To receive the Minutes of the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee held on the 1st February, 2022.

(Please note the Minutes are submitted for points of accuracy only).

7. **ACTION SHEET - 1ST FEBRUARY 2022** 27 - 28

To receive the Action Sheet.

8. **EDUCATION DIRECTORATE-RESPONSE TO COVID-19** 29 - 84

To consider the report of the Corporate Director Education.

9. **EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT SERVICE BUSINESS PLAN 2022-2025** 85 - 158
- To consider the report of the Corporate Director Education.
10. **INSPIRE 2 ACHIEVE AND WORK PERFORMANCE REPORT JANUARY – DECEMBER 2021** 159 - 166
- To consider the report of the Service Manager Young People and Partnerships.
11. **WELSH PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS (WPLS) ANNUAL RETURN 2020/21** 167 - 172
- To consider the report of the Corporate Director Education.
12. **BLAENAU GWENT ADMISSIONS POLICY FOR NURSERY AND STATUTORY EDUCATION 2023/24** 173 - 206
- To consider the report of the Service Manager Education Transformation and Business Change.

To: Councillor H. Trollope (Chair)
 Councillor J. Holt (Vice-Chair)
 Councillor D. Bevan
 Councillor G. Collier
 Councillor M. Cook
 Councillor M. Day
 Councillor L. Elias
 Councillor S. Healy
 Councillor J. Hill
 Councillor C. Meredith
 Councillor J. C. Morgan
 Councillor J. P. Morgan
 Councillor T. Smith
 Councillor B. Summers
 Councillor D. Wilkshire
 T. Baxter
 T. Pritchard

All other Members (for information)
 Manager Director

Chief Officers

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE EDUCATION & LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: SPECIAL EDUCATION & LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 26TH JANUARY, 2022

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR H. TROLLOPE (CHAIR)

Councillors: J. Holt
 D. Bevan
 M. Cook
 M. Day
 L. Elias
 S. Healy
 J. Hill
 J.C. Morgan
 J.P. Morgan
 B. Summers
 D. Wilkshire

Co-opted Member

T. Baxter

AND: Corporate Director of Education
 Strategic Education Improvement Manager
 Service Manager Inclusion
 Service Manager Education Transformation & Business Change
 Press & Publicity Officer
 Scrutiny & Democratic Officer / Advisor

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

<p>No. 2</p>	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G. Collier, C. Meredith and T. Smith.</p> <p>Head of School Improvement & Inclusion Service Manager Young People & Partnerships</p>	
<p>No. 3</p>	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.</p>	
<p>No. 4</p>	<p><u>COVID UPDATE POSITION IN EDUCATION AND ACROSS THE SCHOOL ESTATE</u></p> <p>At the invitation of the Chair the Corporate Director of Education gave a verbal Covid update position in education and across the school estate.</p> <p>The Corporate Director of Education informed Members that currently there were 584 positive cases per 100,000 population, placing Blaenau Gwent fifth across Wales in relation to Covid cases. The level remains high but was down significantly compared to the end of the new year. The Gwent Incident Management team agreed that the schools alert level remains in the very high risk category. The number of cases among school children had increased up to 186 positive cases and 81 staff had been affected by Covid, that was 6.5% of the overall workforce within schools.</p> <p>Blaenau Gwent's position with the Welsh Government categorisation on a RAG status was currently Green as most schools had retained face to face learning. However, recently four schools had introduced elements of blended learning.</p> <p>The Welsh Government Education Minister had issued a letter to all schools outlining that from 28th January, 2022 there would be a national move to alert level 0. There would be a cautious phased and planned approach across schools moving forward. He advised that the Welsh Government had reduced the self-isolation period for positive cases to five days.</p>	

	<p>Schools were expected to continue to use the Schools Infection Control Framework in relation to local school implementation around positive cases.</p> <p>Qualification Wales had confirmed plans to hold examinations for both Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 learners in the summer term. There was an intention to adjust the examination grade boundaries to reflect that many learners had been subject to disrupted teaching and learning over the last two years and this had been broadly welcomed across the Education sector in Wales.</p> <p>In response to a Member’s question, the Corporate Director of Education reassured the Member that with regard to the Welsh Government School Infection Control Framework a localised implementation was expected. The Local Authority was supporting schools where they had to take decisions around blended learning in relation to communication with parents and health and safety requirements.</p> <p>With regard to licenses and digitally disadvantaged learners, the Corporate Director said the transition of equipment from those learners that had left education and those learners entering statutory education was being managed and running relatively smoothly. The Service Manager Education Transformation & Business Change confirmed the process was operating smoothly and they were undertaking regular reviews. Usage and demand for both the mi-fi units and devices had decreased considerably over the course of the autumn term as schools had sought to provide continuity of learning on site, but they were regularly monitoring the situation and working very closely with schools around implementation.</p>	
<p>No. 5</p>	<p><u>EDUCATION & LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The Minutes of the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 30th November, 2021 were submitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the Minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	

<p>No. 6</p>	<p><u>ACTION SHEET – 30TH NOVEMBER, 2021</u></p> <p>The action sheet arising from the meeting of the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee held on 30th November, 2021 was submitted, whereupon:-</p> <p><u>Item 10 - Management of Pupil Places and the School Estate 2020/21</u></p> <p>The Service Manager, Education Transformation & Business Change explained they were working with schools annually to review any capacity issues they had and adapt accordingly, looking at self-help schemes, developing action plans to reduce surplus places and also ensure that there were sufficient places for growth going forward.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the action sheet be noted.</p>	
<p>No. 7</p>	<p><u>CORPORATE DIRECTOR'S REPORT OF EDUCATION SERVICES</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Education which presented the Corporate Director of Education's Spring and Summer Terms Report (2021).</p> <p>The Corporate Director of Education spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.</p> <p>A Member felt that progress around the seven recommendations on the last Estyn report should have been included in this report. He raised concerns regarding performance data, the Welsh Government had suspended the publication of Key Stage 4 performance measures in 2020/21 and 2021/22 academic years stating that qualification awards data would not be used to report on attainment, but that data was included in this report. The Corporate Director of Education explained that progress against the seven recommendations highlighted by Estyn had previously been shared with Members as part of the self-evaluation report. This could also be included within future Corporate Director's Report of Education Services. In relation to performance data the information presented in the report was not attributable to any school and would only</p>	

be used for self-evaluation purposes and not for wider accountability issues. The Director explained that this information was via centre determined grades and was not comparable but did an assessment to move forward and provides a baseline of current performance.

In response to a Member's question regarding the Governing Body at the River Centre, the Director said that Members would be aware from the Improving Schools report that over the last 12 months the River Centre had formally become a school causing concern. As part of the Local Authority powers of intervention they had appointed additional LA Governors, including an LA Chair of Governors which had strengthened the Governing Body significantly. The Director felt assured that the current Governing Body were starting to take steps around admissions, placement of learners and consideration around school development planning to improve the setting for children and young people.

With regard to reporting progress on the new curriculum, the Director said that from September 2022 elements of the initial changes around the curriculum for Wales would be introduced and confirmed that updates around ALN reform, curriculum reform and qualifications reform would become a formal part of the reporting mechanisms moving forward into the new academic year.

The Chair commented that close working with the Social Services Directorate in relation to the new ALN bill should be expanded upon, such as social workers being accessible at schools. The Director said that between the Director of Social Services Annual report and this report they would be able to demonstrate cross directorate working that would be strengthened across both education and social care, particularly as they were dealing with the same children and young people in both community and school settings.

A Member welcomed closer working with the Social Services Directorate particularly around health and well-being as some children with issues such as behavioural problems, eating disorders and mental health issues had been waiting over 18 months for appointments with consultants. The Corporate Director of Education said the situation around collaboration with health services had been

	<p>particularly difficult due to the pandemic. Many services had been under pressure and one of those service areas was CAMHSs, the Director gave assurances that they would continue to work closely with health colleagues to support children and young people. The work of the Youth Services counselling service also ensured that emotional well-being considerations were at the forefront of the work undertaken with children and young people, taking preventative approaches.</p> <p>A Member referred to page 54 – Risk Description EDDRR1 ‘Failure of schools in Blaenau Gwent to adapt and change accordingly to the requirements of the new curriculum and national agenda of the Welsh Government as laid out in the National reform agenda document "Education for Wales: Our national Mission” – and felt this paragraph should be reworded as many schools were working continuously on the new curriculum. The Director explained that this was the risk associated with schools failing to adapt but agreed to revise the wording of this paragraph to avoid and misunderstanding of terminology.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1; namely that Members scrutinised the information detailed within the Corporate Director of Education’s Spring/Summer terms 2021 report and contributed to the continuous assessment of effectiveness by making appropriate recommendations to the Executive Committee.</p>	Director of Education
No. 8	<p><u>EDUCATION DIRECTORATE – RECOVERY AND RENEWAL PLAN</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Education, the Head of School Improvement and Inclusion and the Service Manager – Education Transformation and Business Change, which was presented to provide Members with the opportunity to scrutinise the updated Recovery and Renewal Action Plan (Appendix 3), and the updated One Page Overview (Appendix 4), which address the Education Directorate’s identified priorities for recovery and renewal, as part of the corporate response to the COVID-19 situation.</p>	

	<p>The Service Manager – Education Transformation and Business Change spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.</p> <p>The Director of Education responded to questions raised:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The latest position regarding Estyn regulatory activity was that local authority inspections would continue but school based inspection activity would not start until after February half term. • With regard to local authority comparisons, due to the relaxation of performance measures they were unable to benchmark at this point in time and were not looking to currently provide performance information that would consider either family of schools or family of local authorities as that data was not readily available. • Currently absenteeism was approaching 6.5% of the workforce within schools but only a few Headteachers had been affected by Covid. • With regard to car parking at school sites, the Service Manager said there was a traffic management working group in place to look at key issues at individual school sites and schools were prioritised on the basis of risk and safety and were on a rota for the traffic enforcement process. They worked closely with individual schools and Highways to look at traffic management plans and mitigation measures for each of those schools. <p>A Member referred to page 74 - School Accountability Services and commented that EAS Challenge Advisors in schools had now been replaced with School Improvement Partners. The Service Manager would ensure this was updated on future reports.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1; namely that the report, associated documentation and proposed course of action be accepted.</p>	<p>Service Manager Education Transformation and Business Change</p>
<p>No. 9</p>	<p><u>YOUTH SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2020 – 2021</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager, Young People and Partnerships which was</p>	

presented to provide Members with the opportunity to scrutinise the work of the Youth Service.

The Corporate Director of Education spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.

A Member referred to paragraph 2.3 and enquired regarding progress on youth club developments in Brynmawr. The Director said restructuring was being undertaken with the Detached Youth Work team to ensure the right people were appointed with the right skill sets. The intention was to take the services to community settings that young people were more comfortable with and work with them on street corners etc., this would increase the reach of the service and would impact areas without youth clubs such as Brynmawr.

A Member commented that Youth Services provided a fantastic service that worked well and was needed in all towns throughout the borough. She felt that young people only wanted a safe place with shelter to gather and outreach workers did an excellent job interacting with young people on their level.

A Member raised concerns regarding the risk to future funding for the Youth Services. The Director of Education said work was currently being undertaken on securing future Shared Prosperity Funding. The Member commented that the Youth Services team were doing an excellent job and needed to be supported to secure future funding for the service, as it was important to do more for young people throughout the borough.

A Member referred to paragraph 6.1.1 youth homelessness. The Director of Education said the number of cases of young people dependent upon friends and family to facilitate accommodation had increased due to the pandemic, but was not identified as actual homelessness. It had become an increasing problem across the borough and they were monitoring the situation closely as it did impact upon life chances for young people. With regard to priority housing for them, the Director said that the Service Manager Young People & Partnerships did often refer young people to Housing colleagues.

<p>The Chair commented on the excellent work that had been undertaken by the Service Manager, Young People and Partnerships and her team regarding period poverty. The Director also acknowledged the work of the Service Manager, Education Transformation and Business Change who was leading on this strand of work outside of community settings and the work that was taking place directly within schools.</p> <p>With regard to school holiday activities, the Service Manager, Education Transformation and Business Change reminded Members of the School Holiday Enrichment programme (SHEP) initiative and said they worked closely with the Community Services Directorate and schools to identify settings that meet the criteria and have suitable staff resources and facilities to accommodate the provision for school holiday activities.</p> <p>A Member requested a breakdown of partners that the Authority worked with regarding Summer holiday activities. The Director of Education agreed to provide the information and informed Members that the Detached Youth Work team was partially funded by Gwent Police.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1; namely that Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee considered and accepted the report.</p>	<p>Director of Education</p>
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Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Action Sheet

Special Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee – 26th January 2022

Item	Action to be Taken	By Whom	Action Taken
9	<u>Youth Service Performance Report 2020-2021</u> Information to be provided in relation to those partners that worked with the Youth Service to provide after school and holiday activities.	Joanne Sims	See attached information.

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Activities and projects commissioned by the Youth Service

Provider	Activity/service provided
A1 Jump and Bounce	Provided inflatables and staff as part of summer fun days in Outreach locations throughout school holidays
Eden Centre	Provided STEM workshops focusing on LEGO robotics. Workshops provided through the summer
Lush	Provided Bath bomb making workshops as part of summer and after school clubs (youth clubs)
Beat-technique	Provided a range of taster DJ sessions and lyric and music workshops throughout school holidays and after school clubs
Sgilliau	Commissioned to provide a twice weekly art & cultural after school project within Brynmawr
Cardiff City Foundation	Provide weekly accessible football sessions for 11-19 year olds at 3 venues across Blaenau Gwent (Abertillery, Ebbw Vale & Tredegar)
Aneurin Leisure Trust	Commissioned to facilitate after school sport sessions within identified areas
Aneurin Leisure Trust	Commissioned to provide Sports Leaders Award to young people as part of an after school initiative
Head4Arts	Provided a range of weekly creative art after school projects and school holiday workshops which included jewellery making, graffiti boards and more
Community Music Wales	Commissioned to provide school holiday workshops focusing on learning to play instruments and developing rock band
Fluidity	Provided a range of outreach Free-running and Parkour workshops as part of the school holiday fun days
Cooking Together	Provided a series of after school and school holiday workshops for young people to learn how to cook and prepare meals on a budget
Egg Seeds	Provided in school and after school workshops for young people to design and create their own Christmas decorations
Empire Fighting Chance	Provide both weekly after school activities and school holiday group sessions focusing on health and wellbeing utilising non-contact boxing
Street Doctors	Provided after school sessions with the aim of raising awareness and educating young people on essential First Aid techniques
Caerphilly Adventure Group	Commissioned to provide a series of school holiday outdoor adventurous activities

Aneurin Leisure Trust	Commissioned to provide a series of after school and school holiday outdoor adventurous activities
Brynmawr public hall Cinema	Commissioned to provide inclusive free cinema screenings for young people as part of school holiday activity programme
Street Food Cinema	Commissioned to provide a open air cinema and street food experience through the summer as part of the school holiday programme.
Lloyd the Graffiti	Provided a series of graffiti workshops as part of the school holiday activity programme
Boyd and Girls Clubs of Wales	Provide a youth worker to support wellbeing activities in youth clubs and link to wellbeing residential weekends in a residential centre.

The above list is in addition to activities and workshops provided by the Youth service and does not include trips and activities/services provided by partners who are not commissioned.

List of agencies/organisations that commission the Youth Service to provide bespoke activities/services

Commissioning organisation	Activity/service commissioned
Abertillery & Llanhilleth Community Town Council	Provide detached youth work within Abertillery.
Education - Inclusion	Provide an alternative Education programme for a group of identified young people from year 8 who are at risk of Permanent exclusion
Blaina & Brynmawr Rotary Club	Provide a youth club provision within the Brynmawr and Blaina areas.

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE EDUCATION & LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: EDUCATION & LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 1ST FEBRUARY, 2022

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR J. HOLT (IN THE CHAIR)

Councillors: D. Bevan
 M. Cook
 M. Day
 L. Elias
 S. Healy
 J. Hill
 C. Meredith
 J.C. Morgan
 J.P. Morgan
 T. Smith
 B. Summers

AND: Strategic Education Improvement Manager
 Service Manager Education Transformation & Business Change
 Service Manager Young People & Partnerships
 Press & Publicity Officer
 Scrutiny & Democratic Officer / Advisor

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
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>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors H. Trollope (Chair), G. Collier and D. Wilkshire.</p>	

	<p><u>Co-opted Member</u> T. Baxter</p> <p>Corporate Director of Education</p>	
<p>No. 3</p>	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.</p>	
	<p><u>COVID UPDATE POSITION IN EDUCATION AND ACROSS THE SCHOOL ESTATE</u></p> <p>At the invitation of the Chair the Service Manager Education Transformation & Business Change gave a brief verbal Covid update position in relation to Education and the school estate.</p> <p>The Service Manager advised Members that the number of cases across the school estate within the last five days was 183, the total within the last 28 days was 697 cases.</p> <p>There was still a high proportion of cases throughout the school estate, and over the last two weeks 3 nurseries and 1 special needs class had been affected, however, there were no class closures at present. There were 54 staff cases across schools, of the 45 confirmed cases 7 were working from home and 1 self-isolating due to TTP advice. The overall absence across schools was 103 which included long and short term sickness absence and Covid absence, broken down this was 64 school based staff (excluding teachers) and 39 teachers. Currently there were no classes or schools that had moved to blended learning, however, that was a temperamental and changing situation.</p> <p>In response to a Member’s question regarding staff returning to work after isolation, the Service Manager confirmed that staff were returning as soon as they were clear and the reduction in the self-isolating timeframe had assisted with that. Supply cover had also been affected and they had worked with the Welsh Government and the EAS to look at supporting schools on a national level as well as localised support to gain supply cover as and when required.</p>	

	<p>A Member commented that pupils were preparing for examinations this year and enquired out of the number of staff that were on sick leave how many were not involved with revision classes. The Service Manager said she did not have that information to hand as currently they were collecting information on a local authority basis and working with individual schools where there was pressure. Currently all of the classes were able to be delivered as programmed but she would gather a more detailed breakdown on a school by school basis particularly with regards to secondary provisions and feedback to Members.</p> <p>A Member commented that the last two years had been challenging for schools and requested that the Service Manager forward a letter of appreciation to all Headteachers and staff, on behalf of the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee, thanking them for doing an excellent job and working tirelessly during the pandemic to deliver education in Blaenau Gwent. The Service Manager said it had been a huge undertaking by staff and would draft correspondence on behalf of the scrutiny committee reinforcing the positive messages that had already been made around retaining provision during extremely challenging times throughout the last two academic sessions.</p> <p>All Members endorsed these comments and added that over the last two years the Education Directorate had done an excellent job in supporting schools through this challenging period.</p>	<p>Service Manager Education Transformation and Business Change</p> <p>Service Manager Education Transformation and Business Change</p>
<p>No. 4</p>	<p><u>21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS BAND B PROGRESS</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Education and Service Manager – Education Transformation and Business Change which was presented to provide Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee with an overview of the 21st Century Schools Programme, along with the opportunity to scrutinise progress in line with the delivery of the Band B Programme.</p> <p>The Service Manager – Education Transformation and Business Change spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.</p>	

In relation to the development of the new 360 primary school to replace Glyncoed primary, a Member thanked all Departments on the creation of a pick-up and drop-off area off Allotment Road which would alleviate traffic congestion and improve access to the site.

A Member enquired regarding the car park extension at Six Bells school site. The Service Manager – Education Transformation and Business Change explained that a sustainable drainage application had been submitted retrospectively as legislation came into force after construction of the school had been initiated. An Ecology Management Plan was required and they were working with the Ecology team towards construction on site in line with the extension in the summer period.

A Member commented that £10m for remodelling and improving secondary schools would not go far and enquired regarding the rationale for the timescales moving forward with this work. The Service Manager explained they were looking at long term investment in secondary school remodelling, future bandings in the 21st century schools programme would look to incorporate remodelling. It was a long term vision for the Local Authority who would look to allocate funds on the basis of the needs of each school. The timeline had been constructed as some schools needed more in depth consideration of the options around remodelling projects. An outline budget had been allocated to each secondary school on the basis of condition, suitability and need, they then work with the school to produce a project brief which feeds into the business case development and the associated timelines.

The Service Manager added that they take a holistic approach with regard to minor works maintenance and planned works programme and the Welsh Government capital maintenance funding which had been allocated to support schools. They look to address the condition and suitability issues to the greatest degree possible by looking at some of the fundamental works associated with maintenance of school buildings which would then impact upon the transformational changes brought about by the 21st century schools programme.

The Member reiterated that £10m for remodelling secondary schools would not go far especially with the amount of work that was needed to improve schools built in the 1970's. Glanhwy school would be the oldest school in Blaenau Gwent after completion of the Band B programme and the Member enquired what Band Glanhwy would fall into. The Service Manager stated that the banding for Glanhwy school was not yet known but she would look to bring this forward via the prioritisation programme that was being discussed for Band C going forward.

Councillor R. Summers left the meeting at this juncture.

A Member referred to Rhos-y-Fedwen primary school and enquired regarding work being undertaken aimed at foundation phase. The Service Manager clarified the work was aligned to a larger scheme being undertaken to the external play area and was particularly relevant to foundation phase and had now been completed. She confirmed this work did fall outside of the programme as the programmed works focused on internal remodelling to improve the suitability of the teaching and learning environment and condition of the school.

With regard to the new Welsh medium school, a Member raised concerns regarding pupil numbers for the school. The Service Manager said that after a detailed consultation exercise had been undertaken and which was then followed by the Welsh Government school organisation code and associated statutory processes the school had been approved. She advised that pupil numbers at Bro Helyg primary were increasing and over the next few years could exceed capacity. There was a requirement upon the Local Authority to increase Welsh medium education provision with a commitment to achieving the vision of one million Welsh speakers. The school was being developed as a seedling growth model to allow a period of time for the school to grow and they would look at modelling the pupil population accordingly. The impact upon schools had been captured throughout the consultation and post consultation period and was also covered within the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

Councillor M. Day left the meeting at this juncture.

	<p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1; namely that the report be accepted.</p>	
<p>No. 5</p>	<p><u>BLAENAU GWENT EDUCATION/SCHOOLS ICT STRATEGY AND PROJECT UPDATE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Education and Service Manager – Education Transformation and Business Change which was presented to provide Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee with the opportunity to scrutinise progress in relation to Blaenau Gwent Education/Schools ICT Strategy, along with associated projects.</p> <p>The Service Manager Education Transformation & Business Change spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.</p> <p>In response to a Member’s question regarding the Authority’s responsible officer for ICT, the Service Manager advised that the Chief Officer Commercial & Customer had overall responsibility for the Transformation team who dealt with corporate ICT. Education colleagues worked closely with SRS around education ICT ensuring alignment between corporate and education aspects.</p> <p>A Member commented that this was a digital age and ICT was at the centre of learning and enquired regarding Welsh Government initiatives to ensure that every child was equipped for the future. The Service Manager said that the Hwb Ed Tech programme focused on provision of devices for schools during the pandemic and extensive funding had been available to support digitally disadvantage learners to ensure that if there was a move to blended learning, no learners would be disadvantaged. Welsh Government were keen for local authorities and schools to take over that project moving forward. They were currently building in the monitoring and management of digitally disadvantaged learners, in line with the Welsh Government digital learner journey into the ICT Strategy.</p> <p>The Service Manager Young People & Partnerships joined the meeting at this juncture.</p>	

	<p>A Member enquired if the IT equipment that had been distributed during the pandemic for blended learning was going to be recalled. The Service Manager said that they were working with schools to revisit devices to look at whether or not they were suitable for continued use and look to undertake any necessary adaptations. Devices would only be brought back in to school for technical monitoring or in order to replenish licenses. If it was identified that a family still needed their device, then the school and the Local Authority would continue to support that.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1; namely that the report be accepted.</p>	
<p>No. 6</p>	<p><u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 15TH MARCH 2022</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chair of the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee which presented the Forward Work Programme for the meeting scheduled to be held on the 15th March 2022.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and endorse Option 2; namely that the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme for the meeting scheduled to be held on 15th March 2022 be approved.</p>	

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Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Action Sheet

Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee – 1st February 2022

Item	Action to be Taken	By Whom	Action Taken
	<p><u>COVID Update Position in Education and across the School Estate</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A Member requested information in relation to the number of staff absences for those staff that were involved with revision / examinations.• A Member expressed his thanks for the hard work undertaken by school staff over the last two years and requested that the officer pass on the thanks of the Scrutiny Committee to all schools.	<p>Claire Gardner</p> <p>Claire Gardner / Democratic Services</p>	<p>No issues were reported by schools in relation to staff absences affecting revision classes and/or examinations.</p> <p>Letter drafted for distribution by 9.3.22</p>

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Agenda Item 8

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer:

Committee: **Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee**
Date of meeting: **15th March 2022**
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								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
		02.03.22			15.03.22			

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Members of the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee with an opportunity to review the Education Directorate's response to the COVID-19 situation, particularly supporting the schools during the emergency response period.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 Members will be aware that the Corporate Director of Education provides a verbal update to Scrutiny Committee regarding the response to the COVID-19 emergency. 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 report predominantly reflects on the activity covering Spring term.

2.2 School Position – February 2022

The Council's corporate response during 2021-22 has focussed on our learners returning to whole school settings. The Blaenau Gwent Whole School Re-opening Guidance document outlined the local approach and is a key source of reference for implementation in schools. It provides 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 has continued 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 were most pertinent to the whole school learning is provided below:

- Blaenau Gwent adopted a strategic approach to whole school re-opening for consistency purposes;
- Executive Headteacher School Planning Groups for secondary, primary and special schools are established;
- Re-opening from 1st September 2021 involved a common approach across the school estate; and,
- The BG approach is in line with WG's national School Infection Control Framework, which places an emphasis on localised

determination of response to COVID, particularly linked to COVID Secure Risk Assessments on a school by school basis.

2.3 School Provision – Spring Term 2022

At the time of drafting the report, the overall Blaenau Gwent incidence rate is 300.6 per 100,000 population and the positivity rate is 27.0. This is an improving picture across the County Borough during recent weeks. The latest BG schools case data is outlined below in Table 1. The number of reported cases amongst school children has now decreased significantly.

2.4 Table 1

Weekly Totals: Last 12 Weeks (Week beginning)

Week Commencing	Case Count	Weekly Change	% Change
21-Nov	52		
28-Nov	60	8	15%
05-Dec	61	1	2%
12-Dec	48	-13	-21%
19-Dec	49	1	2%
26-Dec	127	78	159%
02-Jan	144	17	13%
09-Jan	107	-37	-26%
16-Jan	288	181	169%
23-Jan	198	-90	-31%
30-Jan	135	-63	-32%
06-Feb	59	-76	-56%
Grand Total	1328		

2.5 The workforce considerations across Blaenau Gwent schools continues to be monitored and is reported separately at GOLD. The position is an improving one, however, there are real challenges in the Education sector relating to securing appropriate supply teaching staff in particular. The latest position is that 35 staff are affected, including:

- 30 confirmed COVID cases, of which 9 are working from home;
- 1 self-isolating due to new symptoms;
- 2 self-isolating following positive LFT, 1 of which is working from home;
- 1 self-isolating prior to hospital admission; and,
- 1 self-isolating following symptoms in the household.

2.6 Education has assembled a Task and Finish Group on which they lead, comprised of officers from Health and Safety, Environmental Health and Test Trace and Protect (as required). The Group is convened in response to the following:

- A rise in cases in a particular class or school grouping;
- Human resource depletion and associated considerations; and,

- Risk tolerance and mitigation reviews.

The T&F Group has supported all schools in managing the increased risks to school operation associated with, and/or compounded by the pandemic. Thus far this Spring term (over the course of a 7-week period), 10 classes have moved to blended learning across 6 school settings, as follows:

- One Special School - 5 classes linked to positive cases negatively impacting upon staff resourcing
- Four Primary Schools - 3 Nursery classes, 1 Reception class, 1 Year 1 class and 1 Foundation Phase Resource Base class, linked to positive cases negatively impacting upon staff resourcing
- One Secondary School – 1 Year 9 class linked to positive cases negatively impacting upon staff resourcing

Blended learning has been offered between 1 and 8 days, with the majority of the above cases lasting between 1-4 days. During periods where classes have moved to blended learning, schools have sought to prioritise on site provision for critical worker children and vulnerable learners - where resources are available. This is an extremely positive picture in comparison to the situation in the autumn-term, whereby the move to blended learning were a weekly occurrence with approximately 4 classes on average per week accessing blended learning.

The Council has continued to work closely with our Headteachers to adopt a common approach to provision for learners across Blaenau Gwent and schools report back positively regarding the corporate response across the Council.

2.7 Recovery and Renewal – Priorities

- 2.7.1 The Education Directorate core purpose is to secure ‘Better Schools, Better Citizens and Better Communities’ through a child centred approach. It needs to be acknowledged, however, that the impact of approaching 24 months’ disruption to teaching and learning is far reaching. Recovery is planned in the short, medium and long term for learner development and progression. The Council has established a corporate recovery framework (**Appendix 1**) and a key strand of this work will be a learning sub-group that will be led by the Head of School Improvement and Inclusion and Service Manager for Education Transformation and Business Change, with regular reporting into Corporate Leadership Team. Moreover, the Education Directorate’s top priority in the EAS business plan is to;

Minimise the impact of COVID-19 on learner development and progress, including improving the digital competency of all learners and staff in the wider Blaenau Gwent school community.

- 2.7.2 The Education Directorate are using the learning from the pandemic and the aim is to ‘build back better’. Through schools having to adapt to new ways of working, a number of positive outcomes have been evidenced. The Directorate will work with relevant stakeholders, including schools and the EAS, to use these outcomes to shape new ways of working across the

Education Directorate and throughout the school estate. The core purpose of all schools in Blaenau Gwent will be to provide excellent learning and teaching for all our learners, but this will not mean a return to doing things as they were pre-pandemic, but to using the experience of the pandemic to shape education provision as we move forward. The Recovery and Renewal report was presented to Members early in 2022, but the latest update is as follows;

- Impact assessments completed.
- Key measures to indicate progress identified.
- Baseline and data collection on key measures from September 2021 in place.
- Recovery and Renewal targets set from September 2021 baseline.
- Curriculum Reform, ALN Reform and Recovery and Renewal groups set up from September 2021 and now working effectively to ensure a strategic approach to the delivery of the Recovery and Renewal Plan.
- Detailed action plan for each impact area shared with relevant stakeholders.
- A series Headteacher working groups has been set up with 14 schools participating that started in January 2022. Recovery and renewal, self-evaluation and the theme of 'building back better' are key components of the work of these collaborative groups. The Terms of Reference (ToR) for the working groups are shown in **Appendix 2** and the progress documents in **Appendix 3**.

2.7.3 The Estyn Thematic Review report previously presented to the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee provided a positive overview of the Council's response in supporting our schools during the pandemic. Moreover, a full School Operational Guidance review served schools well, along with additional training packages and information sessions for school leaders.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 This report has been previously discussed by Education DMT, CLT and the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee.

Option 1: Scrutiny Committee accept the report as presented.

Option 2: Scrutiny Committee are requested to consider the information detailed within the report and contribute to the continuous assessment of effectiveness by making appropriate recommendations to the Committee.

This report provides the Scrutiny 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 (short and long term impact)**

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 Q3 revenue budget monitoring position demonstrates a favourable variance circa £177,000, mostly attributable to the Strategic Management and Premature Retirement Costs (PRC) revenue budgets. There are, however, some cost pressures that are being managed through school support services, such as cleaning, but there is WG Hardship funding available until March 2022 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 is a stabilisation of cases amongst the workforce, importantly 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 largely effective, especially in the following aspects of work:

- Re-purposing of schools – supporting children of key workers and vulnerable learners;
- Re-opening schools – from the June 2020;
- Preparing for academic year 2021/22, particularly whole school re-opening from September 2021, in line with WG expectations; and,
- Spring term 2022 arrangements, particularly retaining face to face learning, where possible.

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 (consultation, engagement, participation)**

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 (forward planning)**

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 (across service areas)**

The emergency response has been a 'One Council' approach.

6.8 **Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions**

N/A

6.9a **Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment**

The existing impact assessment and action plan was created prior to the socio-economic duty commencing. However, an assessment will be carried out in relation to each priority area during the spring-term review process

6.9b. **Equality Impact Assessment**

The application of EqIA's to each priority has been considered as part of the Education impact assessment process. EqIA's will be undertaken in line with development and implementation of the recovery and renewal plan.

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



Appendix 2
Response and recov

- Appendix 2



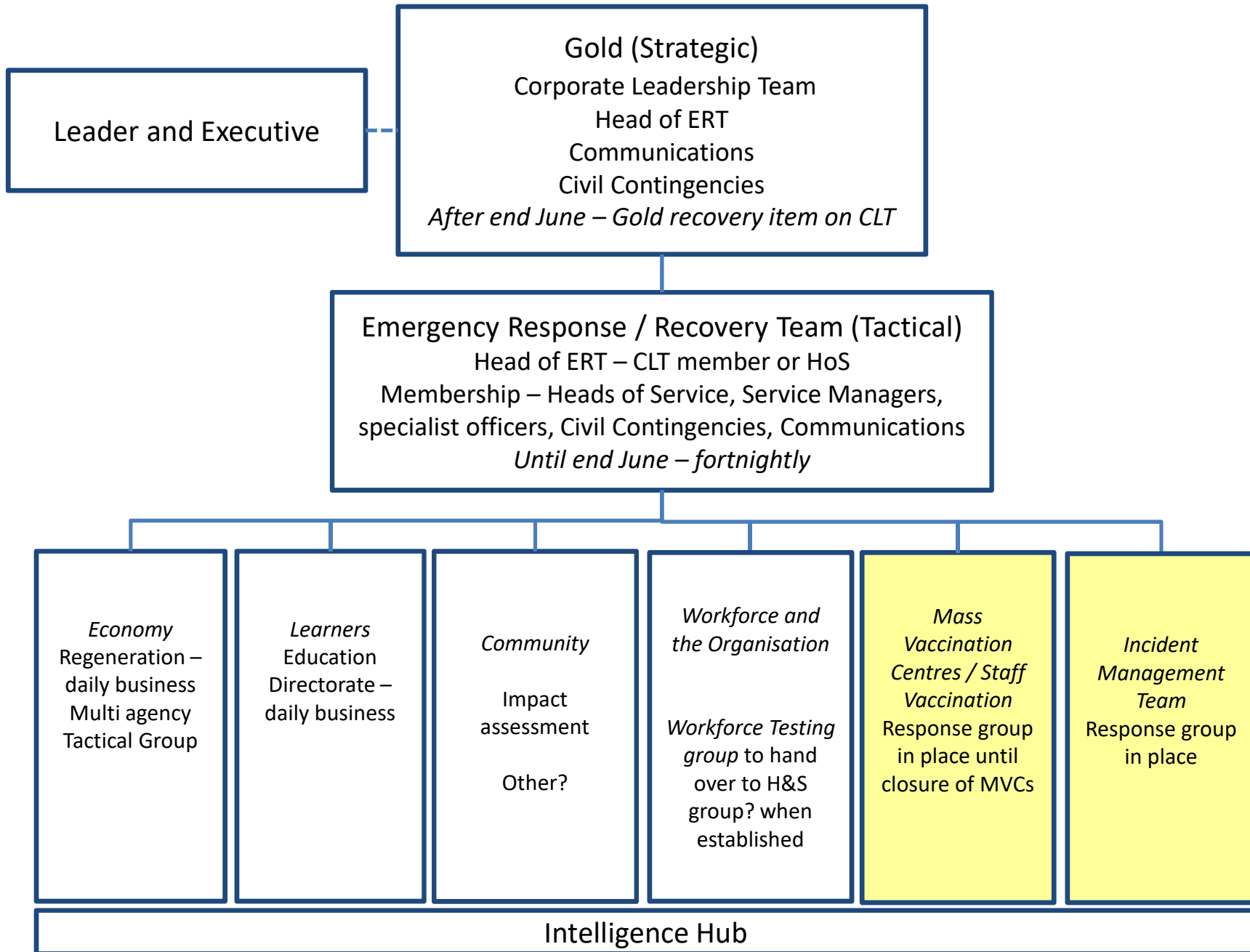
HWG Terms of
Reference.docx

- Appendix 3



Workstream Action
Plan Version 1 (Febru

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Headteacher Working Group (HWG) Terms of Reference

Overview and Purpose

The working group will provide specialist skills and knowledge in a consultative capacity, whilst also actively contributing to planning and development of the following Education workstreams:

- **ALN Reform** - how this looks in Blaenau Gwent, including provision and financial support
- **Curriculum Reform** - in particular, developing approaches to assessment and supporting each other with ideas for a curriculum that meets the needs of our learners
- **Recovery and Renewal** – with a focus on the renewal i.e. how can we push the boundaries to build back better

The Headteacher Working Group will also inform decision making and monitoring processes aligned to the above.

Headteacher Working Group Aims

The aims of the HWG are as follows:

- To ensure that effective strategic planning and change management processes are in place in line with the above workstreams
- To develop a detailed action plan with a focus on the workstreams detailed above, for implementation throughout the school estate
- To consider and identify resource, training and workforce development implications and requirements
- To ensure that the views of primary schools, secondary schools, all-through schools, special schools, associated staff and clusters are well represented
- To inform relevant national, regional and local strategic planning processes in line with the 3 key workstreams

Chair and Secretariat

The role of Chair will be provided by the Local Authority, and the Secretariat for the group will be provided by Business Support.

Membership

Core group members will include:





- Selected Blaenau Gwent School Leaders (7 representatives) covering: primary, secondary, all-through and special sectors
- Local Authority Education Services, in particular: Improvement, Inclusion and Transformation
- Finance

Other relevant partners as required in line with workstream development.

Meetings and Term

Meetings will be held on a fortnightly basis and diarised for 2 hours. Agenda's, minutes and other documentation will be circulated **at least** 2 days prior to the meeting taking place. Thematic and/or specific working groups may be established as required. The HWG will operate for **at least** 2 terms (commencing in the Spring-term 2022), subject to review.

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Workstream	Actions	Timelines	Documents	Review/Progress Update
Curriculum Reform	SNAP survey consultation with schools re: implementation, experience and findings to date	February/March 2022	-	
	Resources and training availability assessment	February/March 2022	-	
	Key practitioner review	February/March 2022	-	
ALN Reform	Assess progress in line with the Principles and Practice document	February/March 2022	 Principles and Practice Document 1	
	Phase 1 review	February 2022		
	Phase 2 roll-out overview and implementation plan	February/March 2022	-	
Recovery and Renewal	Assessing the baseline data requirements for the following priority areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner and staff Wellbeing • Vulnerable Learners • Academic Progress • School Operations 	February 2022 (7.2.22)	 Education Recovery Plan One Page Over  Education Recovery and Renewal Action	
	Schools COVID impact assessment – gaps and issues	March 2022	 Education Corporate Impact As	
	Review priority areas	Monthly		

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**Principles and Expectations of School's and PRUs ALN Education Provision for
Pupils with ALN and Disabilities**
Nov 2020

Aims and Purpose of this Document

This document summarises the Local Authority's expectations of the support arrangements in mainstream educational settings for children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN)

The information contained in this document, produced in consultation with primary and secondary settings, sets out how schools and PRUs are expected to use delegated budgets to ensure that the needs of pupils with ALN are met.

Consultation with the LA Parent Forum has also taken place.

The purpose of this document is to create a shared understanding between schools, PRUs families and the local authority in respect of:

- improving progress and securing better outcomes for learners with ALN
- clarifying what parents can expect schools to provide
- a reference point for ensuring that requests for an LA to provide additional learning provision (ALP) are appropriate
-

Therefore, the LA can base its decision making on the evidence that schools and PRUs have made good efforts to apply the principles and person-centred processes above before reaching the decision to refer to the LA.

Key Aims and Principles of the Code

Aim

To support the creation of a fully inclusive education system where all learners are given the opportunity to succeed and have access to an education that meets their needs and enables them to participate in, benefit from, and enjoy learning

Principles

- a) **A rights-based approach** where the views, wishes and feelings of the child, child's parents/carers or young person are central to planning and provision of support.
- b) **Early identification, intervention and effective transition planning**
- c) **Collaboration** where all involved work together in the best interests of the child or young person
- d) **Inclusive education** supporting participation fully in mainstream education, wherever, feasible and a whole setting approach to meeting the needs of learners with ALN.
- e) **A bilingual system** where all reasonable steps are taken to deliver ALP in Welsh.

The LA has a duty to review the arrangements made by the authority and the governing bodies of maintained schools in its area for children and young people with additional learning needs, having regard to the additional learning provision that may reasonably be arranged by others. (Chapter 5 of the Code)

Principles for all professionals working with children and young people who have ALN

Alongside the expectations of all teachers identified within the Welsh Government professional standards for teachers, the following principles will be observed by all professionals working with children and young people who have ALN as stated in the Code.

“Maintained schools in Wales have a key role to play in identifying ALN and in delivering ALP to support learners with ALN. They are directly responsible for identifying and meeting the needs of the majority of their pupils who have ALN.”

ALN Mandatory Code (draft 2018)

The head teacher and school leaders

It is the role of the head teacher to:

- Advise the governors on policies to meet their statutory responsibilities under the ALN ET Act
- Work to agree the ALN Transformation policy and to implement the agreed vision and policy.
- Oversee all aspects of operational leadership and management.
- Ensure that the ALNCo has enough time and resources to carry out their duties. The Code recommends that ALNCoS are most effective when they are a member of the senior leadership team or have a direct line of communication to the senior leadership team.

The role of the ALNCo:

- Ensuring all practitioners understand their responsibilities to children with ALN and understand the school's approach to identifying and meeting the needs of all pupils
- Ensuring there is an overview of all children who have ALN including their relevant stage of support
- Ensuring the close and continuing involvement of parents, and that their views inform action taken by the setting
- Liaising and make referrals to specialist professionals

The ALNCo should:

- Play an important role in the strategic development of ALN policy and provision in the school advising the leadership team of what is necessary regarding staff and resources.
- Have day-to-day responsibility for the operation of the ALN policy and coordination of specific provision made to support individual pupils with ALN, including those who have IDPs
- Be allocated enough time and resources to carry out these functions
- Have access to appropriate levels of administrative support and time away from teaching to enable the fulfilment of responsibilities
- Support staff with guidance and direct assistance in the identification and assessment of pupils with ALN
- Provide advice and guidance on suitable interventions and strategies
- Be involved in transition planning between schools and college
- Consider the views of children, young people and their families; ensuring that they are involved in discussions and decisions about their individual support
- Enable children, young people and their parents to participate in decision-making
- Collaborate with partners in education, health and social care to provide support
- Making high quality provision to meet the needs of children and young people

- Focus on inclusive practices and removing barriers to learning
- Provide ALN support that should be evidence based, informed by effective practice and personalised to the students.
- Endeavour to deliver ALP in Welsh if requested to do so.

In all schools teachers are:

- Responsible and accountable for the progress and development of all pupils in their class, including where support staff are involved
- Appropriately qualified and experienced
- Supported to gain skills and knowledge in areas that will improve their teaching and their support of child or young person with ALN
- Able to access support and guidance from the ALNCo in school
- Supported to access advice and training where needed
- Responsible for differentiating the curriculum to accommodate the needs of all pupils and students in the class
- Equipped with the skills to implement the assess, plan, do and review cycle effectively.
- Are aware of the needs of the pupil or student as necessary
- Have access and are familiar with planning documents, IDPs and pupil profiles.
- Clear about what is expected of them in relation to named pupils/students and groups of pupils/students
- Plan to implement a child or young person's individual targets into their teaching where the child or young person is in their teaching group.
- Demonstrate person-centred practice-person-centred practice puts the child, child's parent or young person at the centre of decisions.

Responsibilities of the governing body/management board:

- Have legal duties under the ALN ET ACT 2018; Equality Act 2010, and the ALN Code in relation to pupils with additional learning needs and disabilities
- Be clear about the arrangements for the admission of pupils with disabilities, the steps taken to prevent them being treated less favourably than others, the facilities provided to assist access, and their accessibility plans should be addressed through the school Strategic Equality Plan.
- There should be in place a Governor with specific oversight for the school's arrangements for ALN.
- Use their best endeavours and provide reasonable adjustments to make sure that a child with ALN or a disability gets the support they need – this means doing everything they can to remove barriers to learning. Through reviewing IDPs, they should consider what reasonable adjustments have been made to ensure fair and equal access to the curriculum. This may include staffing, timetable changes, adjustments to the physical environment, whilst also acknowledging that what matters most – and has the biggest impact – high quality teaching. (see Appendix 2)
- Work in partnership with the head teacher and school leaders to ensure the curriculum offered meets the needs of all learners and that there is a teaching and learning policy that is understood by all staff. It should reflect equalities legislation, accessibility requirements, and ALN Transformation.
- Ensure that children and young people with ALN and/or disabilities engage in the activities of the school alongside all pupils
- Ensure information is provided to parents when ALP for a pupil is made and that the provision made, is accurately recorded and kept up to date.
- Ensure that arrangements are in place in schools to support pupils at school with medical conditions, including Individual Health Care plans.
- Have a clear approach to identifying and responding to pupils with ALN and determine their approach to using their resources to support the progress of pupils with ALN.

- Ensure that a member of staff is designated as the ALNCo and that the ALNCo's key responsibilities are outlined and monitor how effectively they are carried out
- Ensure that the school's budgetary priorities reflect the needs of children with ALN, and they should assist staff in evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of ALN resourcing decisions within the school.

Teaching assistants:

Accordingly to recent research there is most impact on teaching and learning when teaching assistants clearly understood their role and knew exactly what they needed to do in order to help pupils make progress. Key to this is effective communication between teachers and TAs.

Adults support learning in the classroom by:

- Reducing children's anxieties, helping them to feel safe and secure in their classroom/school
- Being familiar with how the learner gains knowledge and by understanding the learners individualised targets
- Engaging and motivating learners to learn
- Assisting with pre-teaching, including on subject vocabulary, new concepts, early experience of practical activities
- Facilitating engagement and learning of learner in whole or small group learning activities
- Teaching daily programme of skills / concepts in fixed timetable periods, and monitored by teacher
- Classroom presence to refocus, encourage, explain, facilitate responses
- Supporting targeted subject areas, being prepared for what is to be taught and understanding the learning needs of the pupil/student
- Making sure transactional supports are consistently available e.g. Schedules, and within task check lists) this will help to increase independence and avoid over-reliance on adult support
- Monitoring the impact of any support provided.

Staff should be trained in the needs of the learner and understand how to:

- Communicate instructions
- Communicate new knowledge and concepts
- Provide opportunities for skills reinforcement and practice
- Recognise when a child is using behaviour to communicate
- Deliver specific programmes / interventions.

Parents and carers:

The ALN Code recognises that effective engagement with parents and carers has a clear impact on children reaching their potential.

Embedding parental involvement is based on extensive but often ignored evidence that greater parental involvement has a dramatic impact on progression, attainment and wider outcomes as well as improved attendance and behaviour. This is especially relevant for children and young people with ALN who are already vulnerable learners.

The ALNCo and key pastoral staff should act as a communications bridge between their school, colleagues and parents and carers. Providing accurate and updated information from parents is an absolute pre-requisite. This is most effective in the context of a mutually trusting relationship between school and home.

To create the best partnerships there needs to be:

- A commitment to joint working and building the relationship between school staff and parents
- Opportunities for parents to communicate with the key staff on a regular basis- open channels of communication, whether that is face-to-face, phone or email

Provision Mapping

Support for children and young people with ALN begins with a range of provision that is available to all children and young people and becomes increasingly specific and personalised as the needs of the child/young person are identified as being long term, complex and exceptional. All schools, early years' settings and colleges are expected to admit and provide appropriate support to children and young people with ALN.

Each school/LA provision map is divided into 3 levels of provision:

- **Universal**
- **Targeted**
- **Specific**

It is expected that in almost all cases, earlier levels of provision will have been effectively implemented and evaluated before higher levels of the graduated approach are considered.

Expectations of School's and PRUs ALN Education Provision for Pupils with ALN and Disabilities

1. Identifying the particular ALN of children and young people

Schools will:

- Monitor the progress of all pupils through whole school data scrutiny processes
- Regularly review the ALN register and other processes used for identifying and supporting ALN pupils.
- Have clear processes for staff and parents/carers to raise concerns
- Provide teachers and TAs with comprehensive guidance around the identification processes
- Pay regard to advice and information from parents/carers, professionals and previous settings at transition points; liaising as necessary to continue the use of successful strategies and person-centred approaches
- Be able to distinguish between pupils who may need some targeted support through high quality teaching and pupils with an identified ALN that requires ALP
- Identify barriers to learning and know how to, or seek advice, so that the nature of each pupil's ALN can be identified and work to remove that barrier. Sometimes a pupil can have needs in more than one area which requires an individualised approach
- Have access to a range of appropriate screening and assessments in order to identify needs
- Maintain robust records so that evidence describing a pupil's needs can be gathered through the assess, plan, do, review cycle
- Consult with parents / carers when they are making additional learning needs provision for their child and have processes in place for them to provide feedback about provision
- When appropriate, seek advice from advisory services and outside agencies including the Educational Psychology Service, CAMHS, Speech and Language Service, Local Authority support services etc. in order to gain a better understanding of a pupil's needs

2. Consulting with parents

Parents know their child best and it is important that all professionals listen and understand when parents express concerns about them. They should also listen to and

address any concerns raised by children and young people themselves.

Schools will:

- Have in place a transparent complaints procedure
- Have in place a robust annual review process that is underpinned by person centred planning through which aspirational outcomes are identified and appropriate provision is secured.
- Sign-post parents to services that provide independent advice and support for ALN and disability, for example SNAP CYMRU; NYAS
- Provide or sign-post pupils and their parents/carers to sources of advice and information about matters relating to ALN and disability, for example, the LA web-site
- Be aware that a families and schools have the right to request an IDP. Families should feel able to tell their school if they believe their son/daughter has or may have ALN
- Inform parents when they are making additional learning needs provision for their child and have processes in place for engagement with pupils and their families to provide feedback on provision so that future provision is founded on the insights of families and pupils themselves
- Ensure parents/carers are fully aware of planned support and interventions and, where appropriate, plan to seek the involvement of parents/carers to reinforce and contribute to progress at home
- Ensure a clear date for reviewing progress is agreed and the parent/carer, pupil and teaching staff are clear about how they will help the pupil reach the expected targets or outcomes
- Ensure that pupils with ALN are included in 'whole school' mechanisms to capture pupil voice
- Develop parent consultation with the purposes of enabling families to play a role in developing and reviewing ALN provision. For example, feedback on annual review processes, transitions.
- Develop parent consultation with the purpose of providing families with information relating to ALN and disability

3. Securing the services, provision and equipment required by children and young people with ALN or disabilities

Schools will:

- Use their best endeavours to make sure that a pupil with an identified ALN receives the support they need from within the school's own delegated resources
- Understand how their duty to make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 translates into day-to-day practice
- Keep key indicators under review for ALN pupils, such as attendance, exclusion and progress so that the support of relevant services can be secured when necessary
- Know routes for referral for relevant education, health and care specialists in order to secure equipment and services for specific pupils in a timely manner
- Have knowledge of the expertise and training provided by support services and agencies so that it can be accessed on an individual pupil or whole school basis
- Seek further advice from advisory services and outside agencies in order to remove barriers to learning
- Understand the processes for accessing additional learning provision from the LA
- Use IHPs, where appropriate, for those pupils with medical needs

4. Supporting disabled children and young people and those with ALN in moving between phases of education and preparing for adulthood and independent living

Schools will:

- Implement a coherent transition programme that priorities links with common feeder schools and takes a flexible approach to group and individual student needs so that planning can begin at the earliest stage
- Review their transition processes to take account of feedback from pupils, parent/carers and professionals
- Use an enhanced transition process to support pupils with ALN if required
- Pay regard to the LA Post 16 transition protocol so that local processes can be applied and evaluated consistently.
- Develop and implement an appropriate person-centred planning approach to all transitions between schools, key stages or phases so that the pupil and family are at the heart of the planning process
- Share advice and information from parents/carers, previous settings and supporting professionals, liaising as necessary to continue the use of successful strategies and approaches
- Provide or sign-post pupils and their parents/carers to impartial sources of advice and information, for example, SNAP Cymru; NYAS

5. Approaches to teaching, adaptations to the curriculum and the learning environment for children and young people with ALN or disabilities and additional learning support for those with ALN

Every school is required to meet the ALN of the children or young people that they support. Every teacher is accountable for the progress of the pupils within their class
Schools will:

- Ensure all pupils access good quality teaching which takes account of pupils' differing needs
- Ensure that a personalised approach is implemented for pupils with ALN if required
- Make appropriate use of their delegated budgets so that pupils with additional needs are supported as part of a whole school approach to securing and deploying resources
- Carry out regular monitoring of progress so that adaptations to the learning environment and/or teaching can be made
- Provide teachers and TAs with appropriate training and resources so that learning can be differentiated to match the pupil's level of learning
- Implement a consistent graduated approach to meeting pupil need. For example, by reviewing class teaching and access strategies before moving on to develop a more individualised approach
- Provide ALNCoS with sufficient time to use their knowledge and understanding of areas of need to plan provision and to focus on interventions that are relevant and evidence-based
- Refer to the comprehensive range of examples of best practice within Local Authority, Consortia and national guidance documents
- Seek further advice from advisory services and outside agencies about removing barriers to learning so that individualised support programmes for more complex pupils can be put in place.

6. Securing expertise among teachers, teaching assistants, to support children and young people with ALN or disabilities – this should include continuing professional development for all staff

Schools will:

- Audit and review staff training needs on an annual basis so that relevant training can be planned into the school's CPD schedule
- Have clear systems in place for evaluating ALN provision and reviewing staff expertise through the schools review/quality assurance procedures. For example, through performance management processes; classroom observations, learning walks, book looks.
- Provide staff with information that describes effective strategies to use within their class and ensure staff are able to share best practice
- Embed the principle that 'All teachers are teachers of children with ALN'
- Provide sufficient time for the ALNCo to provide professional guidance to colleagues and contribute to wider professional development themes
- Ensure all staff (both teaching and non-teaching) have had training to develop knowledge of the areas of need and the nature of the difficulties linked to each area.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of relevant local and national guidance for example, the transition protocol, The Equality Act Advice for schools etc.
- Identify and develop specific teacher and TA knowledge through 'surgery' time or the opportunity to liaise with external professionals
- Access external training opportunities so that groups of staff can develop specific knowledge in order to meet the predominant need in a given cohort
- Identify on-going sources of training and development so that knowledge around specific needs can be embedded through a sustainable approach
- Develop and budget for a sustainable approach to succession planning for the ALNCo
- Ensure their ALNCo, if new to the role in a mainstream school, is given the opportunity to complete the National Middle Leadership Programme and the ALNCo Progression Pathway and is provided with adequate support to do so.

7. Enabling available facilities to be accessed by disabled children and young people and those with ALN (this could include ancillary aids and assistive technology, including Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC))

Schools will:

- Pay regard to duties outlined in the Equality Act (2010), specifically duties relating to strategic equality plan and accessibility planning, reasonable adjustments and the public sector equality duty
- Regularly review the impact of provision and resources secured through their delegated budgets to support children and young people with additional needs
- Implement a robust graduated approach which includes a clear rationale for access to specific resources
- Understand the processes for accessing additional learning provision from the LA to meet the needs of the most complex pupils
- Appropriately follow advice provided by supporting professionals, including the appropriate use of resources provided to the school for groups or individual pupils
- Ensure that referrals are made to relevant agencies in order to ensure that progress towards outcomes in IDPs can be secured where additional resources and facilities are required

8. Assessing and reviewing pupils' and students' progress towards outcomes, including how schools work with parents and young people in doing so

Schools will:

- Ensure that they have procedures in place for consulting and working with parents/carers
- Track and monitor pupil progress on a regular basis in line with whole reporting processes
- Set up / review 'additional to' or 'different from' **ALP** in the light of information gathered through the assess, plan, do review process
- Identify key outcomes, which are aspirational, along with steps to be taken that will support achievement of them
- Ensure robust use of school / setting data to identify and monitor progress of pupils with ALN
- Ensure that every teacher is responsible for pupil progress in their own class and feeds into wider school processes that monitor pupil progress
- Ensure that high expectations are in place and progress is considered against all pupils with similar starting points
- Have clear monitoring processes in place, including scrutiny of pupil books and work, ensuring that all staff are clear about what is expected and adjust practice accordingly
- Evaluate the impact of interventions through pre- and post- assessment data analysis
- Gather pupil feedback as part of the process to review interventions and provision
- Hold regular parent meetings, with the child or young person, as appropriate, to discuss pupil progress
- Regularly review and evaluate the impact of ALP on the progress, attainment and well-being of ALN pupils

9. Assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of the education provision the school, PRU and local authority makes for children and young people with ALN or disabilities

Schools will:

- Regularly review and evaluate the impact of ALP on the progress, attainment and well-being of ALN pupils
- Review attendance and exclusion data for ALN pupils
- Monitor the impact and success of specific interventions through comparison of pre and post intervention data
- Use the feedback from ALN self-reflection framework; LA/EAS reviews and Estyn inspections to inform their evaluation of provision
- Engage with Regional and LA development work for example, network opportunities, cluster developments; new initiatives and LA ALNCo forums

10. Activities that are available to disabled children and young people and those with ALN, including physical activities and extra-curricular activities

Schools will:

- Pay regard to duties outlined in the Equality Act (2010), specifically duties relating to strategic equality planning including accessibility planning, reasonable adjustments and the public sector equality duty
- Promote the health and wellbeing of each pupil by supporting them to access appropriate extra-curricular activities
- Ensure that children and young people with ALN engage in and are included in the activities of the school alongside pupils who do not have ALN through monitoring ALN pupils engagement with extra-curricular activities

- Promote positive outcomes in the wider areas of personal and social development and ensure that the approaches used are based on the best possible evidence and are having the required impact
- Review the schools equality plan on an annual basis and renew the plan every 4 years.
- Raise awareness about opportunities for community involvement for families of pupils with ALN

11. LA quality assurance and support

The Local Authority will, through quality assurance, ensure that the processes described above are in place. This will include:

- Supporting schools by assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of education provision
- Supporting schools through LA and regional development work, including ALNCo forums
- Review school provision maps and ALN self-reflection framework on an annual basis and identify areas of good practice and areas for development.
- Ensuring annual reviews for pupils with IDPs take place and are of high quality
- Delivering the National Middle Leadership qualification in partnership with the EAS
- Supporting ALNCos to access the Welsh Government ALNCo Progression Pathway
- Supporting schools in developing effective ALN provision
- Reviewing and updating the LA arrangements for meeting the needs of ALN pupils, including updating the LA provision map.
- Offering central and school-based training
- Responding to feedback from training and support to further enhance practice.

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Education Recovery Plan – Overview

All schools, education providers and support services are fully operational, with children and young people able to access a full range of provision and services both school and community based, in order to meet their: Educational; Social; Emotional; Behavioural; and Other relevant needs.

Blaenau Gwent children and young people are able to effectively transition from one stage of their education to another, with wellbeing as a primary focus, supporting them to achieve their potential.

Recovery and Renewal Focus - Education has developed a detailed impact assessment in collaboration with key partners including schools, in order to determine the key priorities for recovery and renewal. The 4 overarching priority areas of focus are as follows:

- **Learner Wellbeing**
- **Vulnerable Learners**
- **Academic Progress**
- **School Operations**

Present Position - Over the last academic session school operations have been negatively affected by the pandemic. The latest Welsh Government operational guidance seeks to resume normal school operations from the autumn-term 2021. During the 2020/21 academic session, data collection and school's data management was reconfigured and/or suspended, therefore, we are currently working to establish the baseline for the above priorities as at September 2021. However, current levels of COVID within the community are affecting the school's ability to resume normal practice. Therefore, the target for the autumn-term is to establish the baseline.

Implementation Plan - Education has worked to establish a detailed action plan for each impact area. The action plan details the work required with Council services, schools/headteachers, wider partners such as the Education Achievement Service, pupils and parents. In addition, stakeholder engagement and communication plans are in place, with 3 consultative groups having been established as follows:

- Recovery and Renewal Group
- Curriculum Reform Group
- School Operations Management Group

Key Measures to Determine Progress -The following data sets – both qualitative and quantitative, will be used to monitor and measure progress against each impact area:

Priority Area	PI	18/19	19/20	20/21	Target (when will we know we have recovered)?
Learner Wellbeing	Applications – Nursery	693	696	714	Applications are the same level or higher than pre-Covid levels. EHE numbers are the same or lower than pre-Covid levels.
	Applications – Primary	739	731	701	
	Applications – Secondary	677	679	696	
		July 2019	July 2020	July 2021	
	Attendance – Primary	94.4	93.5	90.7	Attendance levels are consistently in line with or higher than Wales average.
	Attendance Secondary	93.3	91.7	84.8	
		April 19 - March 20	April 20 - March 21	April 21 - September 2021	
	Exclusions Primary	108	25	17	Exclusions are in line with or lower than pre-Covid levels.
	Exclusions Secondary	459	135	183	
	Average Number of Primary exclusions per month (no. of months in brackets)	9.8	3.6	3.4	
Average Number of Secondary exclusions per month (no. of months in brackets)	41.7	19.3	36.6		
	2019	2020	2021		
Vulnerable Learners	Entitlement to FSM/Transitionally Protected (%)	21.1	24.6	30.4	FSM numbers are in line with or lower than pre-Covid levels. This may take some time to show recovery due to entitlement being protected.
		April 19 - March 20	April 20 - March 21	April - September 2021	
	Number of referrals to Social Services for children and young people of school age (3-16)	2382	2260	1702	Referrals to social services are in line with or lower than pre-Covid levels.
	Average Number of referrals to Social Services for children and young people of school age (3-16) per month (no. of months in brackets)	198.5 (12)	188.3 (12)	283.7 (6)	

		April 19 - March 20	April 20 - March 21	April - September 2021	
Vulnerable Learners	Digital Disadvantage	0	1,359 pupils with devices 161 pupils with MiFi Dongles	Under review	Need for blended learning is greatly reduced, meaning that schools have very few or no requests for devices of MiFi dongles.

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RECOVERY AND RENEWAL
BLAENAU GWENT ACTION PLAN Summer 2021 – Summer 2022

Priority 1: Learner and staff Wellbeing

Responsibility	Action	Resources (Specific no. of days/costs)	Timescale (Start/End)	Success Criteria	Monitoring and evaluation arrangements for actions (date)	Termly Updates
HoS/la and SMETBC	<p>Undertake stakeholder engagement to facilitate learning from experience, and renewal of practice.</p> <p><u>Stakeholder Recovery and Renewal Group</u></p> <p>Monthly engagement with primary and secondary headteachers to shape support for recovery and renewal</p>	Monthly meetings	July 2021 - ongoing	All stakeholders engaged, represented and informed	Report to DMT/CLT and Scrutiny/Executive as part of FWP.	Meetings continue to take place on a monthly basis, with September's session having to be re-arranged to accommodate partners, next meeting October
	<p><u>Focus Groups</u></p>	As required (led by education)	June 2021 January 2022 (6 months pending review) – ongoing	All stakeholders engaged, represented and informed	Report to DMT/CLT and Scrutiny/Executive as part of FWP.	<p>The following meetings have taken place to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return to schools – September • Risk Assessments and Operational Guidance • Track and Trace Processes • Breakfast Club • Cyber Security

	<p><u>Headteacher Working Groups</u> A headteacher working group inclusive of primary, special, secondary and all through settings (from January 2022), to look at 3 key strands of work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ALN reform • Curriculum reform • Renewal 	Fortnightly meetings. Each school will be given £2,500 to support with any cover arrangements or other potential costs associated with engagement	January 2022 for two terms initially	Blaenau Gwent approach to these key areas of work, accompanied by a development plan and reported via the Council's political processes.	Report to DMT/CLT and Scrutiny/Executive	Recruitment and selection of school representatives has taken place
HoSlal	<p><u>Whole school wellbeing and mental health support</u> Evaluate current provision within Inclusion team to support school's wellbeing and mental health. Exploration of different support strategies to provide a BG model e.g. Trauma Informed Schools</p>	Meetings with all relevant stakeholders	October - ongoing	Schools have provision in place to support learner's wellbeing	Report to DMT/CLT and Scrutiny/Executive	Next meeting with Caroline Friend re: TIS in September
HoSlal and SMETBC	<p><u>Further develop partnership working and re-establish pre-Covid referral systems and interventions</u> e.g. healthy schools, Post-16 partnership, youth</p>	Attendance at relevant meetings	July 2021 - onwards	Partnership working developed to support pupil wellbeing across all educational settings. Develop	Report to DMT/CLT and Scrutiny/Executive. Share good practice across EAS.	<p>Joint planning with healthy schools to provide training for schools on respect and tolerance</p> <p>Work has been undertaken with the Policy and Partnerships team to undertake an Equality Action</p>

	service, education transformation, social services			cross partnership BG agreed ways of working		Plan review on a school by school basis
Priority 2: Vulnerable Learners						
Responsibility	Action	Resources (Specific no. of days/costs)	Timescale (Start/End)	Success Criteria	Monitoring and evaluation arrangements for actions (date)	Termly Updates
SMETBC	Digitally disadvantaged learners continue to access devices/MI-FI	Licensing and revenue costs funded by WG and LA. Going forward, these costs will be addressed via schools	Ongoing	All digitally disadvantaged learners in BG have access to devices/MI- FI as required	Weekly monitoring is in place coordinated by Education, in partnership with SRS and schools. An evaluation and review is currently underway, to inform plans and provision going forward.	All schools have sufficient devices to facilitate the provision. 1,359 devices and 161 Mi-Fi units have been distributed to date. Schools will be required to fund any renewal/additional licences and connectivity from January 2022.
SMETBC	Continued support for pupils and families eligible for FSM via direct payments	WG funding	Ongoing	All eligible families receive payments for isolation and holidays	Half-term monitoring and fortnightly reporting via the SitRep	We currently provide payments in line with isolation and holiday periods. Presently, there are approximately 2,500 pupils eligible for direct payments, with application rounds re-opened once every half-term.
SMETBC	<u>Re-establishment of Breakfast Clubs with a pilot scheme until the end of October</u>	Time for meetings	March 21 – ongoing	Pilot in place, with aim to reintroduce BC	Review of BC provision with schools	Breakfast club was re-introduced during the Autumn Term for existing registrants only. The provision is subject to regular review.

SMETBC	<u>Proposal to increase capacity of Pen y Cwm has been approved by Executive Committee, and first phase completed. Second phase to be completed by next Autumn term</u>	Consultation process, meetings with architects, school leaders etc.	Summer 21 – ongoing	Pen y Cwm able to meet the needs of learners in BG	Report to DMT/CLT and Scrutiny/Executive	Phase 1 works are complete. Phase 2 works are in development, with the design process underway. In addition, the long-term planning process has been initiated in partnership with Planning, Estates and Technical Services etc.
HoSlal	<u>Realignment of ALN SLA and EP Service</u> Revised support offer to schools based on school-improving system. Schools to be provided with one offer to access whole school training to support vulnerable learners	Time for meeting with PyC staff	Summer 21 – ongoing	ALN SLA revised in line with new ALN Bill	Report to DMT/CLT and Scrutiny/Executive	Engagement with all relevant services – revised offer to schools to be sent October 21. There is a meeting January 2022 to re-launch the ALN Service/offer – now called the Outreach Service
HoSlal, Gill Smith, Finance	<u>Analysis of funding to support vulnerable learners</u>	Meeting with Finance and GS. Engagement with stakeholders	October 21	Schools able to best support ALN pupils, within budget	Report to DMT/CLT and Scrutiny/Executive	Meeting with finance set up for October 2021 A proposal has been put to School Budget Forum – November 2021
HoSlal	<u>Review of Inclusion Service /ALN Reform</u>	Meetings with all relevant stakeholders	September 21 – August 22	Inclusion service able to meet needs of ALN Bill	Report to DMT/CLT and Scrutiny/Executive	As above re: service review. Now within implementation phase statutory as of January 2022. Ongoing work with Tredegar Comprehensive School to support

HoSlal and Lisa Adams	<u>Review of EHE Policy and practices</u>	Meetings with relevant stakeholders. Support from Tredegar Comp	June 21 – August 22	Updated Policy to meet needs of EHE learners	Report to DMT/CLT and Scrutiny/Executive	schools with statutory changes and legislation Policy in pace and shared with schools
SMETBC/HoSlal	<u>Intimate Care Needs Policy – review Policy</u>	Meetings with relevant stakeholders.	January 2022 onwards	Updated policy	Report to DMT/CLT and Scrutiny/Executive	Initial planning meetings have been undertaken, with the formal review process set to commence in January 2022.
SMETBC	<u>Accessibility Strategy</u>	Time to review policy/strategy	July 21 – Spring/Summer 22	Policy and strategy updated	Monthly monitoring in place, via Accessibility Action plan	Updated timeline and action plan have been taken via the Council's political processes. The review process has commenced, along with the development of the tender documents aligned to detailed accessibility audits of each school.
HoSlal	<u>Equalities training and support for schools</u>	Meetings to agree agenda and set up training	October 21	Schools able to support vulnerable learners		Training for all schools set up for October 20 th 2021. Individual support for schools since November 2021

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Priority 3: Academic Progress

Responsibility	Action	Resources (Specific no. of days/costs)	Timescale (Start/End)	Success Criteria	Monitoring and evaluation arrangements for actions (date)	Monthly Updates
HoSlal and SMETBC	<u>Curriculum Reform and Build Back Better Group</u>		October 21 – ongoing	School governors/leader are supported to implement school improvement and held to account	SCC meetings/action plans/ Report to DMT/CLT and Scrutiny/Executive EAS monthly CA reports	First meeting to be set up by Emma Jones This will be a key focus of the Headteacher Group from January 2022
HoSlal	<u>Partnership work with the EAS to broker support in line with the EAS Business Plan.</u>	Time for meetings	April 21 – September 21	HoSlal has clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development of all school settings in BG	Visit notes – not for accountability purposes	Fortnightly update meetings with HoSlal and Principle Challenge Advisor Meeting planned February 2022 to discuss the MER Cycle with all School Improvement leads across the SEWC region
	Co-construction of MER cycle to hold EAS to account for services provided to BG schools	Time for meetings	September 21 – December 21	Development of BG offer to support parents, initial pilot stage by December 21, roll out to all schools January 22	Report to DMT/CLT and Scrutiny/Executive/ share good practice across EAS	
	Fortnightly meetings with PCA to monitor MER cycle and share information about schools	Time for meetings and visits				

HoSIal and SMETBC , Richard Crook's team	<p><u>Engagement with STEM</u></p> <p>Increase opportunities for STEM links across BG schools</p> <p>Work with Regeneration on the STEM activity</p>	Staff resource and funding	Ongoing	Increased engagement with STEM in schools.	Monthly monitoring via project groups	Ystruth Primary School are engaging with the STEM Powered Learning Project on behalf of the Brynmawr Cluster
HoSIal and SMETBC	Promote 5G classroom across BG schools					The ET team are now engaged within the project group, and have led on school planning and participation. Education are presently working on the recruitment of a new staff member, to develop and oversee school engagement, training and content creation.
HoSIal and SMETBC	<p><u>Develop a LA blended learning best practice policy</u></p> <p>Work with the EAS to review current practice for governance and school leadership in current context, to inform future ways of supporting leadership</p>					
HoSIal and SMETBC	Review of support for families accessing Welsh		2020 – 2022			

HoSIaI and SMETBC	<p>Medium Education working with WG, schools and securing alignment with the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan</p> <p>Work with the Policy and Performance team to create Parent Engagement Survey – to inform the Blended Learning Approach, and to develop engagement/training</p>	Education, WG and the WEF	January 2022	Draft WESP submitted wot Welsh Ministers January 2022	Monitoring is undertaken on a monthly basis	<p>WG and WEF resources have been shared with Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg and parents. The WESP is scheduled for consultation w/c 11.10.21</p> <p>The BG WESP has been drafted and is currently out to consultation. Education had been successful in securing funding via the WG Immersion Grant, to support the development of latecomer provision. In addition, an EOI has been submitted for the WG Welsh Medium Capital Grant.</p> <p>Initial planning meetings have taken place, in order to explore data-based requirements and plan engagement opportunities. This work will be further developed during the Spring-term 2022.</p>
Priority 4: School Operations						
Responsibility	Action	Resources (Specific no. of days/costs)	Timescale (Start/End)	Success Criteria	Monitoring and evaluation arrangements for actions (date)	Monthly Updates
HoSIaI and SMETBC	<u>Survey of schools to identify where training is not up to date e.g.</u>	TBD	October 2021 – November 2021	Training programme developed	Termly monitoring with schools	Responsible Persons Training Programme in place for the autumn-term 2021. Ongoing work with H&S to plan and

	<p><u>Safeguarding, first aid and Health and Safety</u></p> <p>Engagement sessions with schools – new protocols in place to support schools to manage positive cases</p> <p>All schools have emergency contact information to support escalation procedures i.e. move to blended learning</p> <p>BG updated schools based risk assessment and operational guidance, work with individual schools in order to assess individual operational plans and to advise accordingly.</p> <p>Review Home to School Transport Policy and established working group to address complex applications and policy and practices</p> <p>Monitoring group established around national shortage of</p>	<p>Education, Environmental Health, TTP and schools</p> <p>Education, Environmental Health and schools</p> <p>H&S, Education and Environmental Health</p> <p>Education and Community Services</p> <p>Education and Community Services</p>	<p>September 2021 – ongoing (monitored fortnightly)</p> <p>July 2021 – ongoing</p> <p>July 2021 – ongoing</p> <p>July 2021 - ongoing</p> <p>September 2020 – ongoing</p>	<p>aligned to the needs of schools</p> <p>Early identification and monitoring of positive cases</p> <p>Schools are able to effectively respond to case escalation</p> <p>Schools operate safely with sufficient measures and controls in place</p> <p>All eligible pupils and students have access to transport</p> <p>Transport solutions are</p>	<p>Daily monitoring undertaken and reported via Education to all relevant stakeholders</p> <p>Daily monitoring undertaken and reported via Education to all relevant stakeholders</p> <p>Daily monitoring between Education, H&S, Environmental Health and Schools</p> <p>Ongoing monitoring</p> <p>Ongoing monitoring</p>	<p>monitor H&S and FRA inspections, along with associated training. Ongoing engagement sessions, guidance and support for schools is in place.</p> <p>New process and guidance in place. Daily support is provided via Education and Environmental Health. Comms and guidance in place</p> <p>This is monitored daily. All schools have up to date risk assessments in place, which are frequently reviewed in line with the latest PHW and WG guidance etc. A school planning meeting took place w/c 13.12.21, with another planned for 4.1.22.</p> <p>2022/23 Policy review complete. Transport is subject to weekly monitoring processes in line with compliance, recent strike actions and provider/driver shortages. Fortnightly meetings are in place to review complex case requests for transport.</p> <p>A procedural review is underway and will be completed during the</p>
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	drivers – target to address capacity issues as a result of COVID and resource based issues with transport			agreed where issues are identified. Meaning all pupils have access to education, without their transport needs presenting a barrier		first part of the Spring Term 2022, along with a full service review
	Fire Risk Assessment Review process in place	H&S and Education	September – December 2021	All schools FRA documentation is up to date	Weekly in line with COVID Secure Risk Assessment	Transport contingency plans are in place and being monitored. FRA reviews have commenced and are ongoing
	Facilities Action Planning with individual schools re-established	H&S and Education	October – December 2021	All schools have up to date Facilities Action Plans	Monthly monitoring is in place	All school action plans are up to date, and works programmed for completion in order of priority.
	Minor works and maintenance programme	Community Services and Education	Ongoing	All programmed minor works are completed	Monthly monitoring is in place	The Summer and Autumn works programmes have successfully been completed, with a plan for Spring 2022 in place.

Education Impact Assessment (Working Document)

Impact Area	*RAG	Key Impacts	Identified Needs / Actions	Responsible	Success Criteria (indication we have recovered)	Measure - separate meeting to be held with AP / GW / ME	2021/22 Outturn	Tolerance
1. Learner Wellbeing	Red	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mental health (short and long-term) Emotional and physical health Engagement with school and peers Social skills and language acquisition 	As detailed within the learner theme below.	As detailed within the learner theme below.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved learner wellbeing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative wellbeing surveys Attendance and exclusion rates SEN data (ELSA) Access to counselling services Schools baseline data (emotional and skills upon entry) Speech and language support data Early years and pre-school uptake Nursery uptake 		

*R – significant impact; A – moderate impact; G – no or limited impact

2. Vulnerable Learners	Red	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased vulnerability • Neglect • Domestic violence and family issues • Social exclusion and isolation • Poverty • Unidentified needs (short and long-term) • Hard to access specialist provision resulting in provision needing to be increased. 	As detailed within the vulnerable learner theme below.	As detailed within the vulnerable learner theme below.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerable learners are identified and supported 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free school meals data • SEN and ALN Data • Admissions data • Attendance and exclusion data • Referral data (i.e. Social Services) • RPI data • Digitally Disadvantage data 		
3. Academic progress	Red	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners not achieving expected progress/levels • Pupils that did not engage with blended learning • Impact upon transition (both entry into statutory education and school leaver transition) 	As detailed within the learner theme below.	As detailed within the learner theme below.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners make expected progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School data (upon re-introduction) 		

*R – significant impact; A – moderate impact; G – no or limited impact

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased numbers of electively home educated pupils Resources to support progression 						
4. School operations	Red	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools ability to fulfil the statutory obligations associated with curriculum and ALN reform Reduced options and increased control measures within each school setting Staffing considerations (wellbeing, resource availability, skillsets) Reduced capacity and availability within support services. 	As detailed within themes 3,6,7 and 8 below.	As detailed within themes 3,6,7 and 8 below.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased school operations to facilitate effectively delivery Effective implementation of ALN and Curriculum reform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational plans – increased operations within school settings Progression data aligned to the implementation of curriculum and ALN reform Staff wellbeing survey School workforce position statements EAS staff training records/engagement 		

*R – significant impact; A – moderate impact; G – no or limited impact

						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support service data 		
1. Learners	Amber	Impact of missed time in school – education, social, emotional, physical and mental health implications (short and long-term).	<p>Develop a recovery and renewal plan with a focus on education and wellbeing.</p> <p>Link with national and regional priorities.</p> <p>Undertake stakeholder engagement to facilitate learning from experience, and renewal of practice.</p> <p>Partnership work with the EAS to broker support in line with the EAS Business Plan.</p>	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion		<p>PIs for consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational attainment • Surveys • CAMHS referrals • EOTAS 		
2. Vulnerable learners	Red	<p>Impact of missed time in school – education, social, emotional, physical and mental health.</p> <p>For those with disabilities and additional needs,</p>	<p>Develop recovery and renewal plan with a focus on provision for vulnerable learners.</p> <p>Link with national and regional priorities.</p>	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion		<p>PIs for consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational attainment • Surveys • CAMHS referrals 		

*R – significant impact; A – moderate impact; G – no or limited impact

		provision and processes have been restricted.	<p>Undertake stakeholder engagement to facilitate learning from experience, and renewal of practice.</p> <p>Partnership work with Social Services, Health and Safety and the EAS to broker support.</p>				
3. School staff	Amber	<p>Impact of missed time in school – professional development, social, emotional, physical/mental health and general wellbeing in line with the need to adapt to blended learning.</p> <p>Staff childcare implications relating to school closure.</p> <p>LA's and schools have been required to establish and implement control and safety measures</p>	<p>Develop recovery and renewal plan</p> <p>Link with national and regional priorities.</p> <p>Undertake stakeholder engagement to facilitate learning from experience, and renewal of practice.</p> <p>Partnership work with OD, Health & Safety and the EAS to broker support.</p>	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion			

*R – significant impact; A – moderate impact; G – no or limited impact

		to support clinically vulnerable staff. This has impacted upon both staff and school operations. For those with disabilities and additional needs, provision and processes have been restricted.						
4. Childcare	Red	After school and pre-school provision which has been reduced and/or is not available due to COVID restrictions	Childcare operational plans and risk assessments to be reviewed and monitored by the Childcare Sub-group.	Service Manager -ET and BC		PIs for Consideration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakfast clubs • After school clubs 		
5. Staff training	Red	Staff training needs aligned to operations are not all currently adapted to be delivered online i.e. first aid and RPI	Training plan review in partnership with Health and Safety and OD colleagues.	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion/ Service Manager -ET and BC		PIs for Consideration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training uptake • DBS compliance 		
6. Education assets and site management	Amber	Statutory functions, testing and inspection (Health and Safety, Fire Risk Assessment, maintenance and site management, ventilation), operations are regularly reviewed in	Review school operational plans and WG guidance to inform priorities and changes to local guidance and operations. Review guidance and associated policy,	Service Manager - ET and BC		PIs for Consideration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance within the schools • Fire risk assessments • 21st Century Schools 		

*R – significant impact; A – moderate impact; G – no or limited impact

		line with the latest guidance and governed by risk assessments	risk assessment and operational plan bi-monthly, in partnership with Health and Safety and the Technical Working Group.					
7. School operations	Red/ Amber	Catering, cleaning, access to school sites, movement in and around the school, trips and visits, visitors, refuse, PPE and resources are all under continual review. These areas are subject to risk assessment and reduced operation in line with the COVID alert level implementation. Changes to the school day have been implemented throughout the school estate to support staggered start and finish times. Changes to statutory functions and regulations which	Operational plan to be monitored, provision, guidance and policy to be adapted accordingly. Regular monitoring required as above ICT Plan and associated strategy to be developed in partnership with SRS and the ICT Strategy Group. Monthly review in line with the latest regulations. Procurement and operations review	Service Manager ET and BC		PIs for Consideration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICT provision • Grants • training 		

*R – significant impact; A – moderate impact; G – no or limited impact

		<p>affect school operation e.g. school admissions.</p> <p>ICT infrastructure, devices, access to resources, systems and software for both pupils and staff in line with digital exclusion and blended learning are continually reviewed to support inclusion.</p> <p>Home to school and post 16 transport operations, have been restricted, reconfigured and subject to detailed risk assessment.</p>						
8. School support services	Red	<p>School support service operation i.e. Educational Psychology, ALN, Social Services etc. has been prohibited due to lack of access, which has affected pupil and family engagement and progress.</p>	<p>Inclusion Service review to be undertaken.</p> <p>Transition to be developed.</p> <p>Work with OD to undertake an impact</p>	<p>Head of School Improvement and Inclusion/ Service Manager ET and BC</p>		<p>PIs to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transitions • Educational Psychology referrals • Safeguarding referrals 		

*R – significant impact; A – moderate impact; G – no or limited impact

		<p>Transition at all phases has been affected by key support services having restricted/no access to schools.</p> <p>Human Resource management processes and engagement via OD are now online focused, but will require review to support effective school operations that were paused due to COVID. Wellbeing support services require monitoring in terms of access and uptake.</p> <p>Additional insurance and financial implications for schools as a result of the pandemic. EAS support for schools has transitioned to online with a deficit to levels of engagement and to</p>	<p>associated and establish an operational plan around schools.</p> <p>Working with Finance and Insurance colleagues to undertake an impact assessment, in order to inform future planning.</p>					
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*R – significant impact; A – moderate impact; G – no or limited impact

		the brokerage of relevant support at all levels e.g. LNS Schools.						
9. School accountability services	Red	<p>EAS Challenge Advisors have not been able to hold schools to account and school's data monitoring has been suspended.</p> <p>Esytn has suspended inspection resulting in risks to school – particularly those in a category, who are in for longer than planned.</p>	<p>Review EAS Business Plan in line with WG regulations and guidance.</p> <p>Multi-agency partnership working with Estyn in order to support schools causing concern.</p>	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion		<p>PIs for Consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools causing concern 		
10. School leadership	Amber	<p>School governance has been adapted online, therefore, the evidence base is largely restricted to Headteacher report and narrative.</p> <p>Support for current and new school leaders has been limited to online,</p>	Work with the EAS to review current practice for governance and school leadership.	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion				

*R – significant impact; A – moderate impact; G – no or limited impact

		and school to school working opportunities have mainly focused on wellbeing and operational issues.						
11. Poverty	Red	Family entitlement to benefits has increased across Blaenau Gwent and the region, including free school meals. Additional funding has been allocated to support these families, however, many schemes are not sustainable and so the ongoing impact will need to be assessed.	Working with Finance and Benefits colleagues to undertake an impact assessment, in order to inform future planning.	Service Manager ET and BC/ Head of School Improvement and Inclusion		PIs to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FSM • Impact assessment of benefit uptake 		
12. School community	Red	Limited face to face contact and the shift to online engagement has challenged communication and relationships.	Provide support for individual schools to address barriers to parent engagement in partnership with the EAS.	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion				
13. School development	Amber	School development plans have had to be largely adapted in order to react to COVID-19.	Provide support for individual schools in partnership with the EAS.	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion				

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14. Safeguarding - children	Red	School closure has meant that children and young people are at greater risk of harm e.g. adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). Service support intelligence and capability has been restricted.	Supporting Schools to ensure that they are able to effectively identify and manage risks, via structure an effective multi-agency approach.	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion/ Service Manager ET and BC		Pls to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding • ACEs 		
15. Safeguarding - adults	Red	Vulnerable adults are more exposed to risk factors with limited access to support services.	Supporting Schools to ensure that they are able to effectively identify and manage risks, via structure an effective multi-agency approach.	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion/ Service Manager ET and BC		Pls to consider: Referrals to safeguarding		
16. Voluntary/ Third Sector/ Charities work and engagement	Red	Opportunities to engage partners have been restricted significantly due to operational implications associated with COVID-19.	Establish a stakeholder re-engagement and support plan for Education and schools.	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion/ Service Manager ET and BC				
17. Preventative health measures	Red	School-based preventative strategies to support healthcare needs of pupils have either been stopped or largely disrupted by COVID-19 i.e.	Work closely with ABUHB, Public Health Wales and associated partners to review and develop a school health plan .	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion/Service Manager ET and BC				

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		vaccinations, growth and development checks, dental health, period equity etc.						
18. COVID control measures	Amber	LA's and schools have implemented a series of control measures in order to manage community health i.e. vaccinations, Lateral flow tests, use of PPE, positive case management and risk assessment.	Review and evaluate existing control measures in line with the latest guidance, regulations and associated operational plans, in order to inform business continuity planning.	Service Manager ET and BC/Health and Safety		PIs to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID cases • LFT 		
Relationships and Engagement with headteachers	Green	Throughout the course of the pandemic relationships, communication and engagement with school leaders has improved significantly. School leaders have had the opportunity to work together with the Council, shaping provision and	Continue with the current engagement format to aid recover and ensure effective engagement and participation opportunities are in place for/with school leaders	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion/ Service Manager ET and BC				

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		informing key developments throughout the response period. In addition, they have been empowered to share and seek solutions to issues which have emerged, whilst working closely with the Council to achieve consistency in delivery methods etc.		
Digital inclusion	Amber	Throughout the course of the pandemic both Welsh Government and the Council have worked to secure and invest in devices and connectivity to address digital disadvantage. As a result, there is now an improved understanding of the level of digital disadvantage throughout the school estate. In addition, there are established methods and solutions by	Ensure a full review of provision and requirements takes place, to aid device/provision sustainability plans in line with the Education ICT Strategy and blended learning developments.	Service Manager ET and BC/ Head of School Improvement and Inclusion

*R – significant impact; A – moderate impact; G – no or limited impact

		which the impact of digital disadvantage can be addressed.		
Business continuity – service design and delivery	Amber	Both schools and associated Council services have established effective service design and delivery models, along with business continuity arrangements, ensuring effective response to the pandemic.	Continue to review operational and business continuity plans, to ensure that alert level response and associated delivery can be managed effectively.	Service Manager ET and BC
Learners	Amber	Many pupils have developed skills through engaging with distance learning e.g. resilience and time management.	Continue to build on these skills in a face-to-face setting, ensure schools provide catch up support for pupils who have not developed such skills/not engaged well with distance learning	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion
Teaching staff	Amber	Many teachers and teaching assistants have developed their use of ICT to deliver learning, many schools have used ICT in creative and engaging ways to encourage, motivate	Continue to build on these skills in a face-to-face setting. Work with the EAS to ensure blended learning continues to be a key priority in school development planning	Head of School Improvement and Inclusion

*R – significant impact; A – moderate impact; G – no or limited impact

		and support learning.		
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*R – significant impact; A – moderate impact; G – no or limited impact

Agenda Item 9

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer:

Committee: **Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee:**
Date of meeting: **15 March 2022**
Report Subject: **Education Achievement Services (EAS) Business Plan 2022-2025**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr J. Collins, Executive Member for Education**
Report Submitted by: **Lynn Phillips, Corporate Director of Education**
Report Written by: **Debbie Harteveld, Managing 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)
√	24.02.22	02.03.22			15.03.22	16.03.22		

1. Purpose of the Report

This report asks for Members to consider the full contents of the draft EAS Business Plan 2022-2025, as part of the regional consultation process. Through this activity Members will ensure that the plan enables appropriate support for schools and settings in Blaenau Gwent.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The EAS delivers, through an agreed Business Plan, a wide range of school improvement services to all schools (all key stages, including all through schools and special schools), pupil referral units and funded non-maintained nursery settings on behalf of each LA. This plan supports the role LAs have in delivering their statutory function, addressing their individual improvement priorities and promoting improved pupil outcomes.
- 2.2 Joint Executive Group (JEG) Members agreed that the EAS should move to a 3-year Business Plan model with a detailed annual update for Members to agree as per the requirements within the Collaboration and Members Agreement (CAMA). Prior to the consultation version of the Business Plan being completed a series of 'Visioning Sessions' have been held with all key partners invited to attend.
- 2.3 As an organisation, the EAS have reviewed how we have written the Business Plan and communicated this to our partners. The EAS and LAs decided it was timely to review and adapt this process and to make it more accessible to a wider audience. It was determined to use the 'Theory of Change' approach to help us articulate the changes and impact we want to make as the regional school improvement service for South-East Wales and the connections and actions needed that will allow that change and impact to be successfully achieved. This Business Plan spans a three-year period and will receive annual reviews each year.
- 2.4 However, this plan also considers how schools and educational settings continue to face the challenges of the pandemic. The EAS will remain sensitive and responsive to the needs of the workforce and will continue to be a highly supportive, reflective, and responsive organisation.

- 2.5 The EAS will build upon what has worked well during this period, particularly the aspects of our role that have been successful within the virtual environment. The support that the EAS will offer will fully align to the expectations set by local authorities, Welsh Government (WG) and links to emerging research. The pandemic has reminded us that positive change is and has been possible. Schools, settings and the EAS have seized opportunities to explore innovative ways of working and delivering meaningful learning experiences through a creative blended learning approach. These experiences should be built upon to avoid a 'snap back,' keeping the positive learning that has been developed during this time.
- 2.6 Members are asked to take the opportunity to comment on the contents of the Business Plan as part of the consultation process and provide a written response as appropriate
3. **Options for Recommendation**
- 3.1 This report has been approved by Education DMT, CLT for submission to Education and Learning Scrutiny.
- 3.1.1 **Option 1:**
For Members to receive the report for information and accept the Business Plan
- 3.1.2 **Option 2:**
For Members to consider the plan and offer further comment for consideration by the EAS; this can be done via a written response back to the EAS. Written feedback on the draft Business Plan should be provided to the EAS Managing Director following the Education and Learning Scrutiny meeting. This can take the form of the notes from the Member meeting. This feedback will be taken into consideration in the final version of the Business Plan.
4. **Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**
- 4.1 **Statutory Responsibility**
- 4.1.1 The EAS is required to submit an annual overarching regional Business Plan.
- 4.1.2 **Corporate Improvement Plan**
Education Aims
- Minimise the impact of COVID-19 on learner development and progress, including improving the digital competency of all learners and staff in the wider Blaenau Gwent school community.
 - Ensure high quality leadership and teaching that secures good progress for all learners, particularly the vulnerable and those who are eFSM.
 - Improve wellbeing for learners at all stages of development.
 - Secure strong progress in skills, particularly in English and Mathematics at Key Stages 3 and 4.
 - Support schools who are identified as causing concern through regional protocols to secure improvement, in conjunction with the EAS.

4.1.3 **Blaenau Gwent Wellbeing Plan**

The content of the EAS business plan 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)***

5.1.1 Section 4 of the Business Plan details the EAS activities for 2022-2023 and Section 5 details the governance and financial arrangements. Indicative LA Core Contributions have been added into this section. The EAS is subject to a robust governance model that is underpinned by the Articles of Association and a Collaboration and Members Agreement (CAMA). These governance documents essentially link the five Local Authorities to the EAS both operationally and through the commissioning of regional school improvement services.

5.1.2 Section 4 of the Business Plan details the EAS activities for 2022-2023 and Section 5 details the governance and financial arrangements. Indicative LA Core Contributions have been added into this section. The EAS is subject to a robust governance model that is underpinned by the Articles of Association and a Collaboration and Members Agreement (CAMA). These governance documents essentially link the five Local Authorities to the EAS both operationally and through the commissioning of regional school improvement services.

5.1.3 The delegation rate to schools increased to 95.5% in 2021/22, whilst the EAS staff profile has reduced by 53.1% since 2012.

5.1.4 The local authority's indicative core contribution for 2022/23 is as follows: Blaenau-Gwent's contribution for 2022/23 is £350,046, compared with £351,806 in 2021/22, £358,985 in 2020/21 and £364,452 in 2019/20.

5.1.5 At the time of writing this report, there is uncertainty with regards to the regional grant funding from WG for 2021/2022. As a result of the pandemic, it is likely that there will be reductions in the regional grant profile. When the grant position has been confirmed the EAS detailed delivery plan will be updated accordingly.

5.2 **Risks**

5.2.1 In writing this plan a number of assumptions have been made. If these are not in place, then they become a risk to the successful delivery of this plan. The EAS risk register will be reviewed and refined following the agreement of the final EAS Business Plan. These are:

- Operate with integrity, honesty and objectivity.
- Partners understand our role in the education system.
- Professional learning has a positive impact on practice and behaviour.
- We are one part of the much wider system.
- Schools / education settings positively engage with us.
- Schools / education settings use funding effectively.

- We have the capacity and resources to undertake our activity effectively.
- When the conditions in a school / education setting can secure improvement, readiness for support results in positive change.
- Our partners provide us with timely and appropriate information.
- We work with schools / education settings to ensure priorities for improvement are based on robust, accurate self-evaluation.

5.2.2 These risks are mitigated through the identification of priorities as seen in the priority areas above and within the detailed within the EAS Business Plan, Blaenau Gwent LA Plans and the Education Strategic Plan.

5.2.3 Blaenau Gwent will have its own risks linked to the delivery of the strategic objectives within their corporate plans.

5.3 **Legal**

The EAS is required to submit an annual overarching regional Business Plan.

5.4 **Human Resources**

None for this report.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

6.1.1 Please note that a mid-year evaluation of the current revised COVID Business Plan (2021/22) has been submitted to each of the EAS governance groups and has been available for local authorities to share as appropriate within their own democratic processes. Within the context of evolving accountability arrangements and the COVID-19 Pandemic, school and aggregate LA performance data has not been available for presentation to this committee. A separate paper detailing the implications of this has been provided to local authorities.

6.1.2 The delivery model for the Business Plan is on a regional basis, the needs of each school and trends within Blaenau Gwent will continue to be met through bespoke work with each school, both virtually and when safe to do so physically.

6.1.3 The EAS will offer an evolving Professional Learning Offer (PLO) to all schools and settings across the region, in order to meet development needs as we emerge from the pandemic. We will continue to fund schools (grant permitting) to deliver a large proportion of the professional learning activity, where appropriate virtually.

6.1.4 All schools will continue to be provided with a bespoke support package that compliments the priorities identified within their own School Development Plans (SDPs) in line with the levels of support they require. There is a degree of flexibility within the deployment model to allow for in-year changes in circumstances and to allow for changes in light of the pandemic.

6.1.5 The centralised model of service delivery that has been adopted across the South East Wales region has enabled efficiencies to be realised, economies of scale to be secured, particularly in relation to avoiding duplication of functions and the ability to secure a range of educational expertise within the region.

- 6.1.6 The talent and expertise that resides in schools within and beyond the region is incentivised and used effectively to support professional learning and school improvement activity. There has been inevitable fragility in the ability of schools to offer support beyond their own settings because of the pandemic, this situation will be managed with sensitivity and will be constantly reviewed.
- 6.1.7 For sustained school improvement to happen, it is essential that all partners work together more closely than ever recognising that each partner (school, LA and EAS) has its role to play in providing support to secure improvements.
- 6.1.8 The Business Plan is in the consultation process. The draft business plan was created following feedback provided in a broad range of 'Visioning Sessions'. These virtual and physical meetings were offered to a range of stakeholder groups including, headteachers, governors and elected members. Feedback has been incorporated within the plan. The final version of the Business Plan will be supported by a range of supporting documents:
- Detailed Business Plan 2022–2023
 - Regional Grant Mapping Overview 2022–2023 (to follow once detailed received from WG)
 - Regional Self-Evaluation Report (Executive Summary)
 - EAS Risk Register (Executive Summary)
 - Regional Professional Learning Offer 2022–2023
 - Local Authority Strategic Education Plans
- 6.1.9 **South East Wales Vision 2025**
All young people are confident, ambitious, resilient and have a love of lifelong learning and realise their full potential. (*The SE Wales vision/purpose statement is currently under development*)
- 6.1.10 **EAS Vision 2025**
Working in partnership with LAs supporting and enabling schools and education settings to thrive as effective learning organisations. (*There is an existing vision/purpose statement that is currently under development with all stakeholders*).
- 6.1.11 **What will the EAS do to Achieve our Vision?**
All schools will be able to access a universal offer of professional learning support in each of the following areas: School Improvement, Leadership and Teaching, Curriculum for Wales, Health Wellbeing and Equity and School Governors, which are intrinsically linked. As well as a holistic professional learning offer, this will include a set number of days to work with their School Improvement Partner (SIP) and a professional dialogue with the EAS and LA to agree and or amend improvement priorities and support requirements as part of an annual professional discussion. In addition to the universal offer, schools will be able to access specific and targeted support as determined through ongoing professional discussion with their SIP and in line with their school improvement priorities. This professional learning support may be related to a task and finish activity, an option for further work with their SIP or an option for peer working. Bespoke support will also be available for schools who require more intensive support. This could include more support from the SIP or the use of a Learning Network School to School Partnership.

School Improvement: Bespoke support to schools and settings aligned to need. Create and facilitate collaborative networks of professional practice.		
Leadership and teaching Professional learning and support for the development of leadership and teaching across the entire workforce.	Curriculum for Wales Professional learning and support for Curriculum for Wales.	Health, Wellbeing and Equity Professional learning and support for health, wellbeing, vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.
Governors: Provide a broad range of professional learning and support for Governors.		

- 6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***
High Quality education is a fundamental pre-requisite of ensuring future local and national prosperity through the provision of an informed and well-educated workforce and society. The Local Authority’s statutory role to monitor and evaluate school performance and the quality of provision, coupled with its statutory powers of intervention in schools causing concern is fundamental to ensuring that all schools provide high quality education provision.
- 6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***
Involvement of partners is fundamental to securing and sustaining school improvement. The statutory framework advocates this and the work of the Local authority, its commissioned school improvement service (EAS) and schools evidences the positive impact of working in this way.
- 6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***
The EAS Business Plan that is being consulted upon for 2021/2022 aligns to the strategic priorities within Blaenau Gwent.
- 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. Estyn Inspection reports reflect the extent to which settings and Local Authorities has been effective in achieving this.
- 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, Torfaen and Blaenau-Gwent Councils.
- 6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***
The Estyn Inspection Framework is aimed at promoting high 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***
Not required for this report.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The EAS is required to submit to the Business Plan to Welsh Government, this plan covers the period 2021-2022. As noted above, the EAS will be sensitive and responsive to changing priorities as a result of the pandemic and may need to change direction and repurpose priorities as required. The support will be made available to all schools and settings, there is an understanding that schools and settings are likely to be facing continuing challenges. It will be the decision of leaders to determine the most appropriate type and timing of at any of the support on offer in line with their priorities.

7.2 The progress on the implementation and impact of the Business Plan will be reported formally at a mid-year basis to the Joint Executive Group and Company Board. These reports, as in previous years, will be suitable for scrutiny activity at local authority and national level. In addition, the progress made towards the implementation of key actions will be reported at each meeting of the Joint Executive Group and Company Board.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 - Education Achievement Service: Regional Business Plan 2022-2025 (Consultation Version – Accessible)

Appendix 2 – Education Achievement Service: Regional Business Plan 2022-2025 (including Annual Plan 2022-2023)

Appendix 3 – Education Achievement Service – Integrated Impact Assessment

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EAS
Education Achievement Service
for South East Wales
Gwasanaeth Cyflawni Addysg
i Dde Ddwyrain Cymru

EAS Business Plan 2022-2025

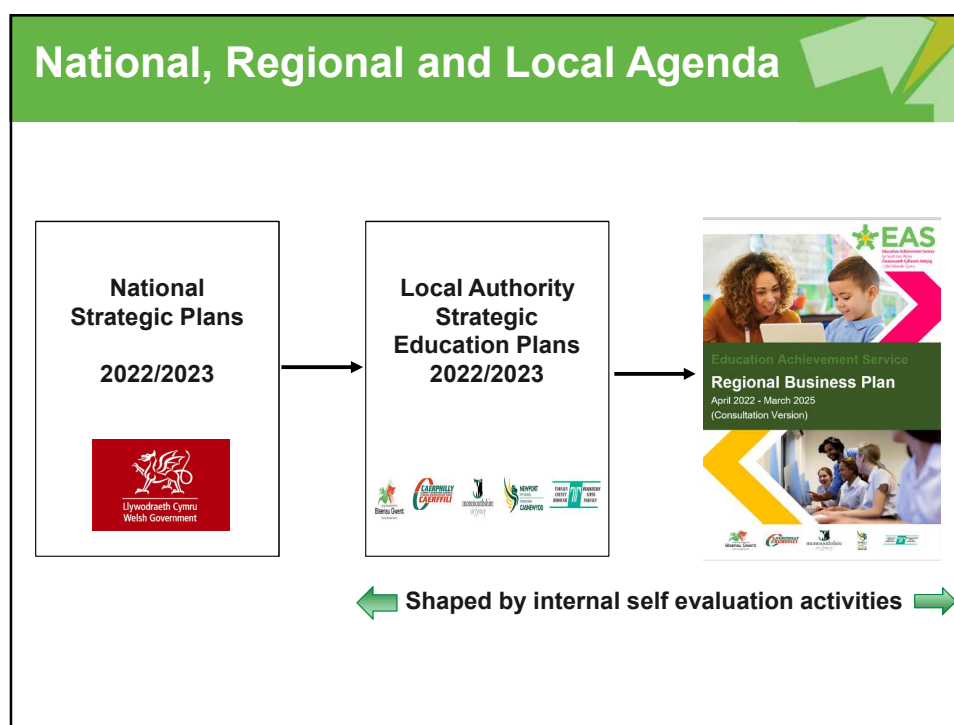
January 2022

Optional Presentation to accompany Scrutiny Reports

Blaenau Gwent, CAERPHILLY, marmouthshire, NEWPORT, TORFAEN COUNCIL BOROUGH, TOWYNE

Overview

- We have reviewed how we have written the Business Plan. Taken advice and guidance and consulted widely through visioning sessions.
- Want to be held to account for delivery and feel that the focus is more succinct.
- Very conscious that we have a role to play in supporting LA and school priorities, also aware of our circle of influence and how the EAS can support improvements.
- We have 'loosely' used the 'Theory of Change' approach to help us articulate the changes and impact we want to make.
- Important to highlight the connections and actions needed to enable improvements in engagement, behaviours etc. to be realised.
- The fundamentals will not change: LA Strategic Plans / Priorities drive the local need, reporting principles and governance.
- Accompanying the final version will be detailed delivery plans and our SE processes.
- Consultation process enables changes to be made.
- **Initial feedback from other stakeholders and what the EAS will change in the final version.**



Consultation and Visioning Sessions

- As part of the consultation process for the EAS Business Plan 2022-2025, invitations were sent to a wide range of key partners (Headteachers, Governors, Members of the Joint Executive Group) to join in a session (a mix of virtual and in person) to share their views on the Vision for the EAS in 2025.
- A separate session was held for LA Directors, LA School Improvement Leads and senior EAS staff to discuss the same theme.

Feedback from session with Directors and School Improvement Leads

5 key priorities for us as a group are:

1. Renewal and reform – Renaissance
2. Roles and responsibilities – principles of how we work together with efficiency and positivity
3. Vision for recovery, practical, help LAs to share practice
4. Shaping the future
5. Continued investment in leadership, including governance – long term gain

Consultation and Visioning Sessions

Group A:

- A dynamic, adapting curriculum that addresses need and context
- Clear, consistent direction
- Everyone on the same page
- Same vision
- Bottom up – top down
- Ethos of action, research, enquiry at all levels
- Global links and Progression 3-18

Group C:

- Regional shared vision
- Shared resources and support, equity, transparency between networks
- Confident workforce
- Professional respect
- Agreed, clear, purposeful accountability
- Collaboration – lessons learned
- Support / trust – hand in hand
- Knowing schools well

Group B:

- Shared Vision – buy in from all
- Professional Trust / Wellbeing
- Communication
- Supportive accountability
- What good looks like?
- Relevant, adaptive PL for all practitioners
- Facilitate 'Big Picture' thinking
- Research, enquiry, support
- Workload reduction / wellbeing

Group D:

- Fully funded professional support
- Trust and clarity across the organisation
- Over communication and solution focused
- Alignment and leaving no one behind
- Growing / embedding CfW
- Excitement / confident with in the profession
- Empowerment: learners, teachers
- Shared purpose across the tiers
- Effective capacity across the tiers
- Progression across the stages
- Appropriate accountability and challenge

What are we all aiming to achieve?

- Maybe the collective vision is too difficult to achieve, however it is important for the EAS to know what we are contributing towards.
- LA Priorities and priorities within SDPs

Why? What are we aiming to achieve?

South East Wales Vision 2025

**SE Wales
Vision**

All young people are confident, ambitious, resilient and have a love of lifelong learning and realise their full potential.

The SE Wales Vision is currently under development

In working towards the SE Wales Vision, a strong commitment of partnership working is critical. It is important to recognise that each local authority, school and educational setting will have their own strategic priorities that support the realisation of the regional vision. These will be documented in LA Strategic Plans and School Development Plans.

EAS Vision 2025

- The EAS vision for 2025 is something that we believe we are able to influence.
- All of our activities will contribute to us supporting schools to become effective learning organisations, therefore improving outcomes for learners over time.

EAS Vision 2025

EAS
Vision

Supporting and enabling schools and education settings to thrive as effective learning organisations.

There is an existing vision that is currently under development with all Stakeholders

In working towards the EAS Vision, it is critical that the EAS Business Plan reflects regional and local needs.

Wales has an ambition that all schools develop as learning organisations, in keeping with OECD principles. Schools that are learning organisations have the capacity to adapt more quickly and explore new approaches, with a means to improving learning and outcomes for all their learners.

What will the EAS do to achieve our vision?

- **All schools will be able to access a universal offer of professional learning** support in each of the following areas: School Improvement, Leadership and Teaching, Curriculum for Wales, Health Wellbeing and Equity and School Governors which are intrinsically linked.
- **As well as a holistic professional learning offer, this will include a set number of days to work with their School Improvement Partner (SIP)** and a professional dialogue with the EAS and LA to agree and or amend improvement priorities and support requirements as part of an annual professional discussion.
- In addition to the universal offer, schools will be able to access **specific and targeted** support as determined through ongoing professional discussion with their SIP and in line with their school improvement priorities.
- **Bespoke support** will also be available for schools who require more intensive support. This could include more support from the SIP or the use of a Learning Network School to School Partnership.

What will the EAS do to support schools to achieve the vision and evidence impact?

- These are the focus areas of support that we will deliver.
- These activities are broken down into an annual summary within the BP and are accompanied by detailed delivery plans.
- Our work in these areas will generate an evidence base that will contribute to our reporting processes.

Activities	School Improvement: Bespoke support to schools and education settings which is aligned to their needs. Create and facilitate collaborative networks of professional practice.		
	Leadership and teaching Professional learning and support for the development of leadership and teaching across the entire workforce.	Curriculum for Wales Professional learning and support for Curriculum for Wales.	Health, Wellbeing and Equity Professional learning and support to improve health and wellbeing, with a particular focus on vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.
	Governors: Provide a broad range of professional learning and support.		

Terminology: Impact / Success Criteria / Expected Outcomes

- The high level statements below are our success criteria.
- Reporting on these enables us to capture a wide variety of data / information e.g. engagement, changes in individual behaviours and practices, changes in system behaviour / leadership and in time, learner outcomes.

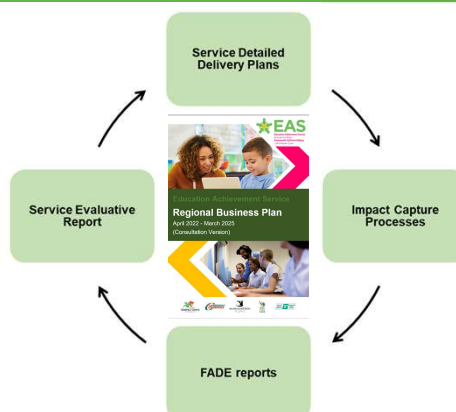
If schools and educational settings have the capacity to secure improvement and engage with the support available from the EAS this is the expected impact:

Impact	The EAS provides support to enable leaders, governors and education practitioners to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours to positively impact practice, providing improved learner outcomes.		
	Professional learning is of high quality and appropriate to (individual) needs.	Support is aligned to needs, enabling schools and education settings to make progress.	The broad range of collaborative networks and activity support the development of a self-improving system.

Through the delivery of the agreed activities, evaluative reports will be systematically reported through to JEG (an LAs) focussed upon the progress that is being made towards the statements above.

How will we capture our work and share information with our partners?

- The EAS will report on the progress it is making towards **the impact statements** within the Business Plan.
- FADE reports will be linked to each activity area: School Improvement, Leadership and Teaching, Curriculum for Wales, Health Wellbeing and Equity and School Governors.
- Reporting on these enables us to capture a wide variety of data / information e.g. engagement, changes in individual behaviours and practices, changes in system behaviour / leadership and in time, learner outcomes.



There are many ways of capturing and sharing what the EAS does which are exemplified in this model as outputs.

Outputs

Governance reports	EAS Website	Impact capture reports
Policies and processes	Case studies	Meeting minutes
External research and review	Supporting Our Schools Site	Partnership documentation
PL resources and guidance		

What are the foundations that enable activities to take place?

The EAS needs to have the following elements in place to enable the activities to take place. These are the foundations of the organisation:

- We are passionately committed to Wales, helping our staff, schools and education settings succeed.
- Agile, timely and responsive.
- Sensitive, flexible, and empathetic to system needs.
- The way we work is informed, drawing on research from a global perspective.
- Welcome challenge and review.
- Effective systems and processes for self-evaluation, risk, and financial management.
- The operation of a clear and effective governance model.
- Positive relationships with a range of partners and stakeholders.
- Adherence to all legislative requirements.
- Communicate clearly.
- Support the wellbeing and professional learning of staff.
- Work is well-planned and managed to deliver the best for schools and education settings.
- Draw upon expertise to improve our delivery.

What needs to be in place?

Assumptions
 In writing this plan we have made the following assumptions. If these are not in place, then they become a risk to the successful delivery of this plan.

- Operate with integrity, honesty and objectivity.
- Partners understand our role in the education system.
- Professional learning has a positive impact on practice and behaviour.
- We are one part of the much wider system.
- Schools / education settings positively engage with us.
- Schools / education settings use funding effectively.
- We have the capacity and resources to undertake our activity effectively.
- When the conditions in a school / education setting can secure improvement, readiness for support results in positive change.
- Our partners provide us with timely and appropriate information.
- We work with schools / education settings to ensure priorities for improvement are based on robust, accurate self-evaluation.

Business Plan on a Page

SE Wales Vision	All young people are confident, ambitious, resilient and have a love of lifelong learning and realise their full potential. <i>The SE Wales Vision is currently under development</i>		
EAS Vision	Supporting and enabling schools and education settings to thrive as effective learning organisations. <i>There is an existing vision that is currently under development with all Stakeholders</i>		
Impact	The EAS provides support to enable leaders, governors and education practitioners to develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours to positively impact practice, providing improved outcomes.	Professional learning is of high quality and appropriate to (individual) needs.	Support is aligned to needs, enabling schools and education settings to make progress.
Outputs	Governance reports, Policies and processes, External research and review, PL resources and guidance	EAS Website, Case studies, Our Schools Site	Impact capture reports, Meeting minutes, Partnership documents
Activities	School Improvement: Bespoke support to schools and education settings which is aligned to their needs. Create and facilitate collaborative networks for professional practice.	Leadership and teaching: Professional learning and support for the development of leadership teaching across the entire workforce.	Curriculum for Wales: Professional learning and support for Curriculum for Wales.
	Health, Wellbeing and Equality: Professional learning and support with a particular focus on vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.		
	Governors: Provide a broad range of professional learning and support.		

Business Plan 2022-2025

Assumptions

- We are able to operate with integrity, honesty and objectivity.
- Partners understand our role in the education system.
- Professional learning has a positive impact on practice and behaviour.
- We are one part of the much wider system.
- Schools / education settings positively engage with us.
- Schools / education settings use funding effectively.
- We have the capacity and resources to undertake our activity effectively.
- When the conditions in a school / education setting can secure improvement, readiness for support results in positive change.
- Our partners provide us with timely and appropriate information.
- We work with schools / education settings to ensure priorities for improvement are based on robust, accurate self evaluation.

Foundations

- We are passionately committed to Wales – helping our staff, schools and education settings succeed.
- We are an agile, timely and responsive organisation.
- We are sensitive, flexible, and empathetic to system needs.
- The way we work is informed, drawing on research from a global perspective.
- We welcome challenge and review and draw on expertise to improve our delivery.
- We have effective systems and processes for self-evaluation, risk, and financial management.
- We operate a clear and effective governance model.
- We have positive relationships with a range of partners and stakeholders.
- We adhere to all legislative requirements.
- We communicate clearly.
- We prioritise the wellbeing and professional learning of staff.
- Our work is planned and managed to deliver the best for our schools and education settings.

↑

Contribute to this

↑

Aiming for this

↑

Report against these

Annual Activities 2022-2023

Section 4: EAS Business Plan Activities 2022-2023

The support across all areas is interrelated and should not be viewed in isolation.

School Improvement: Bespoke support to schools and educational settings aligned to need. Create and facilitate collaborative networks of professional practice.

Universal Provision

- Facilitate professional discussions to identify support aligned to improvement priorities and resource allocation, highlighting good practice to share more widely.
- Undertake supported self-evaluation activities alongside leaders, focusing on the progress of learners including vulnerable groups.
- Provide professional learning for improvement and self-evaluation processes, including supporting the roll out of the National Resource for Evaluation and Improvement.
- Provide opportunities for peer working.
- Work with local authorities to complement existing education HR services and continue to develop a consistent approach to school improvement related HR matters across the region.
- Provide recruitment support for the appointment of Headteachers.
- Provide support as a panel member for Headteacher Performance Management.

Targeted Provision

- Provide additional support to undertake self-evaluation activities alongside leaders.
- Facilitate professional learning or support for specific areas identified by the school or educational setting.
- Facilitate opportunities for peer-to-peer networks.
- Support recruitment at key senior leadership positions.
- Support targeted professional learning for Governing Bodies.
- School Improvement Partners provide enhanced support for new and acting Headteachers.

Bespoke Provision

- Allocate additional EAS support for schools and educational settings requiring higher levels of support.
- Broker EAS school to school intensive support to undertake professional learning and supported self-evaluation activities alongside leaders.
- Working in close partnership with LAs and other partners to monitor the progress schools and or educational settings are making against their identified priorities. Review the impact of support and amend as needed via the Team Around the School and Multi-Agency processes.



EAS
Education Achievement Service
for South East Wales
Gwasanaeth Cyflawni Addysg
i Dde Ddwyrain, Cymru

Early Feedback from key stakeholders







Feedback

Feedback	What the EAS will change in response for the final version of Business Plan 2022-2025
A request for further detail on measuring impact, with explicit success criteria on how this impact is measured.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the draft document there are 4 high level impact statements, detailing our expected impact by 2025. Success criteria will be developed, aligned to these high level activities • We will then report to local authorities on progress towards success criteria in a variety of ways, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly Partnership Meetings • Termly Overviews • Case studies • Scrutiny Reports, bespoke to LAs • EAS Governance Reports • In order to report the impact for each local authority using existing and refined processes we will provide a broad range of quantitative and qualitative impact information in the form of 'Stats and Stories'
A request to ensure that the plan adequately addresses the Covid context?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EAS has now reviewed the high level actions within the draft business plan to ensure they fully align with the Covid Recovery Agenda. • The Covid context is addressed through the Health, Wellbeing and Equity section of the plan. Internal detailed delivery plans will provide the specific actions required.
A request to ensure all language is accessible by all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following additional feedback from other stakeholders we will also undertake a further review the accessibility of the language in Business Plan to ensure clarity.

Clear Success Criteria: Examples

- Schools and educational settings will engage in a professional discussion with the EAS and LA so that priorities are based on effective evaluations and that they are able to access the right support they need to make improvements.
- School Improvement Partners will work alongside schools and educational settings to undertake a range of activities to enable them to know schools and educational settings well.
- All schools are developing as effective learning organisations.
- All schools have CFW as a priority within their SDPs, addressing mandatory aspects of the curriculum, ensuring statutory compliance of the curriculum.
- Schools and educational settings will engage with CFW professional learning and support, sharing practice so that they are well prepared for implementation.
- All schools and educational settings engaged in the RADY programme regularly attend network meetings, sharing impact on their practice and behaviours such as changes in attitudes to learning, engagement of disadvantaged families/carers and ultimately improved learner outcomes.

How will we report on progress towards the success criteria?



Monthly Partnership Meetings

Termly reporting

Termly Overviews and LA 'Stats and Stories' to include contextualised data.

Scrutiny Reports

Bespoke to LAs

Governance Reports

'Stats and Stories' 2021-2022 – Blaenau-Gwent	
<p>Blaenau-Gwent Priorities 2021-2022:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimise the impact of COVID-19 on learner development and progress, including improving the digital competency of all learners and staff in the wider Blaenau Gwent school community. Ensure high quality leadership and teaching that secures good progress for all learners, particularly the vulnerable and those who are eFSM. Improve wellbeing for learners at all stages of development. Secure strong progress in skills, particularly in English and mathematics at key stages 3 and 4. Support schools who are identified as causing concern through regional protocols to secure improvement, in conjunction with the EAS. 	
<p>School Improvement</p>	
<p>System Leadership: 6 Headteachers in Blaenau Gwent are engaging in system leadership across the region as School Improvement Partners, compared to 4 the previous year</p>	<p>Estyn: There are 2 schools in an Estyn follow up category compared to 2 in 2020/21. Both schools receive their visits from Estyn in the next two weeks.</p>
<p>Case Studies: 5 schools in Blaenau Gwent have contributed to school improvement case studies on turnaround leadership and the success of the Learning Network. School provision: St Mary's RC Primary, Pen-y-Cwm Special School, Ebbw Fawr Learning Community, Cwm Primary and Glanhowy Primary</p>	<p>Headteachers: Nearly all (24) Headteachers shared good practice in distance and blended learning as part of their own Celebrate, Share, Support, Refine (CSSR) process. Schools presented their practice at a regional conference. St Illyd's and Tredegar presented on both community engagement and supporting pupil wellbeing.</p>
<p>Wellbeing: Whilst there have been limited face to face visits in schools in BBBC as a result of individual schools' risk assessments, virtual meetings between headteachers and school improvement partners, focusing on wellbeing have continued to take place for all schools.</p>	<p>System Leadership: 5 Schools in Blaenau Gwent are providing holistic support for leadership and teaching to other schools: Glanhowy Primary, St Illyd's Primary, Ebbw Fawr Learning Community, Tredegar School, Pen-y-Cwm Special School</p>
<p>Professional Discussions 6 Primary, 1 Secondary setting (as part of one of the 3-16 schools) have been held, ensuring that the schools' settings have the support they need to secure improvement.</p>	<p>Recruitment of Leaders: The EAS has supported/ is supporting Headteacher recruitment in 6 schools, with a further 2 DHT/IAHT appointment processes supported, securing effective leaders</p>
<p>Rapid School Improvement: Sofydd Primary School has secured rapid school improvement, working with Learning Network Schools in other LAs. Glyncoed Primary has also secured strong progress in distance and blended learning working with Langstone Primary.</p>	
<p>Leadership Teaching and Learning</p>	
<p>System Leadership: 5 schools lead professional learning, supporting teaching and leadership across the EAS (11% of schools across the region).</p>	<p>PL Leads: Every school and setting is funded to develop the professional learning lead role, supporting the realisation of the Curriculum for Wales.</p>
<p>Headteacher Qualification: Over last 3 years, 9 of 59 candidates achieved were from Blaenau Gwent (442 across Wales). 3 of the 9 have secured headship.</p>	<p>Coaching and Mentoring: 19 leaders (19% of the regional total) have trained as National Facilitator Coaches to support the National Leadership Development Programmes in 2021/22.</p>
<p>Senior Leadership: Across the region, 199 (530 across Wales) senior leaders have accessed the senior leader programme, 19 (10%) were from Blaenau Gwent.</p>	<p>Middle Leadership: Across the region 603 middle leaders (1400 across Wales) have accessed the middle leader programme, with 104 (17%) from Blaenau Gwent.</p>
<p>Professional Enquiry: Every cluster is engaged in the National Professional Enquiry project focusing on one of five themes 'Assessment and Progression', 'Re-imagining schooling', 'Inclusion', 'Pedagogy and Learning', 'Leadership'. One school represents the LA in the national Evidence Informed Profession Project.</p>	<p>Middle Leadership: The National Middle Leadership Development Programme was jointly facilitated in Abertillery Learning Community.</p>
<p>International Leadership: 6 of 32 pilot schools have engaged in the International Agile Leadership pilot: St Joseph's RC Primary, Glyncoed Primary, Bro Helyg, Georgetown Primary, St Mary's RC Primary, Ysgol Gyfun Tredegar. A further 4 schools begin cohort 2: St Mary's Church in Wales Primary, Willowtown, Delgion and Blaen-y-Cwm.</p>	<p>Teaching and Learning: The Curriculum for Wales 'Teaching and Learning Group' has enhanced schools' ability to network and share practice, with 43 members from Blaenau Gwent, out of 380.</p>
<p>ITE: Initial Teacher Education Lead Schools: Tredegar comprehensive, ITE Clinical practice /associate/ partner schools: Tredegar Comprehensive and St Illyd's Primary School, Brynbach, Blaen-y-cwm, Beaufort Hill.</p>	<p>Coaching and Mentoring: 11 leaders have engaged in the National Coaching and Mentoring Programme (6% of the total participant population). Tredegar Comprehensive and St Illyd's Primary School jointly facilitate the programme across the region.</p>
<p>NQTs: Over the last year 15 NQTs successfully passed induction. 13 schools are currently supporting 23 Newly Qualified Teachers through the process.</p>	<p>Future Leaders: Tredegar Comprehensive has been part of the Regional Talent Management Framework Pilot.</p>

'Stats and Stories' 2021-2022 – Blaenau-Gwent	
<p>Blaenau-Gwent Priorities 2021-2022:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimise the impact of COVID-19 on learner development and progress, including improving the digital competency of all learners and staff in the wider Blaenau Gwent school community. Ensure high quality leadership and teaching that secures good progress for all learners, particularly the vulnerable and those who are eFSM. Improve wellbeing for learners at all stages of development. Secure strong progress in skills, particularly in English and mathematics at key stages 3 and 4. Support schools who are identified as causing concern through regional protocols to secure improvement, in conjunction with the EAS. 	
<p>Curriculum for Wales</p>	
<p>Support for others: 6 Blaenau Gwent Schools provide professional learning support to other schools across the EAS region in a variety of curriculum areas as Learning Network Schools.</p>	<p>Assessment: All clusters are engaged in the developing school and cluster-based approaches to progression and assessment, to support the development of their assessment strategy.</p>
<p>Curriculum Design: 3 (of 43) practitioners engaged in the Curriculum Design Programme (Lucy Crehan), which supports developing approaches based on focus and coherence Ebbw Fawr, Glyncoed and Rhos Y Fedwen</p>	<p>Curriculum Design: All clusters are represented in the Curriculum for Wales Teaching and Learning development group which is supporting them to network with other schools and share approaches to curriculum design and developing pedagogical approaches.</p>
<p>Planning: Most schools are utilising the SDP guidance provided by the EAS to support them in realising CFW</p>	<p>Curriculum Design: 2 Secondary (or all-through schools) engaged in Secondary Design Network, supporting schools to share approaches to professional learning and curriculum design (Ebbw Fawr and Tredegar Comp.</p>
<p>Health, Wellbeing and Equity</p>	
<p>Wellbeing: All schools and settings receive funding for a Wellbeing Lead. 6 schools attend these regularly.</p>	<p>ACEs: All schools engaged in Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) awareness training and as a result are in a position to draft their tiered approach to Provision.</p>
<p>RADY: 5 schools are part of Raising the Achievement of Disadvantaged Youngsters' professional learning programme. Ebbw Fawr welcomed a RADY Consultant to review their work and follow up visits are to be scheduled to evaluate impact.</p>	<p>A Listening to Learners session was held at Abertillery Learning Community. Learners from all secondary year groups participated and the feedback was very positive regarding Wellbeing Support available to them.</p>
<p>Grants: All secondary sectors made effective use of the Recruit Recover Raise Standards (RRRS) Grant.</p>	<p>Tredegar Comprehensive, Cwm Primary School and St Joseph's RC Primary school are all Lead Wellbeing and Equity Schools. They support our work across the region.</p>
<p>All schools and settings have access to SEAL Community as the region funds their subscription costs. This will support leaders to shape their Health and Wellbeing Curriculum Offer.</p>	
<p>Governors (Improve the quality of leadership)</p>	
<p>Governor PL: Of the 186 Blaenau Gwent Governors that completed a virtual training evaluation, 87% agreed (55% strongly) that the sessions were helpful and informative, and that the information was provided in a clear and precise manner.</p>	<p>Governor PL: Of the 27 Blaenau-Gwent Governors that attended the regional Virtual Governor Conference and completed an evaluation, 93% agreed (63% strongly) that the conference was informative and will help them in their role as a governor.</p>
<p>Governor PL: Attendance at virtual professional learning opportunities, including the conference has overall been over 80% higher than physical training in previous years.</p>	<p>Governor PL: Of the Blaenau-Gwent Governors that attended, 83% said they would attend a Virtual Regional Conference again, with a further 17% saying they would 'maybe' attend again. None said they would not.</p>
<p>SLA: During the year, a total of 130 virtual meetings were supported, an (5.4 per school), well above the legal minimum of 3.</p>	<p>Networking: Over 50% of Blaenau-Gwent Secondary Chairs / Vice-Chairs of Governors regularly attend termly network meetings</p>
<p>Bespoke Support: The EAS has provided bespoke support has been provided for the appointment of LA Additional Governors and LA nominated Chair of Governors.</p>	<p>SLA: For the 25% of Blaenau-Gwent schools that at some point during the year had more than 3 vacancies, notifications were sent to the Chair of Governors, prior to the subsequent meeting.</p>

Consultation Process

EAS Staff
Directors of Education
Diocesan Directors
JEG
Company Board
ARAC
Headteachers
Chairs of Governors
EAS Supporting School Trade Union Group
LA Scrutiny Committees
School Councils

Process ends on February 11th: [EAS Business Plan 2022/2025](#)

Next Steps:

1. SEWC Planning Day – further consultation
2. LA Strategic Priorities finalised
3. Detailed Delivery Plans to be finalised
4. Consultation responses taken into consideration in the final version of the plan

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EAS

Education Achievement Service
for South East Wales
Gwasanaeth Cyflawni Addysg
i Dde Ddwyrain Cymru



Education Achievement Service Regional Business Plan

April 2022 - March 2025

(Consultation Version - Accessible)



The final version of the Business Plan will be available in both English and Welsh.

The final version of the Business Plan 2022-2025 will be presented for agreement to the Regional Joint Executive Group and then to each LA Cabinet / Executive. The plan will then be submitted to Welsh Government.

<p>Cllr J Wilkins Chair of Education Achievement Service Company Board</p>	
<p>Cllr J Collins Chair of Joint Executive Group</p>	
<p>Ms D Harteveld Managing Director, Education Achievement Service</p>	
<p>Mrs K Cole Lead Director on behalf of South East Wales Directors Group</p>	

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Section 1: Regional Context

Key regional facts and figures

- The number of pupils of compulsory school age within the region in 2021 was 73,324. This represents 19.3% of all pupils in Wales.
- There are 237 maintained schools in the region (which includes 4 pupil referral units), 15.8% of all maintained schools in Wales (EAS figure correct from September 2021, Wales figure from Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC), 2021).
- There are 21 Welsh medium primary schools, 3 Welsh medium secondary, 17 Roman Catholic and 11 Church in Wales schools within the region
- The percentage of pupils of compulsory school age who are eligible for free school meals (FSM) is 24.8%. This level of eligibility is the second highest of the four regional consortia with Central South Consortium highest with 25.1% (PLASC, 2021).
- In the region, 10% of people aged three and over say that they can speak Welsh compared to the Wales average of 19% (2011 Census, ONS).
- The percentage of pupils aged 5 or over from an ethnic minority background is 11.8%.
- Based on local authority reported numbers (March 2021), 847 children in the region are looked after (LAC) by a local authority and attend a school in the region. An additional 54 Looked After Children are educated in schools in England. (This data is no longer collected in PLASC).

Overview of regional school governors (As at 02/12/2021)

Local Authority	Number of school governors
Blaenau Gwent	324
Caerphilly	114
Monmouthshire	449
Newport	798
Torfaen -	415
EAS	3100

Overview of school numbers in the region Jan 2022

Blaenau Gwent (31.4% FSM)

- 3 Non-maintained Nursery Settings
- 19 Primary (1 Welsh medium, 3 Roman Catholic, 1 Church in Wales)
- 2 Secondary
- 2 Special
- 2 3-16

Caerphilly (24.9% FSM)

14	Non-maintained Nursery Settings
63	Primary (11 Welsh medium, 1 Roman Catholic)
6	Infant
4	Junior
11	Secondary (1 Welsh medium)
1	Special
1	Pupil Referral Unit
1	3-18

Monmouthshire (16.6% FSM)

26	Non-maintained Nursery Settings
30	Primary (2 Welsh medium, 6 Church in Wales, 2 Roman Catholic)
4	Secondary
1	Pupil Referral Service

Newport (23.1% FSM)

23	Non-maintained Nursery Settings
1	Nursery
44	Primary (4 Welsh medium, 2 Church in Wales, 6 Roman Catholic)
9	Secondary (1 Welsh medium, 1 Roman Catholic)
2	Special
1	Pupil Referral Unit

Torfaen (30.0% FSM)

15	Non-maintained Nursery Settings
25	Primary (3 Welsh medium, 2 Church in Wales, 3 Roman Catholic)
6	Secondary (1 Welsh medium, 1 Roman Catholic)
1	Special
1	Pupil Referral Service

Overview of regional school / PRU staffing

Local Authority	Number of Teaching Staff	Number of Support Staff
Blaenau Gwent	502	552
Caerphilly	1,580	1,416
Monmouthshire	661	626
Newport	1,508	1,346
Torfaen	761	739
EAS	5,012	4,679

Section 2: Introduction

As an organisation we have reviewed how we have written the Business Plan and communicated this to our partners. We decided it was timely to review and adapt this process and to make it more accessible to a wider audience. We have used the 'Theory of Change' approach to help us articulate the changes and impact we want to make as the regional school improvement service for South East Wales and the connections and actions needed that will allow that change and impact to be successfully achieved. This Business Plan spans a three-year period and will receive annual reviews each year.

However, this plan also considers how schools and educational settings continue to face the challenges of the pandemic. The EAS will remain sensitive and responsive to the needs of the workforce and will continue to be a highly supportive, reflective, and responsive organisation.

The EAS will build upon what has worked well during this period, particularly the aspects of our role that have been successful within the virtual environment. The support that the EAS will offer will fully align to the expectations set by local authorities, Welsh Government (WG) and links to emerging research. The pandemic has reminded us that positive change is and has been possible. Schools, settings and the EAS have seized opportunities to explore innovative ways of working and delivering meaningful learning experiences through a creative blended learning approach. These experiences should be built upon to avoid a 'snap back,' keeping the positive learning that has been developed during this time.

Stats and Stories from 2020-2021

- Nearly all (98%) agreed or strongly agreed (46%) that the blended learning masterclass has directly brought about advances in knowledge, skills and/or practice. It has prompted reflection on beliefs and attitudes regarding professional practice.
- Over 90% of leaders agree that the EAS provides high quality professional learning that supports for Leadership and Teaching, access to inspirational guest speakers , digital support and access to an equitable national leadership offer.
- Nearly all schools are Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) Aware
- Over 100 School Improvement Partners (SIP) from both within and beyond the region are current serving Headteachers who are contributing to the self-improving system and the Schools as Learning Organisations (SLO) agenda.
- Sharing of best practice events highlighting key learning and good practice during the pandemic involving international speakers.
- Strong Learning Network school to school provision has been secured for schools who require high levels of support. This support is holistic and addresses leadership and improving the quality of teaching.
- The development of a growing bank of case studies evidencing examples of school improvement and turnaround leadership.
- Enhanced schools' ability to network and share practice. Curriculum for Wales (CfW) Teaching and Learning Development Group has over 380 members and the Progression and Assessment Development Group has 340 members.

- 150 schools have accessed the CfW professional learning (PL) programme to support senior leaders and headteachers.
- Over the last 3 years 59 people in the EAS region have successfully met National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH). The average pass rate over the last three years is 76%.
- 2020/ 2021 58 Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) achieved the status, a 98% pass rate, building capacity in schools
- Governing Body meetings moved online from the end of March 2020. In the subsequent 18 months over 1800 meetings were clerked, an average of 31 each week in term time.
- We have able to connect with more governors than ever across the region, offering a virtual Professional Learning (training) programme from Summer 2020. Since then, we have delivered over 130 virtual events for governors, with over 2000 individual attendances.
- Since Autumn 2019 across the EAS over 500 participants have accessed the Middle Leadership Development Programme. Nearly 900 evaluative comments have been received about the PL experience.

We will continue to research, refine, respond and reflect to school needs. Our established networks will continue to be the mechanism of communicating with schools and settings. The Supporting our Schools website will continue to be the 'go to place' for all resources and guidance materials.

The EAS understands the need to over communicate with clarity to provide reassurance regarding advice, guidance, support and expectations. As a result, the EAS will work with local authorities to minimise any unnecessary bureaucracy for schools and settings to ensure they are able to focus on their important priorities and their support for learners.

The timing, delivery and focus of the support will be carefully considered in respect of the challenges that are likely to continue.

Section 3: Our Approach

The Theory of Change approach

This approach begins with asking why we are doing what we do in the EAS (our vision) and reinforces the need for the development of a collective regional vision, so that we are all clear about what we are trying to achieve and each other's respective roles in this. The EAS will work collaboratively with local authority partners, wider partners and schools and educational settings to implement the Business Plan.

Why? What are we aiming to achieve?

South East Wales Vision 2025

**SE Wales
Vision**

All young people are confident, ambitious, resilient and have a love of lifelong learning and realise their full potential.
The SE Wales Vision is currently under development

In working towards the SE Wales Vision, a strong commitment of partnership working is critical. It is important to recognise that each local authority, school and educational setting will have their own strategic priorities that support the realisation of the regional vision. These will be documented in LA Strategic Plans and School Development Plans.

EAS Vision 2025

EAS Vision

Supporting and enabling schools and education settings to thrive ad effective learning organisations.
There is an existing vision that is currently under development with all stakeholders

In working towards the EAS Vision, it is critical that the EAS Business Plan reflects regional and local needs.

Wales has an ambition that all schools develop as learning organisations, in keeping with OECD principles. Schools that are learning organisations have the capacity to adapt more quickly and explore new approaches, with a means to improving learning and outcomes for all their learners.

What? What will the EAS do to achieve our vision?

All schools will be able to access a universal offer of professional learning support in each of the following areas: School Improvement, Leadership and Teaching, Curriculum for Wales, Health Wellbeing and Equity and School Governors which are intrinsically linked. As well as a holistic professional learning offer, this will include a set number of days to work with their School Improvement Partner (SIP) and a professional dialogue with the EAS and LA to agree and or amend improvement priorities and support requirements as part of an annual professional discussion.

In addition to the universal offer, schools will be able to access specific and targeted support as determined through ongoing professional discussion with their SIP and in line with their school improvement priorities. This professional learning support may be related to a task and finish activity, an option for further work with their SIP or an option for peer working.

Bespoke support will also be available for schools who require more intensive support. This could include more support from the SIP or the use of a Learning Network School to School Partnership.

Activities:

School Improvement: Bespoke support to schools and education settings which is aligned to their needs. Create and facilitate collaborative networks of professional practice.

Leadership and Teaching

Professional learning and support for the development of leadership and teaching across the entire workforce.

Curriculum for Wales

Professional learning and support for curriculum for Wales.

Health, Wellbeing and Equity

Professional learning and support to improve health and wellbeing, with a practical focus on vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

Governors: Provide a broad range of professional learning support.

These activities will be explained in more detail later in the document.

What are the foundations that enable activities to take place?

The EAS needs to have the following elements in place to enable the activities above. These are the foundations of the organisation:

- We are passionately committed to Wales, helping our staff, schools and education settings succeed.
- Agile, timely and responsive.
- Sensitive, flexible, and empathetic to system needs.
- The way we work is informed, drawing on research from a global perspective.
- Welcome challenge and review.
- Effective systems and processes for self-evaluation, risk, and financial management.
- The operation of a clear and effective governance model.
- Positive relationships with a range of partners and stakeholders.
- Adherence to all legislative requirements.
- Communicate clearly.
- Support the wellbeing and professional learning of staff.
- Work is well-planned and managed to deliver the best for schools and education settings.
- Draw upon expertise to improve our delivery.

What will be the impact?

If schools and educational settings have the capacity to secure improvement and engage with the support available from the EAS this is the expected impact:

Impact:

The EAS provides support to enable leaders, governors and education practitioners to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours to positively impact practice, providing improved learner outcomes.

Professional learning is of high quality and appropriate to (individual) needs.

Support is aligned to needs, enabling schools and education settings to make progress.

The broad range of collaborative networks and activity support the development of a self-improving system.

How will we capture our work and share information with our partners?

There are many ways of capturing and sharing what the EAS does which are exemplified in this model as outputs.

Outputs:

Governance reports
Policies and processes
External research and review
PL resources and guidance

EAS Website
Case studies
Supporting Our Schools Site

Impact capture reports
Meeting minutes
Partnership documentation

Assumptions

In writing this plan we have made the following assumptions. If these are not in place, then they become a risk to the successful delivery of this plan.

- Operate with integrity, honesty and objectivity.
- Partners understand our role in the education system.
- Professional learning has a positive impact on practice and behaviour.
- We are one part of the much wider system.
- Schools / education settings positively engage with us.
- Schools / education settings use funding effectively.
- We have the capacity and resources to undertake our activity effectively.
- When the conditions in a school / education setting can secure improvement, readiness for support results in positive change.
- Our partners provide us with timely and appropriate information.
- We work with schools / education settings to ensure priorities for improvement are based on robust, accurate self-evaluation.

SE Wales Vision	<p>All young people are confident, ambitious, resilient and have a love of lifelong learning and realise their full potential. <i>The SE Wales Vision is currently under development</i></p>		
EAS Vision	<p>Supporting and enabling schools and education settings to thrive ad effective learning organisations. <i>There is an existing vision that is currently under development with all stakeholders</i></p>		
Impact	<p>The EAS provides support to enable leaders, governors and education practitioners to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours to positively impact practice, providing improved learner outcomes.</p>		
	<p>Professional learning is of high quality and appropriate to (individual) needs.</p>	<p>Support is aligned to needs, enabling schools and education settings to make progress.</p>	<p>The broad range of collaborative networks and activity support the development of a self-improving system.</p>
Outputs	<p>Governance reports Policies and processes External research and review PL resources and guidance</p>	<p>EAS Website Case studies Supporting Our Schools Site</p>	<p>Impact capture reports Meeting minutes Partnership documentation</p>
Activities	<p>School Improvement: Bespoke support to schools and education settings which is aligned to their needs. Create and facilitate collaborative networks of professional practice.</p>		
	<p>Leadership and Teaching Professional learning and support for the development of leadership and teaching across the entire workforce.</p>	<p>Curriculum for Wales Professional learning and support for curriculum for Wales.</p>	<p>Health, Wellbeing and Equity Professional learning and support to improve health and wellbeing, with a practical focus on vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.</p>
	<p>Governors: Provide a broad range of professional learning support.</p>		

Business Plan 2022-2025

Assumptions

- We are able to operate with integrity, honesty and objectivity.
- Partners understand our role in the education system.
- Professional learning has a positive impact on practice and behaviour.
- We are one part of a much wider system.
- Schools/education settings positively engage with us.
- Schools / education settings use funding effectively.
- We have the capacity and resources to undertake our activity effectively.
- When the conditions in schools/education settings can secure improvement, readiness for support results in positive change.
- Our partners provide us with timely and appropriate information.
- We work with schools / education settings to ensure priorities for improvement are based on robust, accurate self-evaluation.

Foundations

- We are passionately committed to Wales – helping our staff, schools and education settings succeed.
- We are an agile, timely and responsive organisation.
- We are sensitive, flexible, and empathetic to system needs.
- The way we work is informed, drawing on research from a global perspective.
- We welcome challenge and review and draw on expertise to improve our delivery.
- We have effective systems and processes for self-evaluation, risk and financial management.
- We operate a clear and effective governance model.
- We have positive relationships with a range of partners and stakeholders.
- We adhere to all legislative requirements.
- We communicate clearly.
- We support the wellbeing and professional learning of staff.
- Our work is well planned and managed to deliver the best for our schools and education settings.

Section 4: EAS Business Plan Activities 2022-2023

The support across all areas is interrelated and should not be viewed in isolation.

<p>School Improvement: Bespoke support to schools and educational settings aligned to need. Create and facilitate collaborative networks of professional practice.</p>
<p>Universal Provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate professional discussions to identify support aligned to improvement priorities and resource allocation, highlighting good practice to share more widely. Undertake supported self-evaluation activities alongside leaders, focusing on the progress of learners including vulnerable groups. Provide professional learning for improvement and self-evaluation processes, including supporting the roll out of the National Resource for Evaluation and Improvement. Provide opportunities for peer working. Work with local authorities to complement existing education HR services and continue to develop a consistent approach to school improvement related HR matters across the region. Provide recruitment support for the appointment of Headteachers. Provide support as a panel member for Headteacher Performance Management.
<p>Targeted Provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide additional support to undertake self-evaluation activities alongside leaders. Facilitate professional learning or support for specific areas identified by the school or educational setting. Facilitate opportunities for peer-to-peer networks. Support recruitment at key senior leadership positions. Support targeted professional learning for Governing Bodies. School Improvement Partners provide enhanced support for new and acting Headteachers.
<p>Bespoke Provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allocate additional EAS support for schools and educational settings requiring higher levels of support. Broker EAS school to school intensive support to undertake professional learning and supported self-evaluation activities alongside leaders. Working in close partnership with LAs and other partners to monitor the progress schools and or educational settings are making against their identified priorities. Review the impact of support and amend as needed via the Team Around the School and Multi-Agency processes.

<p>Leadership and Teaching: Professional learning and support for the development of leadership and teaching across the entire workforce.</p>
<p>Universal Provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enable the entire workforce to access professional learning that supports the development of secure high quality teaching and learning and the realisation of the curriculum for Wales. Provide support for the leadership of teaching in the development of a whole school teaching and learning strategy, underpinned by the National Professional Teaching and Leading Assisting Teaching Standards. Provide practical examples of teaching and learning approaches used successfully in a variety of settings and schools. Provide a National Professional Learning offer for statutory induction, including support for Newly Qualified Teachers, School based Induction Mentors, External Verifiers. Provide a progressive pathway of professional learning to support the role of Teaching Assistants and Higher Level Teaching Assistants. Support leaders to develop their schools as effective learning organisations. Continue to offer a national professional leadership development programme, including coaching and mentoring for leaders at all levels.

- Identify and develop a sustainable supply of diverse, high-quality, agile leaders to innovate and lead effective 21st century schools.
- Continue to work in partnership with Initial Teacher Education partners in securing high quality teacher education.

Targeted Provision

- Targeted support for the development of whole school teaching and leadership. This may include specific targeted support over a limited time period to include a particular aspect of leadership and/or teaching e.g. targeted support to support assessment across a whole school, support for a group of leaders, Schools as Learning Organisations development.
- Provide a comprehensive package of national and regional professional learning for School Improvement Partners to support them in their system leadership role.

Bespoke Provision

- Intensive and bespoke support exploring all aspects/ relevant needs of teaching and leadership and how the entire workforce supports the improvement journey.

Curriculum for Wales: Professional learning and support for Curriculum for Wales.

Universal Provision

- Provide access to access to national professional learning programmes to realise the Curriculum for Wales.
- Provide access for the entire workforce to collaborative networks of support for Curriculum for Wales and Areas of Learning and Experience (and subject disciplines).
- Provide access to strategic support and professional learning for the development of approaches to bilingualism and the Welsh language.
- Provide access to professional learning to support the development of subject knowledge across the curriculum.
- Provide access to professional learning and guidance to support curriculum design (including progression and assessment), working with a range of international experts.
- Provide access to professional learning for skills development across the curriculum as a feature of high-quality curriculum design.

Targeted Provision

- The School Improvement Partner will work alongside the school or education setting to broker targeted support to meet identified professional learning requirements.

Bespoke Provision

- Allocate additional EAS support for schools and educational settings requiring higher levels of support.
- Broker EAS school to school intensive support to undertake professional learning in Areas of Learning and Experiences (AoLEs) / subject disciplines
- Delivery of specific professional learning activity at a school or cluster level.

Health Wellbeing and Equity: Professional learning and support for health, wellbeing, vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

Universal Provision

- Support to build the capacity within schools and educational setting to create an effective whole school approach to emotional and mental wellbeing.
- Provide strategic support for the development of approaches to the Health and Wellbeing Area of Learning.
- Support to develop strategic approaches to developing UNCRC and Human Rights.
- Support the development of a tiered approach to the provision and teaching for disadvantaged and vulnerable learners.
- Support the development of provision for learners whose circumstances have changed during the pandemic.

- Support for the development of language, social, emotional, physical and cognitive development in early years for those adversely affected by Covid.
- Offer a tiered approach to the professional learning programme: Raising the Achievement of Disadvantaged Youngsters (RADY).
- Support for the development of strategic approaches to embedding Diversity.
- Work in partnership with local authorities with Inclusions Leads and Looked After Children Education (LACEs) to analyse and use attendance and exclusions data for vulnerable and disadvantaged learners.
- Provide guidance and support for the effective use of the Pupil Development Grant (PDG).
- Deliver the National Programme on Teaching and Learning (Mike Gershon).
- Provide support and guidance for schools to become Family and Community Friendly.

Targeted Provision

- Deliver the Vulnerable Learner Lead Programme.
- Deliver the Wellbeing Lead Professional Learning Programme.
- Provide 'WELL' Toolkit to support schools to review their tiered approach to Wellbeing.
- Continue leadership support for key roles, to include: More Able and Talented (MAT) Lead, Family and Community Engagement (FaCE), Seren Leads.

Bespoke Provision

- Seren Network (secondary only).
- Allocate additional EAS support for schools and educational settings requiring higher levels of support.
- Provide Wellbeing Coaching on a need's basis.

School Governors: A broad range of professional learning and support for school governors.

Universal Provision

- Provide a professional learning programme for Governors, including Welsh Government mandated training, the core role of the governor and support for understanding the role of the governing body and their contribution to school development priorities.
- Provide all governing bodies and individual governors with advice, support and guidance in relation to their roles and responsibilities.
- Provide networking opportunities for groups of governors, to discuss best practice, identify common issues and explore solutions.
- Offer all governing bodies a clerking service through the optional adoption of a Service Level Agreement.
- Continue to provide a range of specialist HR professional learning for governors.

Targeted Provision

- Deliver optional programmes to further develop governors' skills and knowledge, enabling them to deepen their understanding of their role, to effectively support and challenge their schools.
- Provide these programmes as part of a targeted Governor Pathway, aimed at specific groups of governors.
- Provide targeted networking opportunities for specific groups of governors, to address specific issues.

Bespoke Provision

- Provide additional specific professional learning for individual governing bodies, clusters of governing bodies or individual governors.
- Broker support for newly appointed Chairs of Governors, who would benefit from the support of an experienced mentor.
- Provide opportunities for more experienced chairs of governors to further develop their skills and knowledge of governance.

EAS Foundations:

Business delivery

- A clear EAS vision is articulated to schools and partners.
- Review and refine the hybrid working model and develop a balanced approach to Professional Learning delivery that incorporates the benefits of the virtual environment alongside face-to-face delivery where appropriate.
- Embed the EAS evaluation model, continuing to welcome external challenge and support, including engagement with research partners to evaluate current programmes and inform future developments.
- Use the Investors in People (IIP) development programme to support service improvements.
- Continue to develop and refine the broad range of ICT systems that support the business model and review the systems that enable the delivery of support for governors.
- Develop an effective communications strategy that meaningfully engage with all key stakeholders
- Continue to engage with other consortia and middle-tier organisations, such as Estyn, to realise efficiencies in programme development and delivery.
- Support and advise local authorities, as appropriate, in the delivery of their statutory functions for the regional Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (SACREs) and the development of individual Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESP).

Staff Development

- To maintain high levels of staff morale and wellbeing in the context of reduced funding and workforce planning.
- Implement new performance management processes to reflect individual and service needs.
- Continue to develop collaborative ways in which the EAS team contribute to decision-making processes and are recognised more systematically for their successes.
- Provide all staff with the professional learning opportunities that enable them to undertake their role and develop professionally and personally ensuring all mandatory professional learning is undertaken.
- Recruit, develop and retain a skilled, professional, well informed, and motivated workforce that represents the values and vision of the EAS.

Funding and Resources

- Work with key partners to secure a more sustainable deliverable funding model, aligned with workforce planning.
- Secure an updated Collaboration and Members Agreement (CAMA) with local authority partners, that recognises change management funding.

Section 5: Delivery arrangements and resources for 2022-2023

Governance

The EAS is subject to a robust governance model that is underpinned by the Articles of Association and a Collaboration and Members Agreement (CAMA).

Consortium funding

The EAS is funded on an annual basis from three sources: Local authority core contributions, regional school improvement grants and a service level agreement for governor support services. A spending plan accompanies this Business Plan which is intrinsically linked to all actions contained within it. A detailed overview of the regional distribution of all grants is available for all schools to view and compare allocations and rates of delegation through the regional grant monitoring tool.

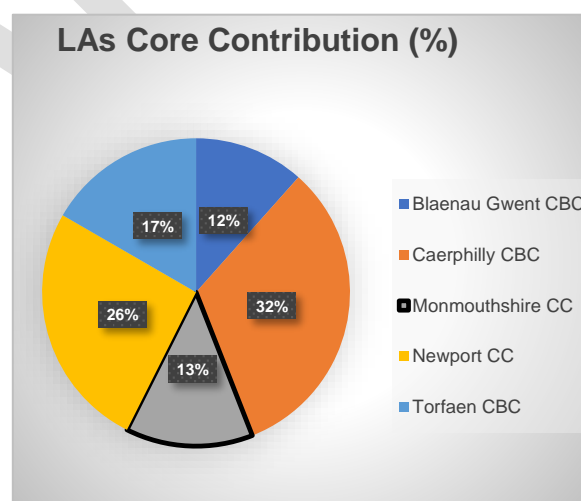
The delegation rate to schools increased to 95.5% in 2021/22, whilst the EAS staff profile has reduced by 53.1% since 2012.

As recipients of public funding, it is important that budgets are allocated and spent wisely. The EAS will continually strive to provide value for money through the optimal use of resources to achieve intended outcomes.

Local authority contributions 2022-2023

Local authority funding for consortium working is underpinned by the National Model for Regional Working, published by the Welsh Government in 2014. The model recommended a core funding allocation of £3.6m for the EAS. The local authorities' indicative figures for 2022-2023 are as follows:

Local Authority (to be agreed)	£
Blaenau Gwent CBC	£350,046
Caerphilly CBC	£980,663
Monmouthshire CC	£403,815
Newport CC	£783,291
Torfaen CBC	£503,498
Total	£3,021,313



In terms of the above £0.99m of this figure is used to secure capacity within the EAS team from current serving headteachers and schools and £0.18m of this figure is used to secure service level agreements and venue costs sourced through local authorities.

Regional school improvement grants

The Collaboration and Members Agreement (CAMA) details the procedure to be followed for all regional school improvement grants received into the region from Welsh Government. Before the grant can be accepted approval to funding distribution is required from the local authority Chief Education Officers / Directors of Education with a follow up ratification from JEG members.

Grant Name (To be updated when information on grants is received from Welsh Government)	Grant Total	Amount delegated to schools	Delegation* Rate	Regionally Retained
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Indicative Calculation 2022-2023

	£	£		£
Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant (RCSIG)				
- Education Improvement Grant	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc
- Professional Learning for Teachers	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc
- Other grant initiatives	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc
Pupil Development Grant (PDG)	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc
PDG (Lead Regional PDG Adviser)	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc
Seren Pre 16	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc
Seren Post 16	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc
Total	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC

*Delegation: This refers to funding which gives freedom of choice to a school in how it is used. It must however be spent in accordance with, and in the spirit of, the core purpose of the grant and the individual school development plan.

Governor Support Service Level Agreement

The EAS has responsibility for providing a Governor Support Service to all schools in the region. The service provides support to school governing bodies, headteachers, and individual governors. This includes advice, guidance, training, and an optional clerking service to support governing bodies to deliver their responsibilities.

The optional clerking service is provided through a service level agreement with an option to buy into a clerking service and then additionally a statutory committee clerking service, through a Service Level Agreement (SLA). From 2020 to 2022, 99% of schools opted into the SLA clerking service, with 51% of schools choosing the additional statutory committee service. From April 2022 the service is being offered on a 3-year basis, which aligns with the revised Business Plan approach. The indicative funding for 2022/23 is £0.364m.

Section 6: Additional supporting documents

This Business Plan is supported by the following documents:

- Local Authority Strategic Education Plans
- Detailed Business Plan 2022–2023
- Regional Grant Mapping Overview 2022–2023 (to follow once detailed received from WG)
- Regional Self-Evaluation Report (Executive Summary)
- EAS Risk Register (Executive Summary)
- Regional Professional Learning Offer 2022–2023

DRAFT



EAS

Education Achievement Service
for South East Wales
Gwasanaeth Cyflawni Addysg
i Dde Ddwyrain Cymru



Education Achievement Service

Regional Business Plan

April 2022 - March 2025 (Including Annual Plan 2022-2023)



The final version of the Business Plan 2022-2025 will be presented for agreement to the Regional Joint Executive Group and then to each LA Cabinet / Executive. The plan will then be submitted to Welsh Government.

<p>Cllr J Wilkins Chair of Education Achievement Service Company Board</p>	
<p>Cllr J Collins Chair of Joint Executive Group</p>	
<p>Ms D Harteveld Managing Director, Education Achievement Service</p>	
<p>Mrs K Cole Lead Director on behalf of South East Wales Directors Group</p>	

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Forward

DRAFT

Section 1: Regional Context

The number of pupils of compulsory school age within the region in 2021 was **73,324**

This represents **19.3%** of all pupils in Wales.

There are **237** maintained schools in the region (which includes 4 pupil referral units), **15.8%** of all maintained schools in Wales.

(EAS figure correct from September 2021, Wales figure from Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC), 2021)

There are **21** Welsh medium primary schools, **3** Welsh medium secondary, **17** Roman Catholic and **11** Church in Wales schools within the region.

Based on local authority reported numbers (March 2021), **847** children in the region are looked after (LAC) by a local authority and attend a school in the region.

An additional **54** Looked After Children are educated in schools in England.

(This data is no longer collected in PLASC)

The percentage of pupils of compulsory school age who are eligible for free school meals (FSM) is **24.8%**.

This level of eligibility is the second highest of the four regional consortia with Central South Consortium highest with **25.1%**

(PLASC, 2021)

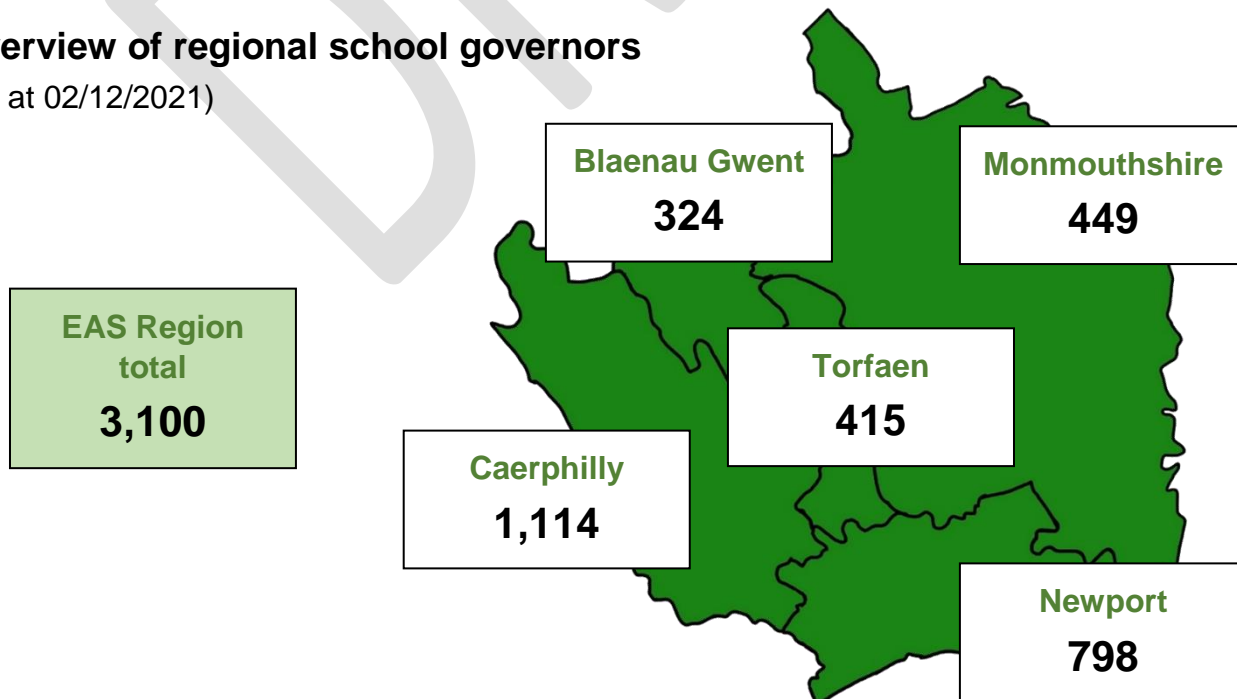
In the region, **10%** of people aged three and over say that they can speak Welsh compared to the Wales average of 19%

(2011 Census, ONS)

The percentage of pupils aged 5 or over from an ethnic minority background is **11.8%**

Overview of regional school governors

(As at 02/12/2021)

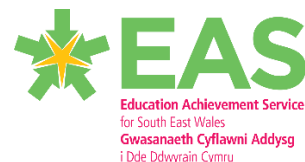


Overview of school numbers in the region

January 2022



Blaenau Gwent		Caerphilly		Monmouthshire	
31.4% FSM	School numbers (January 2022)	24.9% FSM	School numbers (January 2022)	16.6% FSM	School numbers (January 2022)
3	Non-maintained nursery settings	14	Non-maintained nursery settings	26	Non-maintained nursery settings
19	Primary (1 Welsh medium, 3 Roman Catholic, 1 Church in Wales)	63	Primary (11 Welsh medium, 1 Roman Catholic)	30	Primary (2 Welsh medium, 2 Roman Catholic, 6 Church in Wales)
2	Secondary	6	Infant	4	Secondary
2	Special	4	Junior	1	Pupil referral service
2	3-16	11	Secondary (1 Welsh medium)		
		1	Special		
		1	Pupil referral unit		
		1	3-18		
Regional school / PRU staffing		Regional school / PRU staffing		Regional school / PRU staffing	
Teaching staff	Support staff	Teaching staff	Support staff	Teaching staff	Support staff
502	552	1,580	1,416	661	626



Newport		Torfaen		EAS Region	
23.1% FSM	School numbers (January 2022)	30.0% FSM	School numbers (January 2022)	24.8% FSM	School numbers (January 2022)
23	Non-maintained nursery settings	15	Non-maintained nursery settings	81	Non-maintained nursery settings
1	Nursery			1	Nursery
44	Primary (4 Welsh medium, 6 Roman Catholic, 2 Church in Wales)	25	Primary (3 Welsh medium, 3 Roman Catholic, 2 Church in Wales)	181	Primary (21 Welsh medium, 15 Roman Catholic, 11 Church in Wales)
9	Secondary (1 Welsh medium, 1 Roman Catholic)	6	Secondary (1 Welsh medium, 1 Roman Catholic)	6	Infant
2	Special	1	Special	4	Junior
1	Pupil referral unit	1	Pupil referral service	32	Secondary (3 Welsh medium, 2 Roman Catholic)
Regional school / PRU staffing		Regional school / PRU staffing		Regional school / PRU staffing	
Teaching staff	Support staff	Teaching staff	Support staff	Teaching staff	Support staff
1,508	1,346	761	739	5,012	4,679
				6	Special
				2	Pupil referral service
				2	Pupil referral unit
				2	3-16
				1	3-18

Section 2: Introduction

As an organisation we have reviewed how we have written the Business Plan and communicated this to our partners. We decided it was timely to review and adapt this process and to make it more accessible to a wider audience. We have used a new approach to help us articulate the changes and impact we want to make as the regional school improvement service for South East Wales and the connections and actions needed that will allow that change and impact to be successfully achieved. This Business Plan spans a three-year period and will receive annual reviews each year.

However, this plan also considers how schools and educational settings continue to face the challenges of the pandemic. The evidence suggests that the pandemic has affected some groups of learners more than others:

- Vulnerable or disadvantaged learners, and learners with ALN have not necessarily had access to the support they need; some may have faced challenges with distance learning, and some with readjusting to face-to-face learning. We need also to support those learners whose circumstances have changed during the pandemic, who may not have previously fallen into this category;
- Learners in Early Years education are at a critical stage for language, social, emotional, physical and cognitive development. Pupils risk missing key developmental milestones, which could impact on their emotional wellbeing, communication and learning development. They may have specific challenges in finding a sense of belonging in their schools or settings, or in being away from their families;
- Learners in post-16 and transition and those moving into post-16 provision will be concerned with progressing to their next steps, as well as their longer-term employability and skills. These learners will have experienced particular pressures and uncertainty, and their confidence maybe affected;
- Specific challenges for Welsh immersion learners in English-speaking households, and learners transitioning from Year 6 to Year 7.

The EAS will remain sensitive and responsive to the needs of the workforce and will continue to be a highly supportive, reflective, and responsive organisation.

The EAS will build upon what has worked well during this period, particularly the aspects of our role that have been successful within the virtual environment. The support that the EAS will offer will fully align to the expectations set by local authorities, Welsh Government (WG) and links to emerging research. The pandemic has reminded us that positive change is and has been possible. Schools, settings and the EAS have seized opportunities to explore innovative ways of working and delivering meaningful learning experiences through a creative blended learning approach. These experiences should be built upon to avoid a 'snap back,' keeping the positive learning that has been developed during this time.

Self-Evaluation: Progress in Key Areas in 2020-2021

ADs to update

Add next steps – strategic against each area

Leadership and Teaching: Professional learning and support for the development of leadership and teaching across the entire workforce.
Next Steps:

Leadership and Teaching: Professional learning and support for the development of leadership and teaching across the entire workforce.
Next Steps:

Leadership and Teaching: Professional learning and support for the development of leadership and teaching across the entire workforce.
Next Steps:

Leadership and Teaching: Professional learning and support for the development of leadership and teaching across the entire workforce.
Next Steps:

ACE
 Nearly all schools are Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) Aware

Over **90%** of leaders agree that the EAS provides high quality professional learning that supports for Leadership and Teaching, access to inspirational guest speakers, digital support and access to an equitable national leadership offer.

NPQH
 Over the last 3 years 59 people in the EAS region have successfully met NPQH. The average pass rate over the last three years is 76%.

We have connected with more governors than ever across the region, offering a virtual PL programme from Summer 2020. Since then, we have delivered over **130** virtual events for governors, with over **2000** individual attendances.

Governing Body meetings moved online from the end of March 2020. In the subsequent 18 months over **1800** meetings were clerked, an average of 31 each week in term time.

HLTA
 In 2020/2021 58 HLTAs achieved the status, a 98% pass rate, building capacity in schools

The development of a growing bank of case studies evidencing examples of school improvement and turnaround leadership.

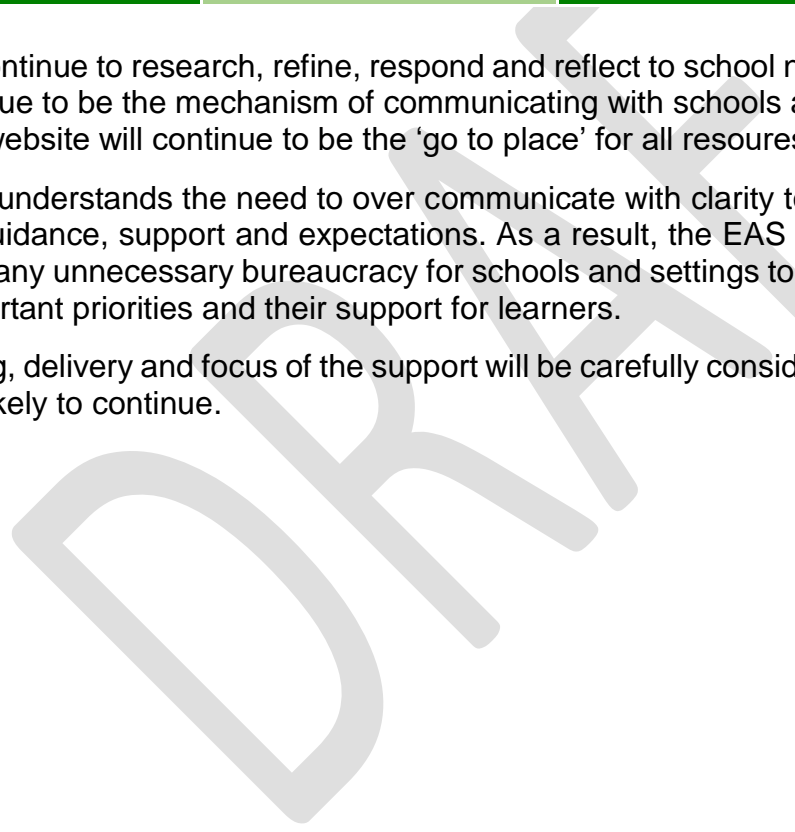
98%
 Nearly all (98%) agreed or strongly agreed (46%) that the blended learning masterclass has directly brought about advances in knowledge, skills and/or practice. It has prompted reflection on beliefs and

<p>Over 500</p> <p>Since Autumn 2019 across the EAS over 500 participants have accessed the Middle Leadership Development Programme.</p> <p>Nearly 900 evaluative comments have been received about the Professional Learning experience.</p>	<p>Strong Learning Network school to school provision has been secured for schools who require high levels of support. This support is holistic and addresses leadership and improving the quality of teaching.</p>	<p>Sharing of best practice events highlighting key learning and good practice during the pandemic involving international speakers.</p>	<p>attitudes regarding professional practice.</p>
<p>Nearly 900 evaluative comments have been received about the Professional Learning experience.</p>	<p>Enhanced schools' ability to network and share practice. CfW Teaching and Learning Development Group has over 380 members and the Progression and Assessment Development Group has 340 members.</p>	<p>150 schools have accessed the Curriculum for Wales (CfW) Professional Learning programme to support senior leaders and headteachers</p>	<p>Over 100 School Improvement Partners (SIPs) from both within and beyond the region are current serving Headteachers who are contributing to the self-improving system and the Schools as Learning Organisations agenda.</p>

We will continue to research, refine, respond and reflect to school needs. Our established networks will continue to be the mechanism of communicating with schools and settings. The Supporting our Schools website will continue to be the 'go to place' for all resources and guidance materials.

The EAS understands the need to over communicate with clarity to provide reassurance regarding advice, guidance, support and expectations. As a result, the EAS will work with local authorities to minimise any unnecessary bureaucracy for schools and settings to ensure they are able to focus on their important priorities and their support for learners.

The timing, delivery and focus of the support will be carefully considered in respect of the challenges that are likely to continue.



Section 3: Our Approach

The Theory of Change approach

This approach begins with asking why we are doing what we do in the EAS (our vision) and reinforces the need for the development of a collective regional vision, so that we are all clear about what we are trying to achieve and each other's respective roles in this. The EAS will work collaboratively with local authority partners, wider partners and schools and educational settings to implement the Business Plan.

Why? What are we aiming to achieve?

South East Wales Vision 2025

SE Wales Vision	All young people are confident, ambitious, resilient and have a love of lifelong learning and realise their full potential. <i>The SE Wales Vision is currently under development</i>
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In working towards the SE Wales Vision, a strong commitment of partnership working is critical. It is important to recognise that each local authority, school and educational setting will have their own strategic priorities that support the realisation of the regional vision. These will be documented in LA Strategic Plans and School Development Plans.

EAS Vision 2025

EAS Vision	Supporting and enabling schools and education settings to thrive as effective learning organisations. <i>There is an existing vision that is currently under development with all Stakeholders</i>
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In working towards the EAS Vision, it is critical that the EAS Business Plan reflects regional and local needs.

Wales has an ambition that all schools develop as learning organisations, in keeping with OECD principles. Schools that are learning organisations have the capacity to adapt more quickly and explore new approaches, with a means to improving learning and outcomes for all their learners.

What? What will the EAS do to achieve our vision?

All schools will be able to access a universal offer of professional learning support in each of the following areas: School Improvement, Leadership and Teaching, Curriculum for Wales, Health Wellbeing and Equity and School Governors which are intrinsically linked. As well as a holistic professional learning offer, this will include a set number of days to work with their School Improvement Partner (SIP) and a professional dialogue with the EAS and LA to agree and or amend improvement priorities and support requirements as part of an annual professional discussion.

In addition to the universal offer, schools will be able to access specific and targeted support as determined through ongoing professional discussion with their SIP and in line with their school improvement priorities. This professional learning support may be related to a task and finish activity, an option for further work with their SIP or an option for peer working.

Bespoke support will also be available for schools who require more intensive support. This could include more support from the SIP or the use of a Learning Network School to School Partnership.

Activities	School Improvement: Bespoke support to schools and education settings which is aligned to their needs. Create and facilitate collaborative networks of professional practice.		
	Leadership and teaching Professional learning and support for the development of leadership and teaching across the entire workforce.	Curriculum for Wales Professional learning and support for Curriculum for Wales.	Health, Wellbeing and Equity Professional learning and support to improve health and wellbeing, with a particular focus on vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.
	Governors: Provide a broad range of professional learning and support.		

These activities will be explained in more detail later in the document.

What are the foundations that enable activities to take place?

The EAS needs to have the following elements in place to enable the activities above. These are the foundations of the organisation:

- We are passionately committed to Wales, helping our staff, schools and education settings succeed.
- Agile, timely and responsive.
- Sensitive, flexible, and empathetic to system needs.
- The way we work is informed, drawing on research from a global perspective.
- Welcome challenge and review.
- Effective systems and processes for self-evaluation, risk, and financial management.
- The operation of a clear and effective governance model.
- Positive relationships with a range of partners and stakeholders.
- Adherence to all legislative requirements.
- Communicate clearly.
- Support the wellbeing and professional learning of staff.
- Work is well-planned and managed to deliver the best for schools and education settings.
- Draw upon expertise to improve our delivery.

What will be the impact?

If schools and educational settings have the capacity to secure improvement and engage with the support available from the EAS this is the expected impact:

Impact	The EAS provides support to enable leaders, governors and education practitioners to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours to positively impact practice, providing improved learner outcomes.		
	Professional learning is of high quality and appropriate to (individual) needs.	Support is aligned to needs, enabling schools and education settings to make progress.	The broad range of collaborative networks and activity support the development of a self-improving system.

How will we capture our work and share information with our partners?

There are many ways of capturing and sharing what the EAS does which are exemplified in this model as outputs.

Outputs	Governance reports			EAS Website			Impact capture reports		
	Policies and processes			Case studies			Meeting minutes		
	External research and review			Supporting Our Schools Site			Partnership documentation		
	PL resources and guidance								

Assumptions

In writing this plan we have made the following assumptions. If these are not in place, then they become a risk to the successful delivery of this plan.

- Operate with integrity, honesty and objectivity.
- Partners understand our role in the education system.
- Professional learning has a positive impact on practice and behaviour.
- We are one part of the much wider system.
- Schools / education settings positively engage with us.
- Schools / education settings use funding effectively.
- We have the capacity and resources to undertake our activity effectively.
- When the conditions in a school / education setting can secure improvement, readiness for support results in positive change.
- Our partners provide us with timely and appropriate information.
- We work with schools / education settings to ensure priorities for improvement are based on robust, accurate self-evaluation.

SE Wales Vision	<p>All young people are confident, ambitious, resilient and have a love of lifelong learning and realise their full potential. <i>The SE Wales Vision is currently under development</i></p>		
EAS Vision	<p>Supporting and enabling schools and education settings to thrive as effective learning organisations. <i>There is an existing vision that is currently under development with all Stakeholders</i></p>		
Impact	<p>The EAS provides support to enable leaders, governors and education practitioners to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours to positively impact practice, providing improved learner outcomes.</p>		
	<p>Professional learning is of high quality and appropriate to (individual) needs.</p>	<p>Support is aligned to needs, enabling schools and education settings to make progress.</p>	<p>The broad range of collaborative networks and activity support the development of a self-improving system.</p>
	<p>The EAS provides support to enable leaders, governors and education practitioners to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours to positively impact practice, providing improved learner outcomes.</p>		
Outputs	<p>Governance reports Policies and processes External research and review PL resources and guidance</p>	<p>EAS Website Case studies Supporting Our Schools Site</p>	<p>Impact capture reports Meeting minutes Partnership documentation</p>
Activities	<p>School Improvement: Bespoke support to schools and education settings which is aligned to their needs. Create and facilitate collaborative networks of professional practice.</p>		
	<p>Leadership and teaching Professional learning and support for the development of leadership and teaching across the entire workforce.</p>	<p>Curriculum for Wales Professional learning and support for Curriculum for Wales.</p>	<p>Health, Wellbeing and Equity Professional learning and support to improve health and wellbeing, with a particular focus on vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.</p>
	<p>Governors: Provide a broad range of professional learning and support.</p>		

Business Plan 2022-2025



Assumptions

- We are able to operate with integrity, honesty and objectivity.
- Partners understand our role in the education system.
- Professional learning has a positive impact on practice and behaviour.
- We are one part of the much wider system.
- Schools / education settings positively engage with us.
- Schools / education settings use funding effectively.
- We have the capacity and resources to undertake our activity effectively.
- When the conditions in a school / education setting can secure improvement, readiness for support results in positive change.
- Our partners provide us with timely and appropriate information.
- We work with schools / education settings to ensure priorities for improvement are based on robust, accurate self evaluation.

Foundations

- We are passionately committed to Wales – helping our staff, schools and education settings succeed.
- We are an agile, timely and responsive organisation.
- We are sensitive, flexible, and empathetic to system needs.
- The way we work is informed, drawing on research from a global perspective.
- We welcome challenge and review and draw on expertise to improve our delivery.
- We have effective systems and processes for self-evaluation, risk, and financial management.
- We operate a clear and effective governance model.
- We have positive relationships with a range of partners and stakeholders.
- We adhere to all legislative requirements.
- We communicate clearly.
- We support the wellbeing and professional learning of staff.
- Our work is well-planned and managed to deliver the best for our schools and education settings.

Section 4: EAS Business Plan Activities 2022-2023

The support across all areas is interrelated and should not be viewed in isolation.

School Improvement: Bespoke support to schools and educational settings aligned to need. Create and facilitate collaborative networks of professional practice.

Universal Provision

- Facilitate professional discussions to identify support aligned to improvement priorities and resource allocation, highlighting good practice to share more widely.
- Undertake supported self-evaluation activities alongside leaders, focusing on the progress of learners including vulnerable groups.
- Provide professional learning for improvement and self-evaluation processes, including supporting the roll out of the National Resource for Evaluation and Improvement.
- Provide opportunities for peer working.
- Work with local authorities to complement existing education HR services and continue to develop a consistent approach to school improvement related HR matters across the region.
- Provide recruitment support for the appointment of Headteachers.
- Provide support as a panel member for Headteacher Performance Management.

Targeted Provision

- Provide additional support to undertake self-evaluation activities alongside leaders.
- Facilitate professional learning or support for specific areas identified by the school or educational setting.
- Facilitate opportunities for peer-to-peer networks.
- Support recruitment at key senior leadership positions.
- Support targeted professional learning for Governing Bodies.
- School Improvement Partners provide enhanced support for new and acting Headteachers.

Bespoke Provision

- Allocate additional EAS support for schools and educational settings requiring higher levels of support.
- Broker EAS school to school intensive support to undertake professional learning and supported self-evaluation activities alongside leaders.
- Working in close partnership with LAs and other partners to monitor the progress schools and or educational settings are making against their identified priorities. Review the impact of support and amend as needed via the Team Around the School and Multi-Agency processes.

Leadership and Teaching: Professional learning and support for the development of leadership and teaching across the entire workforce.

Universal Provision

- Enable the entire workforce to access professional learning that supports the development of secure high quality teaching and learning and the realisation of the curriculum for Wales.
- Provide support for the leadership of teaching in the development of a whole school teaching and learning strategy, underpinned by the National Professional Teaching and Leading Assisting Teaching Standards.
- Provide practical examples of teaching and learning approaches used successfully in a variety of settings and schools.
- Provide a National Professional Learning offer for statutory induction, including support for Newly Qualified Teachers, School based Induction Mentors, External Verifiers.
- Provide a progressive pathway of professional learning to support the role of Teaching Assistants and Higher Level Teaching Assistants.
- Support leaders to develop their schools as effective learning organisations.
- Continue to offer a national professional leadership development programme, including coaching and mentoring for leaders at all levels.

- Identify and develop a sustainable supply of diverse, high-quality, agile leaders to innovate and lead effective 21st century schools.
- Continue to work in partnership with Initial Teacher Education partners in securing high quality teacher education.

Targeted Provision

- Targeted support for the development of whole school teaching and leadership. This may include specific targeted support over a limited time period to include a particular aspect of leadership and/or teaching e.g. targeted support to support assessment across a whole school, support for a group of leaders, Schools as Learning Organisations development.
- Provide a comprehensive package of national and regional professional learning for School Improvement Partners to support them in their system leadership role.

Bespoke Provision

- Intensive and bespoke support exploring all aspects/ relevant needs of teaching and leadership and how the entire workforce supports the improvement journey.

Curriculum for Wales: Professional learning and support for Curriculum for Wales.

Universal Provision

- Provide access to access to national professional learning programmes to realise the Curriculum for Wales.
- Provide access for the entire workforce to collaborative networks of support for Curriculum for Wales and Areas of Learning and Experience (and subject disciplines).
- Provide access to strategic support and professional learning for the development of approaches to bilingualism and the Welsh language.
- Provide access to professional learning to support the development of subject knowledge across the curriculum.
- Provide access to professional learning and guidance to support curriculum design (including progression and assessment), working with a range of international experts.
- Provide access to professional learning for skills development across the curriculum as a feature of high-quality curriculum design.

Targeted Provision

- The School Improvement Partner will work alongside the school or education setting to broker targeted support to meet identified professional learning requirements.

Bespoke Provision

- Allocate additional EAS support for schools and educational settings requiring higher levels of support.
- Broker EAS school to school intensive support to undertake professional learning in Areas of Learning and Experiences (AoLEs) / subject disciplines
- Delivery of specific professional learning activity at a school or cluster level.

Health Wellbeing and Equity: Professional learning and support for health, wellbeing, vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

Universal Provision

- Support to build the capacity within schools and educational setting to create an effective whole school approach to emotional and mental wellbeing.
- Provide strategic support for the development of approaches to the Health and Wellbeing Area of Learning.
- Support to develop strategic approaches to developing UNCRC and Human Rights.
- Support the development of a tiered approach to the provision and teaching for disadvantaged and vulnerable learners.
- Support the development of provision for learners whose circumstances have changed during the pandemic.

- Support for the development of language, social, emotional, physical and cognitive development in early years for those adversely affected by Covid.
- Offer a tiered approach to the professional learning programme: Raising the Achievement of Disadvantaged Youngsters (RADY).
- Support for the development of strategic approaches to embedding Diversity.
- Work in partnership with local authorities with Inclusions Leads and Looked After Children Education (LACEs) to analyse and use attendance and exclusions data for vulnerable and disadvantaged learners.
- Provide guidance and support for the effective use of the Pupil Development Grant (PDG).
- Deliver the National Programme on Teaching and Learning (Mike Gershon).
- Provide support and guidance for schools to become Family and Community Friendly.

Targeted Provision

- Deliver the Vulnerable Learner Lead Programme.
- Deliver the Wellbeing Lead Professional Learning Programme.
- Provide 'WELL' Toolkit to support schools to review their tiered approach to Wellbeing.
- Continue leadership support for key roles, to include: More Able and Talented (MAT) Lead, Family and Community Engagement (FaCE), Seren Leads.

Bespoke Provision

- Seren Network (secondary only).
- Allocate additional EAS support for schools and educational settings requiring higher levels of support.
- Provide Wellbeing Coaching on a need's basis.

School Governors: A broad range of professional learning and support for school governors.

Universal Provision

- Provide a professional learning programme for Governors, including Welsh Government mandated training, the core role of the governor and support for understanding the role of the governing body and their contribution to school development priorities.
- Provide all governing bodies and individual governors with advice, support and guidance in relation to their roles and responsibilities.
- Provide networking opportunities for groups of governors, to discuss best practice, identify common issues and explore solutions.
- Offer all governing bodies a clerking service through the optional adoption of a Service Level Agreement.
- Continue to provide a range of specialist HR professional learning for governors.

Targeted Provision

- Deliver optional programmes to further develop governors' skills and knowledge, enabling them to deepen their understanding of their role, to effectively support and challenge their schools.
- Provide these programmes as part of a targeted Governor Pathway, aimed at specific groups of governors.
- Provide targeted networking opportunities for specific groups of governors, to address specific issues.

Bespoke Provision

- Provide additional specific professional learning for individual governing bodies, clusters of governing bodies or individual governors.
- Broker support for newly appointed Chairs of Governors, who would benefit from the support of an experienced mentor.
- Provide opportunities for more experienced chairs of governors to further develop their skills and knowledge of governance.

EAS Foundations:

Business delivery

- A clear EAS vision is articulated to schools and partners.
- Review and refine the hybrid working model and develop a balanced approach to Professional Learning delivery that incorporates the benefits of the virtual environment alongside face-to-face delivery where appropriate.
- Embed the EAS evaluation model, continuing to welcome external challenge and support, including engagement with research partners to evaluate current programmes and inform future developments.
- Use the Investors in People (IIP) development programme to support service improvements.
- Continue to develop and refine the broad range of ICT systems that support the business model and review the systems that enable the delivery of support for governors.
- Develop an effective communications strategy that meaningfully engage with all key stakeholders
- Continue to engage with other consortia and middle-tier organisations, such as Estyn, to realise efficiencies in programme development and delivery.
- Support and advise local authorities, as appropriate, in the delivery of their statutory functions for the regional Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (SACREs) and the development of individual Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESP).

Staff Development

- To maintain high levels of staff morale and wellbeing in the context of reduced funding and workforce planning.
- Implement new performance management processes to reflect individual and service needs.
- Continue to develop collaborative ways in which the EAS team contribute to decision-making processes and are recognised more systematically for their successes.
- Provide all staff with the professional learning opportunities that enable them to undertake their role and develop professionally and personally ensuring all mandatory professional learning is undertaken.
- Recruit, develop and retain a skilled, professional, well informed, and motivated workforce that represents the values and vision of the EAS.

Funding and Resources

- Work with key partners to secure a more sustainable deliverable funding model, aligned with workforce planning.
- Secure an updated Collaboration and Members Agreement (CAMA) with local authority partners, that recognises change management funding.

Section 5: Delivery arrangements and resources for 2022-2023

Governance

The EAS is subject to a robust governance model that is underpinned by the Articles of Association and a Collaboration and Members Agreement (CAMA).

Consortium funding

The EAS is funded on an annual basis from three sources: Local authority core contributions, regional school improvement grants and a service level agreement for governor support services. A spending plan accompanies this Business Plan which is intrinsically linked to all actions contained within it. A detailed overview of the regional distribution of all grants is available for all schools to view and compare allocations and rates of delegation through the regional grant monitoring tool.

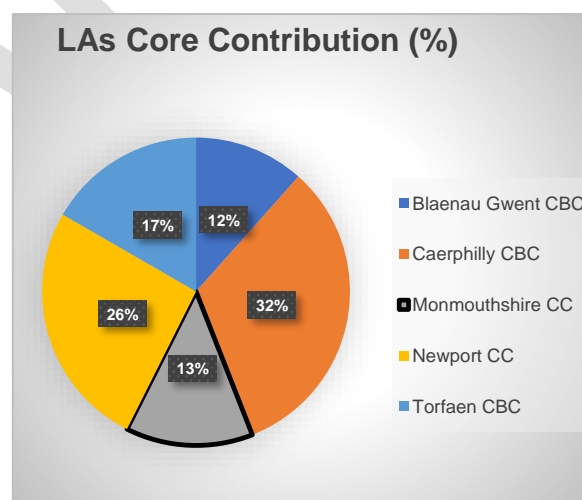
The delegation rate to schools increased to 95.5% in 2021/22, whilst the EAS staff profile has reduced by 53.1% since 2012.

As recipients of public funding, it is important that budgets are allocated and spent wisely. The EAS will continually strive to provide value for money through the optimal use of resources to achieve intended outcomes.

Local authority contributions 2022-2023

Local authority funding for consortium working is underpinned by the National Model for Regional Working, published by the Welsh Government in 2014. The model recommended a core funding allocation of £3.6m for the EAS. The local authorities' indicative figures for 2022-2023 are as follows:

Local Authority (to be agreed)	£
Blaenau Gwent CBC	£350,046
Caerphilly CBC	£980,663
Monmouthshire CC	£403,815
Newport CC	£783,291
Torfaen CBC	£503,498
Total	£3,021,313



In terms of the above £0.99m of this figure is used to secure capacity within the EAS team from current serving headteachers and schools and £0.18m of this figure is used to secure service level agreements and venue costs sourced through local authorities.

Regional school improvement grants

The Collaboration and Members Agreement (CAMA) details the procedure to be followed for all regional school improvement grants received into the region from Welsh Government. Before the grant can be accepted approval to funding distribution is required from the local authority Chief Education Officers / Directors of Education with a follow up ratification from JEG members.

Grant Name (To be updated when information on grants is received from Welsh Government)	Grant Total	Amount delegated to schools	Delegation*	Regionally Retained
	Indicative Calculation 2022-2023			
	£	£		£
Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant (RCSIG)				
- Education Improvement Grant	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc
- Professional Learning for Teachers	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc
- Other grant initiatives	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc
Pupil Development Grant (PDG)	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc
PDG (Lead Regional PDG Adviser)	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc
Seren Pre 16	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc
Seren Post 16	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc
Total	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC

*Delegation: This refers to funding which gives freedom of choice to a school in how it is used. It must however be spent in accordance with, and in the spirit of, the core purpose of the grant and the individual school development plan.

Governor Support Service Level Agreement

The EAS has responsibility for providing a Governor Support Service to all schools in the region. The service provides support to school governing bodies, headteachers, and individual governors. This includes advice, guidance, training, and an optional clerking service to support governing bodies to deliver their responsibilities.

The optional clerking service is provided through a service level agreement with an option to buy into a clerking service and then additionally a statutory committee clerking service, through a Service Level Agreement (SLA). From 2020 to 2022, 99% of schools opted into the SLA clerking service, with 51% of schools choosing the additional statutory committee service. From April 2022 the service is being offered on a 3-year basis, which aligns with the revised Business Plan approach. The indicative funding for 2022/23 is £0.364m.

Section 6: Additional supporting documents

This Business Plan is supported by the following documents:

- Local Authority Strategic Education Plans
- Regional Grant Mapping Overview 2022–2023 (to follow once detailed received from WG)
- EAS Risk Register (Executive Summary)
- Regional Professional Learning Offer 2022–2023

DRAFT

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EAS - Integrated Impact Assessment

This Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment (FEIA) has been designed to assist to help support the EAS in making informed and effective decisions whilst ensuring compliance with a range of relevant legislation, including:

- Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011
- Welsh Language Standards (Wales) 2015
- Socio-economic Duty – Sections 1 to 3 of the Equality Act 2010
- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

PLEASE NOTE: Section 3 *Socio-economic Duty* only needs to be completed if proposals are of a strategic nature or when reviewing previous strategic decisions.

1. Proposal Details

Lead Officer	SMT Approval	Service Area & Department	Date
Edward Pryce	Geraint Willington	EAS Wide	13/1/2022

Is this proposal a... (please tick relevant box)

Policy	Strategy / Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Practice	Procedure	Restructure	Project
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What is the proposal to be assessed? *Provide brief details of the proposal and provide a link to any relevant report or documents.*

The EAS is required by Welsh Government to submit an annual overarching regional Business Plan on an annual basis. The EAS then delivers, through this plan, a wide range of school improvement services to all schools (all key stages, including all through schools and special schools), pupil referral units and funded non-maintained nursery settings on behalf of each LA. This plan supports the role LAs have in delivering their statutory function, addressing their individual improvement priorities and promoting improved pupil outcomes.

As an organisation we have reviewed how we have written the Business Plan and communicated this to our partners. We have used the 'Theory of Change' approach to help us articulate the changes and impact we want to make as the regional school improvement service for South-East Wales and the connections and actions needed that will allow that change and impact to be successfully achieved. This Business Plan spans a three-year period and will receive annual reviews each year.

The proposal is for each Local Authority cabinet to approve the business plan (which commences 1 April 2022, following consultation from January to early March) prior to submission to Welsh Government.

2. Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011

(The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to have “due regard” to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and foster good relations between different groups). Please note that an individual may have more than one protected characteristic.

Protected Characteristics	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the protected characteristics and how?	If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Age <i>(people of all ages)</i>	Positive		The EAS Business Plan delivers school improvement services to all schools and settings. There is no direct work with the public and no direct support for learners with Additional Learning Needs (ALN), as this remains within the remit of the Local Authority. Descriptions of the range of support and professional learning programmes, including elements on wellbeing and support for schools in developing and inclusive curriculum for all are included.
Disability <i>(people with disabilities/ long term conditions)</i>	Positive		The EAS Business Plan delivers school improvement services to all schools and settings. There is no direct work with the public and no direct support for learners with Additional Learning Needs (ALN), as this remains within the remit of the Local Authority. Descriptions of the range of support and professional learning programmes, including elements on wellbeing and support for schools in developing and inclusive curriculum for all are included.

<p>Gender Reassignment <i>(anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex they were assigned at birth)</i></p>	<p>Neutral</p>		<p>The business plan would have no tangible direct impact on these groups. If there was any impact it would be positive in terms of support for schools in terms of developing an inclusive approach through our professional learning.</p>
<p>Marriage or Civil Partnership <i>(people who are married or in a civil partnership)</i></p>	<p>Neutral</p>		<p>The business plan would have no tangible direct impact on these groups. If there was any impact it would be positive in terms of support for schools in terms of developing an inclusive approach through our professional learning.</p>
<p>Pregnancy and Maternity <i>(women who are pregnant and/or on maternity leave)</i></p>	<p>Neutral</p>		<p>The business plan would have no tangible direct impact on these groups. If there was any impact it would be positive in terms of support for schools in terms of developing an inclusive approach through our professional learning.</p>
<p>Race <i>(people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and different racial backgrounds)</i></p>	<p>Positive</p>		<p>The EAS Business Plan delivers school improvement services to all schools and settings. There is no direct work with the public and no direct support for learners with Additional Learning Needs (ALN), as this remains within the remit of the Local Authority. Descriptions of the range of support and professional learning programmes, including elements on wellbeing and support for schools in developing and inclusive curriculum for all are included.</p>

<p>Religion or Belief <i>(people with different religions and beliefs including people with no beliefs)</i></p>	<p>Neutral</p>		<p>The business plan would have no tangible direct impact on these groups. If there was any impact it would be positive in terms of support for schools in terms of developing an inclusive approach through our professional learning.</p>
<p>Sex <i>(women and men, girls and boys and those who self-identify their gender)</i></p>	<p>Neutral</p>		<p>The business plan would have no tangible direct impact on these groups. If there was any impact it would be positive in terms of support for schools in terms of developing an inclusive approach through our professional learning.</p>
<p>Sexual Orientation <i>(lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual)</i></p>	<p>Neutral</p>		<p>The business plan would have no tangible direct impact on these groups. If there was any impact it would be positive in terms of support for schools in terms of developing an inclusive approach through our professional learning.</p>

3. Socio-economic Duty (Strategic Decisions Only)
(The Socio-economic Duty gives us an opportunity to do things differently and put tackling inequality genuinely at the heart of key decision making. Socio-economic disadvantage means living on a low income compared to others in Wales, with little or no accumulated wealth, leading to greater material deprivation, restricting the ability to access basic goods and services)

Please consider these additional vulnerable groups and the impact your proposal may or may not have on them:

- Single parents and vulnerable families
- People with low literacy/numeracy
- Pensioners
- Looked after children (LAC / CLA)
- Homeless people
- Carers
- Armed Forces Community
- Students
- Single adult households
- People misusing substances
- People who have experienced the asylum system
- People of all ages leaving a care setting
- People living in the most deprived areas in Wales (WIMD)
- People involved in the criminal justice system

<p>Socio-economic Disadvantage</p>	<p>Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral</p>	<p>If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?</p>	<p>What evidence has been used to support this view?</p>
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	impacts on the following and how?		
Low Income / Income Poverty <i>(cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing, transport etc.)</i>	Section not applicable, as this Business Plan is not a strategic decision. However the plan describes a range of support for schools related to reducing socio-economic impact, particularly for learners who are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) or those who are looked after (LAC/CLA)		
Low and/or No Wealth <i>(enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provisions for the future)</i>			
Material Deprivation <i>(unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, hobbies etc.)</i>			
Area Deprivation <i>(where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of public transport)</i>			
Socio-economic Background <i>(social class i.e. parents education, employment and income)</i>			
Socio-economic Disadvantage <i>(What cumulative impact will the proposal have on people or groups because of their protected characteristic(s) or</i>			

vulnerability or because they are already disadvantaged)			
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4. Well-being Objectives

(How does your proposal deliver against regional Councils' Well-being Objectives? Which in turn support the national well-being goals for Wales as outlined in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Are there any impacts (positive, negative or neutral? If there are negative impacts how have these been mitigated?)

Improving education opportunities for all	<p>The EAS delivers, through an agreed Business Plan, a wide range of school improvement services to all schools (all key stages, including all through schools and special schools), pupil referral units and funded non-maintained nursery settings on behalf of each LA. This plan supports the role LAs have in delivering their statutory function, addressing their individual improvement priorities and promoting improved pupil outcomes. Plan priorities include:</p> <p>Ensuring that the wellbeing of practitioners and learners in schools and settings remains paramount. Regional professional learning will be provided to support the social and emotional needs of the workforce and learners.</p> <p>Continuing to provide support to school leaders on the identification and support for specific groups of disadvantaged and vulnerable learners including those who have been disproportionality affected by school closures.</p>
Enabling employment	Improved educational outcomes are linked to improved employment prospects.
Housing objectives	n/a
Transport / environment impact	n/a
Healthy lifestyle / sustainable development principle within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015	n/a
Wellbeing objectives	n/a

5. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 – The Five Ways of Working (ICLIP)

(Also known as the sustainable development principles. The Act requires the Council to consider how any proposal improves the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales using the five ways of working as a baseline)

Ways of Working	How have you used the Sustainable Development Principles in forming the proposal?
Long Term	<p>Consider the long-term impact of the proposal on the ability of communities to secure their well-being.</p> <p>This is a three-year business plan with one-year updates as stipulated by Welsh Government. The plan however supports the development of a self-improving school system and all Welsh Government long term strategic objectives in relation to school improvement. Longer term projections are not possible due to significant proportions of EAS work being funded by Welsh Government Regional grants for schools which are only known on a one year basis.</p>
Prevention	<p>Consider how the proposal is preventing problems from occurring or getting worse</p> <p>The plan is designed to support the development and growth of schools, as part of a self improving system.</p>
Integration	<p>Consider how your proposal will impact on other services provided in our communities (these might be Council services or services delivered by other organisations or groups)</p> <p>This Business Plan has been completed in consultation and collaboration with all five Local Authorities, and been informed by a broad ranging consultation exercise. Individual councils will need to consider how the business plan links to other council services</p>
Collaboration	<p>Consider how you are working with Council services or services delivered by other organisations or groups in our communities.</p> <p>This Business Plan has been completed in consultation and collaboration with all five Local Authorities, and been informed by a broad ranging consultation exercise. Individual councils will need to consider how the business plan links to other council services.</p>
Involvement	<p>Consider how you involve people who have an interest in this proposal and ensure that they represent the diversity of our communities.</p> <p>This Business Plan has been completed in consultation and collaboration with all five Local Authorities, and been informed by a broad ranging consultation exercise across all stakeholder groups.</p>

6. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Wellbeing Goals	Does the proposal maximise council's contribution to the Well-being Goals and how?
<p>A Prosperous Wales <i>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</i></p>	<p>Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people generates wealth and provides jobs The plan will deliver a wide range of school improvement services to all schools (all key stages, including all through schools and special schools), pupil referral units and funded non-maintained nursery settings on behalf of each LA. This will contribute, through schools and partners in the Local Authority to a skilled and well-educated population.</p> <p>High quality education is a fundamental of ensuring future local and national prosperity through the provision of an informed and well-educated workforce and society. The Local Authority's statutory role to support, monitor and evaluate school performance and the quality of provision is essential.</p>
<p>A Resilient Wales <i>A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for climate change)</i></p>	<p>Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change) n/a</p>
<p>A Healthier Wales <i>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</i></p>	<p>People's physical and mental well-being is maximised and health impacts are understood The EAS has placed wellbeing at the forefront of its work and will continue to provide a range of professional learning to schools and settings that has provided support to the social and emotional needs of the workforce and learners.</p>
<p>A More Equal Wales <i>A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio-economic background and circumstances)</i></p>	<p>People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances. This includes the protected characteristics listed in Q2 above. Also consider the cumulative impacts. The plan supports the development of strategies in schools that support equity and equality, including continuing to provide support to school leaders on the identification and support for specific groups of disadvantaged and vulnerable learners including those who have been disproportionality affected by school closures.</p>

Well-being Goals	Does the proposal maximise our contribution to the Well-being Goal and how?
A Wales of Cohesive Communities <i>Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities</i>	Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected. n/a
A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language <i>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</i>	Culture, heritage and the Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to participate in sport, art and recreation. All schools are required to promote Welsh culture and heritage through the Cwricwlwm Cymreig and to ensure that pupils are able to learn and practice the Welsh Language. Support for both is a key strand of the business plan.
A Globally Responsible Wales <i>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</i>	Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental well-being. Ensuring high quality education is fundamental to securing the economic, social and cultural wellbeing of future generations. The Business Plan focuses support for all schools appropriately schools. The school curriculum includes focus on social, environmental and cultural well-being, and these aspects are support as part of the plan.

7. Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and Welsh Language Standards

(The Welsh Language Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards require the Councils to have 'due regard' for the positive or negative impact a proposal may have on opportunities to use the Welsh language and ensuring the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language). Whilst not bound by this standard the EAS Welsh Language Policy explains how this duty is complied with to the same level.

Requirement	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the following and how?	If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Links with Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 Strategy and Local Authority's Welsh Language Strategies	The EAS has an updated (September 2021) Welsh Language Policy in place and Welsh language support for schools development of the language is included in the plan.	Positive	EAS Welsh Language Policy (Sept 2021) EAS Welsh Language Strategy included within the Business Plan (2022-2025)
Compliance with the Welsh Language Standards	Promoted through the EAS Welsh Language Policy	Positive	Compliance with the policy Section within the EAS Annual Headteacher / other staff stakeholder survey
Opportunities to promote the Welsh language e.g. status, use of Welsh language services, use of Welsh in everyday life in work / community	Promoted through the EAS Welsh Language Policy. All materials for schools are bilingual.	Positive	Compliance with the policy Section within the EAS Annual Headteacher / other staff stakeholder survey
Opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language e.g. staff, residents and visitors	Promoted through the EAS Welsh Language Policy. All materials for schools are bilingual, and all schools / governors have opportunity for a response by a Welsh speaking member of staff where requested.	Positive	Compliance with the policy Section within the EAS Annual Headteacher / other staff stakeholder survey

<p>Treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language</p>	<p>Promoted through the EAS Welsh Language Policy. All materials for schools are bilingual, and all schools / governors have opportunity for a response by a Welsh speaking member of staff where requested.</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>Compliance with the policy Section within the EAS Annual Headteacher / other staff stakeholder survey</p>
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7a. Having considered the impacts above, how has the proposal been developed so that there are positive effects, or increased positive effects on (a) opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language, and b) treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

The EAS Welsh Language Policy (Updated September 2021) describes in full the ways in which the EAS complies with the Welsh Language Measure (2015), including accesses to all materials bilingually, actively promotes the use of the language and offers an ever a range of services and support through the medium of Welsh for those who require them.

8. Data and Information
(What data or other evidence has been used to inform the development of the proposal? Evidence may include the outcome of previous consultations, existing databases, pilot projects, review of customer complaints and compliments and or other service user feedback, national and regional data, academic publications and consultants' reports etc.)

<p>Data/evidence <i>(Please provide link to report if appropriate)</i></p>	<p>Key relevant findings</p>	<p>How has the data/evidence informed this proposal?</p>
<p>What data / evidence was used? Provide links to any reports if appropriate e.g. Household Survey 2017</p> <p>Please note that a mid-year evaluation of the current revised Covid Business Plan (2020/21) has been submitted to each of the EAS governance groups and has been available for local authorities to share as appropriate within their own democratic processes.</p>	<p>What were the key findings? What did the data / evidence used tell you?</p> <p>A full analysis of feedback from consultations will be incorporated into the final plan.</p>	<p>How has the data / evidence available helped inform the proposal? Did it support the proposal and how? If the data / evidence didn't support the proposal why was this?</p> <p>The plan has also been informed by a broad range of visioning sessions available for all stakeholders and is informed by a range of stakeholder surveys whose outcomes have been analysed across 2021-2022.</p>

Were there any gaps identified in the evidence and data used to develop this proposal and how will these gaps be filled?
Details of further consultation can be included in Section 9.

Are there any gaps in the existing data and how will you go about filling these gaps?

No

9. Consultation

(In some instances, there is a legal requirement to consult. In others, even where there is no legal obligation, there may be a legitimate expectation from people that a consultation will take place.)

Briefly describe any recent or planned consultations paying particular attention to evidencing the Gunning Principles.

The Business Plan has been through a consultation process. The Consultees are noted below:

- EAS staff
- Directors of Education (within South East Wales) and Diocesan Directors
- Regional Joint Executive Group
- EAS Company Board
- EAS Audit and Risk Assurance Committee
- Individual local authority education scrutiny committees
- All Headteachers from within the region
- All Chairs of Governors from within the region
- School Councils from within the region
- All school based Professional Learning Leads
- EAS Supporting School Trade Union Group (SSTU Group)

When were they consulted did the consultation take place at the formative stage and was adequate time given for consultees to consider and respond?

From October – December 2021

Was sufficient information provided to consultees to allow them to make an informed decision on the proposal?

The full draft Business Plan was shared with all consultees.

What were the key findings?

All feedback has been considered and where appropriate incorporated into the final Business Plan.

How have the consultation findings been taken into account?

All feedback has been considered and where appropriate incorporated into the final Business Plan.

10. Monitoring and Review

<p>How will the implementation and the impact of the proposal be monitored, including implementation of any amendments?</p>	<p>For example, what monitoring will be used? How frequent? There are many ways of capturing and sharing what the EAS does which are exemplified in this model as outputs. The progress on the implementation and impact of the Business Plan will be reported to the Joint Executive Group and Company Board. These reports, as in previous years, will be suitable for scrutiny activity at local authority and national level. In addition, the progress made towards the implementation of key actions will be reported at each meeting of the Joint Executive Group and Company Board. This approach will be aligned to the national changes in the accountability system.</p>
<p>What are the practical arrangements for monitoring?</p>	<p>Bi-monthly meetings of EAS Joint Executive Group, Company Board and the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, all of whom have council representatives. All groups are chaired by an elected member.</p>
<p>How will the results of the monitoring be used to develop future proposals?</p>	<p>In the same way that this business plan has been informed by previous business plans. Through a comprehensive evaluation and subsequent consultation process.</p>
<p>When is the proposal due to be reviewed?</p>	<p>Bi-monthly internally to governance groups.</p>
<p>Who is responsible for ensuring this happens?</p>	<p>Overall EAS Managing Director supported by broader Senior Leadership Team</p>

11. Recommendation and Reasoning

<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Implement proposal with no amendments</p>
	<p>Implement proposal taking account of the mitigating actions outlined</p>
	<p>Reject the proposal due to disproportionate impact on equality, poverty and socio-economic disadvantage</p>

12. Reason(s) for Recommendation

(Provide below a summary of the Fairness and Equalities Impact Assessment.)

The EAS is required to submit an annual overarching regional Business Plan on an annual basis. The proposal is for cabinet to approve the business plan (which commenced on 1 April 2022, following consultation from January to early March) prior to submission to Welsh Government.

The plan provides support for school improvement services directly to schools across the region. The plan does not include changes to the services, or delivery methods for any particular group or groups. It is therefore at least neutral in its impact with many positive benefits, particularly in relation to wellbeing goals and support for disadvantaged learners.

13. Version Control

(The IIA should be used in the early stages of the proposal development process. The IIA can be strengthened as time progresses to help shape the proposal. The Version Control section will act as an audit trail to evidence how the IIA has been developed over time)

Version No.	Author	Brief description of the amendments/update	Revision Date
1	Edward Pryce		13/1/2022

Integrated Impact Assessment Author

Name:	Edward Pryce
Job Title:	Assistant Director – Policy and Strategy
Date:	13/1/2022

EAS SMT Approval

Name:	Geraint Willington		
Job Title:	Director		
Signature:		Date:	13/1/2022

Agenda Item 10

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer:

Committee: **Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee**
Date of meeting: **15th March 2022**
Report Subject: **Inspire 2 Achieve and Work Performance Report January – December 2021**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Jo Collins, Executive Member for Education**
Report Submitted by: **Joanne Sims, Service Manager – Young People and Partnerships**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
22/02/21	24/02/21	02.03.22			15/3/21			

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Members with an opportunity to scrutinise the local Inspire 2 Achieve and Inspire 2 Work projects funded by the European Social Fund (ESF). These projects are part of the Youth Service's approach to reducing the numbers of young people becoming Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET).

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 In 2013, Blaenau Gwent Youth Service led on the development of two ESF operations across West Wales and the Valleys (10 Local Authorities and 4 FE Colleges) called Inspire 2 Achieve (11-24 at risk of NEET young people) and Inspire 2 Work (16-24 NEET young people). In July 2015, the lead was transitioned to Environment and Regeneration, whilst the local delivery projects are managed by the Youth Service within the Education Directorate.
- 2.2 The ESF Inspire 2 Achieve project was approved by WEFO in February 2016, with Inspire 2 Work being approved in November 2016, both approved until 2022 with a recent agreed final extension until April 2023. The Youth Service had established both teams by 2017, with additional posts for 6 to 7 transition, emotional and mental health and health and fitness recruited later. These projects have ensured continued support for young people both at risk of becoming and currently NEET for the past 5 years.
- 2.3 The Inspire projects are underpinned by the Welsh Government's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF), which outlines 6 key areas which Councils are required to have in place, to support young people who are at risk or who are currently NEET. The Inspire projects are how the Council provides the brokerage/lead worker role for young people.

2.4 The two Inspire projects have ensured that as a Council we deliver the requirements of the YEPF and that the numbers of young people becoming NEET continue to reduce. The additional posts address the emerging themes identified since the onset of the project, which are contributory risk factors, which include transition from year 6 to 7 and additional support for young people pre and post 16 around emotional and mental health needs.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 It is recommended that Members scrutinise the current performance of the two projects and consider the following options:

3.1.1 Option 1 – Members are asked to scrutinise the information detailed within the report and accept the report.

3.1.2 Option 2 – Members do not accept the report and contribute by making appropriate recommendations to the Executive Committee.

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

4.1 The Inspire programmes contribute to all areas of the Blaenau Gwent Wellbeing Plan through supporting young people to overcome barriers in their life enabling them to become positive members of the community. The programmes also contribute to key objectives within the Corporate Plan, provide support to some of the most vulnerable young people in Blaenau Gwent, supporting them to overcome significant barriers to their learning, training and/or employment.

4.2 This work also ensures that the Welsh Government's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF) 6 key areas are fully met.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 Impact on Budget:

The two programmes are externally funded by ESF and so have no impact on core budget. Although, there is an amount of match funding required, this is minimal and is provided by some officer in-kind time from the Service Manager – Young People and Partnerships, one Youth Service Team Manager and then other externally funded posts.

The financial profiles for the two Inspire programmes for 2016 - 2023 are overleaf:

I2W

Total Project Costs - £2,440,445

ESF Grant receivable - £2,148,723

Match Funding identified - £310,874

I2A

Total Project Costs - £3,787,353

ESF Grant Receivable - £3,325,260

Match Funding Identified - £470,026

Redundancy costs are built into the lifetime of the programme.

5.2 Risk Including Mitigating Actions:

There is positive news in that securing ESF monies until 2023 has provided some stability for targeted services for the past 5 years. However, plans need to be put in place prior to this end date to secure support for young people beyond this date. If the entire project support ends in 2022, this will have a detrimental impact on managing the NEET agenda. This has been flagged up as a risk and is considered in the Education Directorate risk planning arrangements this year as well as the Corporate Risk Register (CRR). The Service Manager now attends the Regional Skills Partnership Cluster group which is preparing for future funding from UK Government which is expected to support previously funded ESF programmes. However, all guidance released from UK Government implies that future funding will be focussed on Adult Employability programmes, and not young people. This issue is now being escalated across key departments in Welsh Government and with the Regional Skills Partnership.

5.3 Legal:

There are no legal implications for this report.

5.4 Human Resources:

There are no immediate implications for Human Resources. However, as the end date of 2023 approaches, all staff within the two projects will need to be put on notice.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 Performance Information and Data:

Although support is provided to young people up to the age of 25, Local Authorities are measured and compared nationally against the recorded numbers of young people leaving school each year at the end of Year 11 and then becoming NEET. Since 2010, Blaenau Gwent has seen a steady reduction in the numbers of young people leaving in Year 11 becoming NEET from 8.7% (74 young people) in 2009/10 to 1.5% (9 young people) in 2020/21. This is the same as the previous year, and is in line with the lowest figure ever achieved. The national comparative report is published later this year.

6.1.1 Considering the context of the past two years, it is extremely positive that so many young people transitioned successfully and maintained their post 16 placement. This reduction is attributed to improved partnership working

but also due to the focussed efforts of the Youth Service using ESF funded programmes, initially Prevent 14-19 and now Inspire.

6.1.2 **Post Covid/Responding to Poverty Agenda**

Since March 2020, the Youth Service has supported the response to COVID-19 and Inspire have been part of that response. Youth workers are back in schools and youth centres and support has moved from dealing with essentials to supporting wellbeing. This support is provided through one to one and group work, with a growing increase in requests for detached youth work. A full summer and winter programme was provided as part of the Summer of Fun and Winter of Wellbeing. All opportunities provided by the Youth Service are free, food and transport provided. Recent examples are a residential to Jamie's Farm, a reward trip to Cardiff City Stadium and a Christmas trip to Winter Wonderland. The service works with partners to address identified need, examples include providing clothing for work/sports/proms, free gym passes to encourage healthy living and wellbeing. As part of period poverty, sanitary products are available for free in all youth service settings with this widened to include other personal hygiene items such as toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap and deodorants. The service has partnered again this year to provide Christmas Hampers to those in need. Inspire works closely with the Youth Homelessness team to ensure that appropriate referrals are made and that young people are completing necessary paperwork to secure shelter. If accommodation is offered the Youth Service supports young people to ensure they are in receipt of the correct benefits, support with budgeting plans and access funds for furniture and appliances where needed. All projects assist young people with managing their finances, responsibilities and budget when the need is identified. Where issues of poverty arise, staff are able to identify this and suggest referrals to Safeguarding or Families First for wider family support

6.1.3 Inspire 2 Achieve (11-16)

The Youth Service Team Manager: Education, Employment and Training oversees both the Inspire programmes.

6.1.4 There are 12 members of staff in the Inspire 2 Achieve (I2A) team. This includes 1 x Team Lead, 4 x School Based Youth Workers, 4 x Transition Youth Workers (2 x Yr 6/7, 2 x Yr 11 including year 11 Electively Home Educated young people), 1 x Alternative Education youth worker, 1 x Group Delivery Youth worker and 1 x Emotional and Mental Health youth worker. Usual support includes one to one support and group programmes depending on the needs of the individual in an out of school.

6.1.5 The projected outcomes (targets) for the lifetime of the project and progress for Inspire 2 Achieve (aged 11-16) are set out below:

- Total number of young people supported: 1196 (699 males, 497 females)
- 7% to gain qualifications (84 young people),
- 20% to enter into further learning when leaving school (239 young people)

- 50% to be at reduced risk of becoming NEET (598 young people)
- 6.1.6 Since 2016 (when team was established):
- 1005 young people (out of 1196) have been supported, (501 males, 503 females), with one young person identifying as Non-Binary.
- 6.1.7 Of the 470 officially closed, the following outcomes are recorded:
- 19% (90 young people) have gained qualifications. This is 8% against overall target, exceeding the original target.
 - 42% (196 young people) have made successful transition in to posts 16 Education, Training and Employment (ETE). This is 16% against overall target, we are expecting to easily exceed the target of 20%.
 - 51% (240 young people) have reduced their risk of becoming NEET. We expect this percentage to be increased and exceeded by April 2022.
 - 93% of participants have improved their 'soft' skills.
- 6.1.8 For the period of January to December 2021, 96 new young people were supported (33 males, 63 female). It is important to note that due to the Covid 19 pandemic and subsequent issues this raised, I2A staff extended support to an additional 300 young people. The outcomes for these young people are still being collated. However, a cohort of these young people made successful transitions in to post 16 ETE or have developed the skills to function and have been closed (2022). This has enabled staff to offer support to new referrals across all school and alternative education sites.
- 6.1.9 Inspire 2 Work (16-24)
The team has reduced from 6.5 to 4.5 this year as two members of staff have moved to the youth homelessness work in the Youth Service. The team, managed by the Youth Service Team Manager, includes 3 x core I2W youth workers (Education, Employment and Training), 1 x Health and Fitness youth worker and 0.5 emotional and mental health youth worker. This project also funds one day a week counselling for 16-24 year olds and part funds a psychologist for the service.
- 6.1.10 Inspire support for young people aged 16-24 is provided on a one to one and group basis, delivering projects such as gym, fitness, training, enterprise and wellbeing and plays a pivotal role in supporting young people on Tiers 1,2 and 3 of the Careers Wales 5 Tier Model. Support is also offered to young people linked to the DWP, Housing associations, Social Services and other agencies. I2W can only support any young person who is NEET, and not living in a Communities First area, as Communities 4 Work is based in those areas. The reality is that the majority of young people coming through to the team often need long term intensive support, addressing issues such mental health, low self-esteem and housing. Therefore, the team work closely with other Youth Service colleagues and other partners, and small steps are seen as a big success.
- 6.1.11

The Communities 4 Work (C4W) Triage partnership work is pivotal. Each I2W Youth Worker acts as a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for each C4W cluster area. All referrals for young people who live in Communities First post code areas must go to the Triage post in Communities 4 Work (C4F) before agreed to refer to Inspire. This ultimately means that Inspire has limited control over how many young people can access the project.

6.1.12

The projected outcomes (targets) for the lifetime of the project and progress for Inspire 2 Work (16-24) are set out below:

- Total number of young people supported: 780 (438 males, 342 females)
- 50% to gain qualifications (390 young people),
- 20% to enter into further learning when leaving school (156 young people)
- 20% to gain employment NEET (156 young people)

6.1.13

Since 2017 (when team was established) 315 young people have been supported (186 males, 129 females). Of the 265 closed, the following outcomes are recorded:

- 57 achieved a qualification (22%)
- 71 supported into further learning (27%)
- 76 supported into employment (28%)
- 99 still NEET but improved 'soft' skills (37%)

6.1.15

Of the 265 closed, 202 (96%) improved their wellbeing support scores, meaning that their overall awareness and understanding of themselves and the wider world has significantly improved.

6.1.16

For the period of January to December 2021, 152 new young people were referred, with only 59 eligible through the Triage process and enrolled (38 males, 21 females). Out of the 59, 21 have now moved onto further learning and employment, with 28 continuing with support into 2022.

6.1.17

It is clear to see that the sharing of participants between the Inspire 2 Work programme and C4W programme (C4W is an all Wales programme, run by Welsh Government, funded by ESF) has made meeting and/or exceeding targets difficult. This has been the same experience across the region where Local Authorities have a higher percentage of prior Communities First areas. WEFO and the lead team are aware of this situation as all ESF programmes for this age group are facing a similar situation. Despite this, the numbers of young people being supported are good, with positive achievements being made by all young people. Nevertheless, future funding developments needs to take this into consideration, as more young people could be supported if the tight geographical restrictions on where they live could be removed.

6.2

Expected outcome for the public:

Through the delivery of these programmes, young people will be supported at the times when they most need it and are more likely to achieve better outcomes in school, training and employment. The by-

product of this enhanced support should lead to more economically active young people, more young people reaching their potential in secondary education and further learning/training and less mental health barriers hindering the development of young people.

- 6.3 Involvement (Consultation, engagement, participation):
From the outset, young people, schools and partner organisations influenced the design of the programmes.
- 6.4 Thinking for the long term:
The support provided is expected to better prepare young people for their future and beyond the lifetime of the programmes.
- 6.5 Preventative Focus:
Both Inspire programmes are preventative in their approach. Inspire 2 Achieve exist to help 'prevent' young people from becoming NEET. Inspire 2 Work exists to 'prevent' young people from developing ingrained negative behaviours and lifestyles into their future.
- 6.6 Collaboration/Partnership Working:
The programmes are collaborative in their nature as they are a regionally planned programme, locally delivered. The local Raising Aspirations Group holds the Youth Service to account for achieving the outcomes in both Inspire programmes.
- 6.7 Integration:
These programmes impact upon key objectives for both Education and Environment and Regeneration Directorates, including educational attainment, attendance and behaviour and addressing skills and employment for 11-24 year olds.
- 6.8 EgIA:
N/A as this programme will not have any negative impact on protected characteristics, only positive.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

- 7.1 The Raising Aspirations Group monitors the progress of the local delivery of the two Inspire programmes. A performance monitoring report is presented annually to Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise the local delivery. Annual reports and evaluation reports are also provided to Education Directorate Management Team (DMT).

Background Documents / Electronic Links

None

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Agenda Item 11

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

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

Committee: **Education and Learning Scrutiny**
Date of meeting: **Tuesday 15th March 2022**
Report Subject: **Welsh Public Library Standards (WPLS) Annual Return 2020/21**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr. Joanne Collins, Executive Member for Education**
Report Submitted by: **Lynn Phillips, Corporate Director of Education**
Joanne Sims, Service Manager – Young People and Partnerships

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
✓	24/03/22	02.03.22			15/03/22			

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider the report submitted to the Museums, Archives and Libraries Division (MALD) of Welsh Government with respect to the fourth year of the Sixth Assessment Framework for the Welsh Public Library Standards (WPLS) return 2020/21. Previous years' reports have focussed on Welsh Government's feedback to Blaenau Gwent. However, a pan Wales only report is being published this year, and therefore, no Blaenau Gwent specific feedback will be provided. Consequently, this report will focus on the Blaenau Gwent Libraries local update.

2.0 Scope and Background

2.1 Aneurin Leisure Trust has been commissioned by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council to deliver the Library Service as part of their general operations since 2014. In April 2020, the client function for the Leisure Trust moved to the Education Directorate. This is the second year that this report has been submitted to the Education and Learning Scrutiny. Public libraries are a statutory service as laid out in the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. For over a decade the Welsh Government has implemented successive assessment frameworks which have helped bring a more consistent level of public library provision across Wales.

2.2 Under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 it is a statutory duty for every library authority (Local Authorities) in Wales to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof'.

2.3 The Sixth Assessment Framework for Welsh Public Library Standards Annual Return 2019/20 covers the fourth extended year of a three-year cycle of the new quality framework "**Connected and Ambitious Libraries: The sixth quality framework of Welsh Libraries 2017-20**". It has now been confirmed, however, that the framework will be extended again for another year.

2.4 This report has been prepared based on information provided by Blaenau Gwent's annual return, case studies and narrative report submitted to the

Museums, Archives and Libraries Division of Welsh Government in July 2021. This was submitted through the Aneurin Leisure Trust.

2.5 The sixth framework of Welsh public library standards builds on the developments in the fifth framework. It comprises 12 core entitlements and 16 quality indicators to monitor how well library services realise these benefits for the local community and the people of Wales.

2.6 Blaenau Gwent's Library annual return highlights the following performance against the WPLS:

- Blaenau Gwent continues to achieve all 12 core entitlements.
- 10 of the indicators were removed due to the pandemic and there are only 6 remaining. These include: WPLSQI 7 Location of Service Points, WPLSQI 8 Library Use, WPLSQI 9 Up-to-date and appropriate reading material, WPLSQI 10 Welsh Language Resources, WPLSQI 13 Staffing Levels and Qualifications, WPLSQI 14 Operational Expenditure.
- WPLSQ1 8 Library use:
The number of external visits to the website reduced dramatically, however, the WPLS do not take into account social media channels but in 2020/21 the library service had a reach of 87,874 via Facebook and received 9,577 Facebook post engagements.
- WPLSQ19 Up to date Reading Equipment:
Total materials expenditure increased to £62,971, against £51,681 for the previous year. This reflects an increased investment in physical stock plus Borrowbox to meet the needs of the pandemic (Ebooks / Eaudio).
- WPLSQ1 13 Staffing Levels and Qualifications:
Remained stable (still the lowest in Wales). However, a plan is in place to address this moving forward.
- Library services in Blaenau Gwent are delivered by the Aneurin Leisure Trust on behalf of the local authority, and are a key component in both the Local Authority and Trust's service delivery plans.
- The continued partnership work with key organisations remains a strength of the service and enables Blaenau Gwent to support the needs within communities and deliver appropriate activities e.g. the Community Hubs provision.

2.7 Importantly, the return indicates that overall Blaenau Gwent has improved its performance in this fourth year of the sixth framework.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

It is recommended that Members scrutinise the content of the report and consider the following options;

3.1 Option 1 – Members are asked to scrutinise the information detailed within the report and accept the report.

3.2 Option 2 – Members do not accept the report and contribute by making appropriate recommendations to the Executive Committee.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**
- 4.1 The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 sets out the statutory duties of the public library authorities to 'provide a comprehensive and efficient library service' to their communities.
- 4.2 The Library Service fully supports Blaenau Gwent's Well-being Plan and also acts as an agency for economic wellbeing in our local communities through supporting learning at all stages of life helping with illiteracy, lack of skills and the digital divide. The Library Service also contributes to a range of Welsh Government outcomes such as literacy, skills and learning, digital inclusion, poverty, health and well-being. Library provision spans these outcomes, offering a range of services which often support two or more of the outcomes simultaneously.
- 4.3 The Library Service is seen as a key partner in tackling the problems of social isolation, inequality, disadvantage, fractured communities and ill health. The library service acts as a single point of contact for local people to access public services and also gain information on local health issues, providing space for local voluntary organisations to provide advice and information on health and other matters.
5. **Implications Against Each Option**

There are no current implications associated with the options proposed in section 3 above
- 5.1 **Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)**

During the review of the Leisure Trust, the Trust committed to increasing the book fund from £27,000 to circa £43,000 in 2018/19 and be reviewed year on year in order to achieve a more appropriate budget going forward. In 2020/21, the Trust spent £62,971, a further increase exceeding the original agreement.
- 5.1.1 Furthermore, the Trust has invested on a pan Wales level in Borrow box to increase the availability of eBooks given the current pandemic. This includes spend on Welsh Language books to meet that target.
- 5.2 **Risk including Mitigating Actions**

There are no risks associated with this report. Regular dialogue through newly established strategic governance arrangements ensures that collectively, between the Council and the Trust, the Library Service is supported to meet the standards required.
- 5.3 **Legal**

There are no legal issues associated with this report

5.4 **Human Resources**

There are no direct staffing issues with respect to Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council in relation to this report. However, the report highlights concern about the level of staffing within the library service.

5.4.1 This will be an area of discussion and monitoring through the new governance arrangements between the Council and the Leisure Trust.

6.0 **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

Blaenau Gwent continues to meet all of the 12 core entitlements in full. The return has highlighted that overall Blaenau Gwent has improved its performance in this fourth year of the sixth framework, with an improvement in Welsh Language resources in 2020/21.

6.1.1 Key developments this year include:

- The Library Service abolished fines on overdue books, assisting towards a more equitable society, removing barriers to engagement.
- Worked in Partnership with 'Good Thing Foundation' to provide on-line and face to face support for the 20/21 Census.
- Partnership with 'We are Digital' to provide face-to-face support to enable clients to access the EU Settlement Scheme.
- Over 640 welfare calls to vulnerable clients, when face-to-face was suspended.
- Call and Collect established in each branch, extremely positive feedback, as reflected in the case studies attached. (Staff choose the books and client collects them from just inside the door).
- Community Loan Scheme expanded into local Children's Mental Health Unit 'Reading Well for Children' collection has been established at the unit, expanding the reach of the service and promoting good mental health (Case study).

6.1.2 Community Hubs have been established through the libraries in partnership with the Council. The impact of this will be reported in the following return in more detail, although initial feedback from the public is extremely positive.

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

To be able to continue to access a fully accessible and professional library service within the local community.

6.3 **Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)**

Local people, groups/agencies and volunteers are engaged through regular customer surveys, in line with the Welsh Public Library Standards (WLPS)

- 6.4 **Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)**
The library standards will help establish a sustainable model for the Library Service going forward.
- 6.5 **Preventative focus**
Libraries provide support with many key preventative approaches, such as improving literacy levels for children and young people through early intervention within communities
- 6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**
Partnership working with a number of agencies/organisations is embedded in the ethos of the Library Service.
- 6.7 **Integration (across service areas)**
The library service has close links to Education, Adult and Community Learning and also acts as a direct link to other Council Services through providing the use of ICT to the local community also providing access to third sector organisations. The move of the Leisure Trust to the Education Directorate's portfolio will only strengthen further these links.
- 6.8 **EqIA**
N/A
7. **Monitoring Arrangements**
- 7.1 Performance reports related to the Leisure Trust are monitored through Strategic Leisure Partnership Board, Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee, the Executive and Council.

Background Documents /Electronic Links
N/A

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Agenda Item 12

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer:

Committee: **Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee**
Date of meeting: **Tuesday 15th March 2022**
Report Subject: **Blaenau Gwent Admissions Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education 2023/24**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr. Joanne Collins, Executive Member Education**
Report Submitted by: **Claire Gardner, Service Manager Education Transformation and Business Change**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
✓	17.02.22	02.03.22			15.03.22	16.03.22		

1. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of the report is to outline the outcome of the annual consultation process, in line with the revised draft of the Blaenau Gwent Admissions Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education 2023/24. Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee are asked to provide their views and comments on the document in preparation for the 2023/24 admission round, prior to its determination and publication on the 15th April 2022.

2. Scope and Background

2.1 The Welsh Government's School Admissions Code (2013) dictates that Councils must review their admissions policies annually for consultation and publication by April 15th in the academic year preceding the admissions round. Blaenau Gwent School Admissions Policy outlines the arrangements, criteria and relevant legislation that underpin school admission processes and methodology, and has been drafted in line with the aforementioned Code, along with the Admissions Appeals Code (2013). The Admissions Authority must ensure that the following information is provided during the consultation process:

- 2.2
- i) The admission numbers for each school
 - ii) Application procedures and the timetable for the admission process
 - iii) The criteria to be applied to applications in the event that there are more applications than places for a school
 - iv) Arrangements for waiting lists and how they operate
 - v) Arrangements for the processing of late applications
 - vi) Details of how parents will be notified of a decision on their application, as well as appeal procedures should their application be unsuccessful

2.3 The primary changes (detailed in red within **Appendix 1**) to the policy document for the 2023/24 academic session are as follows:

- Updated consultation and application details;
- A review of the nursery, primary and secondary admission numbers in line with the annual capacity review process, which considers

changes to the configuration of teaching and learning environments. This process is carried out in line with the Welsh Government Measuring the Capacity of Schools in Wales Guidance (2011). The final agreed capacity calculations are then used to inform admission numbers detailed with the policy document;

- A review of the dates for the admission round(s), associated processing and offer deadlines;
- A review of the admissions appeals for primary and secondary school places. This is due to the Welsh Government introducing legislation which temporarily relaxed the requirements relating to admission appeals, in order to allow appeals to take place despite the restrictions imposed by the Coronavirus pandemic;
- Changes to terminology in line with ALN reform;
- A section was added to the policy, highlighting the arrangements for:
 - Children of UK Service Personnel and other Crown Servants
 - Children housed via domestic violence services
 - Gypsy and traveller children
- Cylch Meithrin Brynithel have been added to the policy in line with their early year's education provider status; and,
- Updates as requested by consultees (detailed below).

2.4 The draft Blaenau Gwent Admissions Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education (2023/24, please refer to **Appendix 1** for the policy document), was distributed to relevant consultees as outlined within Welsh Government's School Admissions Code (2013, pages 6-7) and detailed on page 2 of the appended policy consultation document. The consultation period commenced on Monday 21st January 2022 and concluded on Friday 11th February 2022. During the consultation period, 3 responses were received as follows:

- Glanhwy Primary School made a request for the Nursery intake timings to reduce to support and improve early language skills. The Admissions Authority explained to the consultee that the policy is developed in line with the framework detailed within the Welsh Government School Admissions Code (2013) paragraph 2.57 that states that Local authorities in Wales are under a duty to secure sufficient provision of nursery places for their area for children in the term following their third birthday. Therefore, there is limited flexibility in terms of what can be changed in respect of the nursery intake.
- St Mary's R.C. Primary School requested that the policy was updated to reflect the changes they have made in offering full-time nursery places to all pupils e.g. both rising 3's and nursery pupils – the policy was amended on Page 4 to reflect this.
- Cwm Primary School asked that the processes around statemented pupils are reviewed – the policy reflects the process, but was strengthened to include more information on excepted pupil status.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 **Option 1:** Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee considers and accepts the policy document; or,

- 3.2 **Option 2:** Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee considers the policy document and provides comments relating to improvements that can be made in consideration of the publication date (15th April 2021).
4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**
- 4.1 In accordance with the Welsh Government's School Admissions and Admission Appeals Code (2013), there is a statutory requirement upon the Council to determine and publish their admissions arrangements annually by the 15th April, the year preceding the admissions round to which they apply.
- 4.2 Education is a priority in the Council's Corporate Plan of which the planning of school places, is an essential component.
5. **Implications Against Each Option**
- 5.1 **Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)**
There are no direct budget implications associated with this report.
- 5.2 **Risk including Mitigating Actions**
There is a risk that Council will not be compliant with the Welsh Government School Admissions Code (2013), if the policy is not approved and published by the 15th April 2021. The timeline for approval take account of the publication requirements and dates.
- 5.3 **Legal**
The Council are legally required to prepare, implement and update accessibility strategies for all schools for which they are the responsible body.
- 5.4 **Human Resources**
There are no direct legal implications associated with this report.
- 5.4.1 The Schools Admissions Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education 2022/23 has been developed by the Education Transformation team, who oversee implementation and reviews of the policy within Blaenau Gwent.
- 5.4.2 The Corporate Director, supported by Wider Corporate Leadership Team, will have a key role in ensuring the key staff-related actions are effectively delivered.
6. **Supporting Evidence**
- 6.1 **Performance Information and Data**
Please refer to **Appendix 2**, for a summary of the 2021/22 Admissions Round. The Council are presently implementing the 2022/23 policy.

- 6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**
The public can expect a fair and equitable admissions process for all pupils in accessing education, and where possible place allocation in line with parent/pupil preference.
- 6.3 **Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)**
Stakeholders and end user needs and engagement are of paramount importance and a key focus of both the policy development, and ongoing admissions process. The Policy is subject to consultation on an annual basis, in line with the Welsh Government School Admissions Code (2013). In addition, the admission arrangements and forms are developed in consultation with key stakeholders including: schools, partners, governing bodies, parents etc.
- 6.4 **Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)**
The admissions process contributes to effective pupil place planning and management, ensuring that there are sufficient pupil places and promoting access to education for all Blaenau Gwent pupils.
- 6.5 **Preventative focus**
The admissions process prevents oversubscription of schools and inequality in line with access to education.
- 6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**
The Admissions Authority works with other internal admission authorities i.e. the faith and foundation schools, along with external admission authorities within the region and partners such as Social Services, to ensure that there are sufficient arrangements and pupil places for Blaenau Gwent Schools. Also, supporting effective appeal, capacity assessment, childcare offer and other associated processes. The Blaenau Gwent Admission Forum which is comprised of school, council, governor and other service representatives; oversee application of the policy, procedures and compliance with the Welsh Government School Admissions and Admission Appeals Codes (2013).
- 6.7 **Integration (across service areas)**
The Blaenau Gwent School Admissions Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education is aligned to early year's education, pupil place planning, school organisation, the work of social services, planning in line with housing developments etc. Service integration is essential to ensure effective policy implementation, whilst also securing appropriate access to education for current and prospective pupils. The Admissions process is monitored and assured by the Admissions Forum, works in accordance with ALN and Managed Move Panels and associated process. Work with Social Services, Health & Safety, Early Years, Health, Occupational etc. is ongoing to ensure effective transition processes are in place.
- 6.8 **Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions**
Any physical works planned and undertaken within education settings are planned in order to take account of decarbonisation and reducing carbon

emissions. The Minister for Education and Welsh Language Jeremy Miles, announced on November 2nd 2021 that all new school and college buildings, major refurbishments and extension projects, will be required to meet Net Zero Carbon targets from January 1st 2022. The Council are committed to and have begun working with Welsh Government in planning implementation of this agenda.

6.9a Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment

A Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment has been carried out in line with the final draft of the policy prior to approval, with the impact overall being neutral.

6.9b. Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Screening Assessment (EQIA) has been completed in line with the policy, which determined that there is no negative impact upon the protected characteristics. The policy promotes equality of opportunity for all, with regards to accessing education.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

7.1 The Admissions Authority monitors the development and delivery admission round(s) and processes on a weekly basis; reporting the Blaenau Gwent Admissions Forum quarterly, providing monthly data analysis and undertaking annual appraisals in line with the delivery of the admission arrangements, which are reported via Councils political processes.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Draft Admissions Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education (2023/24)

Appendix 2 – Annual Admissions Analysis 2021/22

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2023/24

Blaenau Gwent Admission Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education



Consultation Process

In accordance with the Welsh Government School Admissions Code (2013) Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council consults upon its admission arrangements on an annual basis, attempting where possible to mirror the admission round timescales of neighbouring admission authorities. The coordinated admission arrangements will determine the date at which application forms are sent to parents as well as the publication of an agreed closing date (For more information please refer to page 13).

Consultation will commence on Friday 21st January 2022 and conclude at 5 pm on Friday 11th February 2022. The admission arrangements will then be published on 15th April 2022, the year preceding the 2023/2024 admissions round. The Local Authority will ensure that the following information is provided during the consultation process:

- i) Admission numbers for each school
- ii) Application procedures and the timetable for the admission process
- iii) The criteria to be applied to applications in the event that there are more applications than places for a School
- iv) Arrangements for waiting lists and how they operate
- v) Arrangements for the processing of late applications
- vi) Details of how parents will be notified of a decision on their application, as well as appeal procedures should their application be unsuccessful.

The Local Authority will consult with the following parties on its admission arrangements:

Headteachers of relevant Schools:	All headteachers of community Schools in Blaenau Gwent
Governing body of relevant Schools:	All governing bodies of community Schools in Blaenau Gwent
All neighbouring Local Authorities within the area:	Caerphilly County Borough Council Torfaen County Borough Council Monmouthshire County Borough Council Newport City Council
Admission Authorities for all other schools in the area:	All headteachers of voluntary aided schools in Blaenau Gwent All governing bodies of voluntary aided schools in Blaenau Gwent Brynmawr Foundation School All Saints RC Primary School St Marys Church in Wales Primary School St Marys RC Primary School St Joseph's RC Primary School

Blaenau Gwent Proposed Admission Policy for Statutory Education 2023/24

1. Introduction/ Purpose

There is a requirement upon Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council as a directive from Welsh Government, to develop, review and consult upon the Blaenau Gwent School Admissions Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education, on an annual basis. The purpose of the policy in question is to guide and inform the statutory admissions function within Blaenau Gwent, ensuring equality of opportunity for all current and prospective pupils. ***Please note that the following non-maintained schools and non-maintained early year's education providers are responsible for the development of and governed by their own individual Admissions Policies:**

- Acorns Nursery
- All Saints Roman Catholic Primary School
- Brynmawr Foundation School
- **Cylch Meithrin Brynithel**
- Mrs Tiggywinkles Day Nursery
- St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School
- St Mary's Church in Wales Primary School
- St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School

The Blaenau Gwent Admissions Policy for Nursery (non-statutory) and Statutory Education has been updated in line with confirmed admission numbers and the dates from the 2022/23 admission round. All other content remains the same. The policy is fully compliant with the Welsh Government School Admissions Code (2013) and School Admissions Appeal Code (2013). This document outlines requirements associated with and guidance relating to pupil admissions and in-year transfers/admissions for nursery, primary, and secondary school place allocation within Blaenau Gwent.

The Welsh Minister for Education and Skills in 2013 outlined the following key considerations in relation to how pupil place allocation in respect of admissions should ensure equality of opportunity:

“The process of starting or transferring between schools can be a time of uncertainty or anxiety; therefore, it is essential that the principles of fairness and openness are applied to all aspects of school admissions. A properly functioning admissions system, that reflects this, can play a vital part in helping to minimise concerns. It is crucial in delivering equality of opportunity.”

Minister for Education and Skills (2013)

2. Admission Types

2.1 Nursery Education

The Council provides free part-time nursery education to every child and every child is entitled to a 'rising 3' place from the start of the term following their third birthday, at either school nursery provision or a quality assured early years' education provider.

- Nursery places are in the main offered on a part time basis (am and/or pm sessions which vary in each school throughout the year). Children start attending nursery classes at the age of 3 or 4 years.
- There are three intakes for rising 3 pupils per year as follows:
 - **January**
 - **April**
 - **September**

*Please note that the specific dates for intake change on an annual basis linked to school term dates. These dates are communicated within the Starting Schools Booklet and on nursery application forms, in line with the admission rounds for nursery, reception and secondary school places.

- Some governing bodies offer full-time provision, which is funded directly from the school budget. The nursery entitlement within Blaenau Gwent is part-time which equates to 12.5 hours per/week (2.5 hours per/day), other than the following nursery provisions, which offer:
 - **Blaen y Cwm Primary School - full time rising 3 and nursery places**
 - **Coed y Garn Primary School - full time rising 3 and nursery places**
 - **Rhos y Fedwen Primary School - full time rising 3 and nursery places**
 - **St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School – part-time rising 3 places and full-time nursery places**
 - **St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School - part-time rising 3 places and full-time nursery places**
 - **Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg – full time rising 3 and nursery places**
- The regulations pertaining to nursery education are specific and confirm that: **attending a nursery class does NOT give a child priority for a place in the reception year group. A separate application is required for this purpose.**

2.2 Admission to Primary Education

Children are eligible for admission to school at the start of the school year in which their fifth birthday falls (i.e. 1st September to 31st August inclusive).

It is against the law to prevent your child from accessing education at the start of the school year in which their fifth birthday falls.

The Council must provide education places for the admission of all children in the September following their fifth birthday; however, parents/ guardians or carers have the right to:

- a. request that the date their child is admitted to school is deferred until the term after the child's fifth birthday; or,
- b. request that their child takes up the place part-time until the term after their fifth birthday.

2.2.1 Allocation of Primary School Places at Abertillery Learning Community

In the case of Abertillery Learning Community Primary Phase, the admission authority (Blaenau Gwent Council) is responsible for placing pupils at the Learning Community. These pupils are then allocated a site within the Learning Community by Abertillery Learning Community Leadership team and Governing Body in line with the following criteria:

1. Siblings in the campus already
2. Catchment area
3. Ensuring each session stays within the agreed teacher to learner ratio

Once the site has been confirmed the notification process is then administered by the admissions authority. This process has been established in accordance with the Welsh Government School Admissions Code (2013) point 2.51 which states:

“Where split site schools are in operation, the admission authority **should** in most cases, apply the admission arrangements as if the school were a single unit. They **should** make it clear to parents that admission applications are made to the school as a whole and not to a particular site. The site that children attend is a matter for the internal organisation of the school. Appeals **cannot** be made against the site allocated”.

The Council's School Organisation Policy (2015), advocates having the right schools, of the right size, in the right places. All school organisation proposals are assessed in line with the Council's admissions and pupil place planning arrangements, to ensure that there is sufficient capacity within Blaenau Gwent Schools to accommodate local pupils.

2.3 Admission to Secondary School

Children/ young people transfer from primary school to secondary school at the beginning of the school year, following their eleventh birthday.

2.3.1 Allocation of Secondary School Places 3-16 at Middle Schools

In the case of both Ebbw Fawr Learning Community and Abertillery Learning Community, **pupils who are on roll in Year 6** at the primary phase will automatically transfer to/ be allocated a place at the secondary phase. In this instance a separate admission application is **not** required. ***Please note all other secondary settings require an application to be made in order for a place to be allocated. When making an application for an alternative secondary school automatic place allocation will be removed from the secondary phase.**

2.4 In-Year Transfers (admission that is requested outside of the normal admission round)

In-year transfer/ admission refers to applications made in-year (during and not prior to the academic year commencing), and outside of the normal admission round, i.e. pupils moving into the borough, wishing to change schools etc. All In-year transfers are dealt with in date order of receipt. Where there are a greater number of applications received than the number of places available, the Council will apply their oversubscription criteria (see page 12) in order to determine place allocation and/or refusal.

Applications are processed within 7-15 working days of receipt, confirmation of a place is proved by the Council, and confirmation of a start date is provided by the school. Where possible the start date provided by the school is within 10 days of place allocation being confirmed.

In the following circumstances pupil allocation will be managed differently to that of a standard transfer request:

- **Complex Admissions** – an admission is considered to be complex, if the needs of the pupil fall outside of the standard admission and hard to place procedures (detailed below). In this case a working group co-ordinated by the Admissions Officer, will be convened in order to address the complex nature of the placement, ensuring that all of the pupils needs can be addressed within an appropriate education setting.
- **Hard to place pupils**– applicants who are considered hard to place, fall into one or more of the categories presented below. The 14 categories cover circumstances and/or needs which would deem or contribute to a learner being considered as hard to place:

- Children who were permanently excluded from their last maintained school placement and are able / ready to integrate to an alternative school;
- Children returning from the criminal justice system (secure estate);
- Child victims of serious crimes (child cruelty, kidnapping, sexual or violent crime, FGM);
- Children who are CLA;
- Children who have been out of education for longer than two months;
- Children with below 50% attendance;
- Children with disabilities or medical conditions which have already impacted on their attendance or participation at school;
- Children of carers, Gypsies, Roma, Travellers, children whose parents offend, asylum seekers and refugees who have been in the UK less than two years and need a supported entry to school;
- Homeless children who have been placed in temporary housing;
- Children who are in a refuge due to domestic violence;
- Children of UK service personnel where a change of location ordered by the service leads to a need for a change of school and will have experienced multiple moves;
- Children who have received 10 day exclusions in the last twelve months; and/or,
- Children on the child protection register.

It may not be possible to process complex and hard to place admissions within the target timeframe outlined above. In such cases, the applicant would be informed of any increases to the processing timescales with regards to their application, and the process through which the application will be managed. The Additional Learning Needs Panel, Managed Move Panel, and/ or the Complex Admissions Working Group; would be responsible for managing applications as outlined above (please refer to section 2.6 below for further information on the panel's).

As part of the transfer allocation process, the Council will contact the child or young person's current school to obtain information in order to support and ensure a smooth transition. This information will then be shared with the recipient school in order to make sure that they are equipped to meet the pupils' educational, learning and any other identified needs upon transfer.

It is the responsibility of the parent/ guardian or carer to notify the Admissions Officer if they no longer wish to transfer their child to the newly allocated school, as confirmed within the offer letter.

***Please note:**

The admissions authority does not encourage transfers from one local school to another, due to the potential disruption that it causes to all

parties. However, it does recognise that this process may be required in putting the needs of the child and/ or young person first.

Previous research has determined that the transfer process can impinge upon a pupil's educational achievement and success, unless there are exceptional circumstances, such as the transfer being in the best interest of the child/ young person. Transfers are also dependent (as with general admissions), upon place availability at the preferred school. Parents will be encouraged to discuss at length their reasons for wanting to change schools with the school and admissions authority.

Parents should also consider prior to making a transfer request, differences in curriculum offer available at the child's current school and requested recipient school, i.e. the schools may not offer the same subjects at GCSE level.

2.5 Requests for Admission Outside of Chronological Year Group

It is the Council's policy that children are admitted into their chronological year group. It is only in exceptional circumstances that the Council will support admission into a year group that is not within the chronological year. For example, where there is an appropriate evidence base that suggests the chronological year group is not able to meet the needs of the child e.g. on medical grounds, due to ill health, additional learning needs and/ or if a pupil is new to the UK. Evidence of the placement being 'essential' will be required should a placement of this nature be requested.

Applicants submitting requests for admission into a year group that is not the chronological year for the child/ young person, will be given the opportunity to share their reasons for the application with the Council. The headteacher of the preferred school will be consulted during the processing of the application, and their views considered as part of the decision making process.

Parents, guardians or carers who have been refused a place at the preferred school will have a statutory right of appeal against the decision that has been made; however, there is no right of appeal against a decision to refuse a place into a non-chronological year group.

2.6 Managed Moves, Resource Bases, Special School and Complex Placements

The Council has a protocol in place which ensures that children and young people who may benefit from what is called a 'managed move' are able to move schools in an organised and coordinated way, ensuring that their needs are appropriately met. This protocol is called the Managed Move protocol and implemented via the **Additional Learning Needs Panel**. Where appropriate the Admissions Officer will consider the individual circumstances in line with the Welsh Government Admissions Code (2013), and if the school is over subscribed, utilise and implement 'excepted pupil' status (for more information

please see the aforementioned Welsh Government School Admissions Code, 2013, page 27), in order to admit the pupil.

The Council has a number of Resource Base provisions throughout Blaenau Gwent to meet the needs of pupils with complex needs, social emotional and behavioural needs (SEBD) or autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) needs that cannot be met within a mainstream environment.

The Council also has two special schools:

- Pen-Y-Cwm Special School, which caters for children and young people with severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties throughout the 3-19 age range.
- River Centre 3-16 Learning Community which caters for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

All placements into resource base and special school provision are agreed and managed by the Additional Learning Needs Panel, which is comprised of representatives from:

- School Admissions;
- the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) team;
- the Education Welfare Service
- Educational Psychology Service; and,
- Headteachers/ Senior Leaders and school ALNCOs as well as other professionals/officers as and when required.

Decisions are made based upon strict criteria to ensure placements are appropriate. Processes are managed by the ALN team to ensure that pupils with additional learning needs are admitted in a timely manner, whilst ensuring that all of their identified needs can be met by the recipient school. All processes are carried out in consultation with the Admissions Officer in order to inform the allocation and planning of school places.

Where an application is received for a pupil in receipt of either a Statement of Educational Need or an Individual Development Plan (IDP), the application is shared with the ALN team, who then consider the associated placement requirements.

The Welsh Government admission code states there are certain categories of children where schools **must** admit and without delay as follows:

Children with Statements of SEN

In general, the admission of children with statements of SEN is covered by the Education Act 1996. Guidance on the admission of children with statements is provided in the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice for Wales. Consequently, the admissions provisions in the 1998 Act do not generally apply to children with statements of SEN. Section 324 of the Education Act 1996 requires a maintained school that is named in a statement of SEN to admit the child. Schools cannot refuse to admit even if by doing so they would exceed their admission number.

If a LA has provided a statement for a child with SEN it is responsible for ensuring that the special educational provision is made for the child. The LA may identify a particular school which it considers to be suitable for the child's needs, and name the school in the statement. Admission authorities must be mindful of their duties with regards to Equalities Legislation and guidance on improving the accessibility of schools. If the parent of a child with a statement of SEN wishes to appeal against the school named in the statement, or the fact that no school has been named, the appeal is to the Special Educational Needs Tribunal for Wales, not to the admission appeal panel.

In certain cases, pupils may be granted excepted pupil status in compliance with the School Admissions Code, which determines that:

Where certain types of children ("excepted pupils") cannot be provided with education at the school in another infant class in which the limit is not exceeded without relevant measures being taken which would prejudice efficient education or the efficient use of resources, those children are not to be counted for the purpose of ascertaining whether or not the limit of 30 pupils is exceeded. Excepted children are:

- *Children whose statements of SEN specify that they should be educated at the school concerned, and who were admitted to the school outside a normal admission round.*
- *Children who are looked after by local authorities (looked after children), or who have ceased to be looked after (previously looked after children) as a result of being adopted or being placed with a family or given a special guardian and are admitted to the school outside a normal admission round.*
- *Children initially refused admission to a school, but subsequently offered a place outside a normal admission round by direction of an admission appeal panel, or because the person responsible for making the original decision recognises that an error was made in implementing the school's admission arrangements.*
- *Children admitted outside the normal admission round who:*
 - *the maintaining local authority confirmed cannot gain a place at any other suitable school within a reasonable distance of their home because they have moved into the area outside a normal admission round, or*
- *Children who were admitted to the school outside the normal admission round after which the school has arranged its classes, and after the first day of the school year, the effect of which would mean that the school would have to take a relevant measure if such children were not excepted pupils.*
- *Children of armed forces personnel who are admitted outside the normal admission round.*
- *Children whose twin or other sibling from a multiple birth are admitted as non-excepted pupils, as the final pupil(s) allocated a place before the admission number is reached.*
- *Children who are registered pupils at special schools, but who receive part of their education at a mainstream school.*

- *Children with SEN who are normally educated in a special unit in a mainstream school, who receive part of their lessons in a non-special class*

*Excepted pupils will remain so, once admitted, for the remainder of their time in an infant class or until class numbers fall back and they can be organised to comply with the infant class size limit. For example, because a non-excepted child leaves the class, an additional infant class is created, or an additional teacher is appointed, then that child ceases to be an excepted pupil. Classes **must** be organised so as to comply with the limit wherever possible.*

A complex admission is characterised by the child or young person's needs and or circumstances, being unable to be met within the normal admissions round and general admissions arrangements. Cases characterised as complex often require careful consideration and involvement from a wider network of partners, in order to ensure that the child's educational needs can be met within an appropriate school setting/ placement. Where there is a complex admissions case outside of the remit of the Managed Move protocol and ALN Panel processes, the Admissions Officer will coordinate the development of a working group aligned to the needs of the pupil, in considering the prospective pupil's circumstances and ensuring appropriate school placement. Complex admissions will be managed and processed in accordance with the School Admissions Code (2013). Where appropriate Welsh Government advice may be sought in line with the decision making process.

3. School Admission Criteria

The determination of school admissions differs between Local Authority maintained and non-maintained schools. The faith schools, foundation school, and non-maintained early year's education providers within Blaenau Gwent, maintain their own policies and criteria. These differ to the standardised criteria of the Council. The faith and foundation schools are also responsible for administering their own transfer and appeal procedures. **Applications for pupil places at these schools need to be made directly to the preferred school.** Applications for pupils where a faith or the foundation school is a first preference, should only be submitted to the Councils' Education Transformation team in respect of second and third preference schools that are maintained by Blaenau Gwent. ***Please note that the Council are unable to allocate pupil places within the following non-maintained faith and foundation schools and non-maintained early year's education providers:**

- Acorns Nursery
- All Saints Roman Catholic Primary School
- Brynmawr Foundation School
- **Cylch Meithrin Brynithel**
- Mrs Tiggywinkles Day Nursery
- St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School
- St Mary's Church in Wales Primary School

- St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School

Additionally, the Council cannot allocate pupil places within schools outside of Blaenau Gwent. Out of county school admissions and placements are managed by the admission authority of the Borough within which they reside, and/ or the schools themselves, when they are not maintained by the Council.

The Council works jointly with the faith, foundation schools and non-maintained early year's education providers; to ensure that all pupils applying either via the schools/settings directly or the Councils processes are allocated a place. Joint monitoring also takes place around transfers and appeals.

Each school has a limit to the number of children that it can accommodate per year group. This limit is called the published admission number (please refer to **Appendix 1** of this document for more information). The admission number takes into account the physical space within the school building relevant to each age group, as determined by the Measuring the Capacity of Schools in Wales Guidance (2011). There are two figures derived from this formula for primary school admissions, the admission number for nursery and the admission number for reception. The nursery area includes the available space for all pupils who are eligible to attend nursery, which includes rising threes (as detailed within the nursery section above). For those schools that run both morning and afternoon sessions, the admission number is applied to each session, and so can be doubled. For secondary the figure derived indicates the admission number for all year groups. Schools are asked on an annual basis each autumn-term, to confirm their sessional plans etc. for the admission round and capacity calculations, which are then presented within the admissions policy, two years preceding the academic year to which it applies. Schools will then be bound by the admission numbers for primary and secondary school places. In the case of non-statutory nursery admissions, the capacity calculation is advisory based on the guidance detailed above.

In the event of school reorganisation taking place, the admission arrangements will be determined and confirmed as part of the statutory consultation and transition process.

4. How to apply for a School Place in Blaenau Gwent (excluding the Faith and Foundation Schools and non-maintained early year's education providers)

Parents/carers are required to make an application for a school place. Completed forms with supporting evidence are to be returned by the closing date as detailed in Section 6 (below). In order to process an application linked to allocation of a school place, only **one** of the following types of evidence within each category below will be required for submission with the application form:

- **Proof of Residency (copies of one of the following)**
 - Valid driving licence including paper licence

- Council tax bill (for the 2021/22 year)
- Recent child benefit / child tax credit notification, naming the child for whom the application has been made
- Utility bills (within the last three months)
- NHS Medical card
- Proof of Date of birth (**copies of one of the following**)
 - Child's birth certificate
 - NHS medical card
 - Valid passport which displays your child date of birth

Applications to the Council should be made online via the following link:

<https://citizenportal.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/CitizenPortal/en>

In making an online application, applicants will receive immediate confirmation that their application has been submitted, then confirmation of pupil placement will be sent on the offer date. Alternatively, parents can request an application pack from the Admissions team on (01495) 355340 or via the following email address: schooladmissions@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

As previously outlined the faith and foundation schools within Blaenau Gwent have additional criteria linked to their independent status, which needs to be fulfilled in line with the child securing a place. Applications to non-maintained early year's education providers are dealt with directly by the providers concerned.

Where a parent/ guardian or carer does not provide the relevant evidence, the application will be treated as **incomplete** until such time all supporting evidence is received. Consequently, should the supporting information be received after the closing date of the relevant admissions round, then this will render the application **as a 'late' submission**. If the information is not provided upon initial request, the Council will then attempt to chase the parent/ guardian or carer for the information a further **three times only**.

In the case of a double allocation as a result of an administrative error, the Council would need to ensure that adequate places are available and follow the School Admissions Code and oversubscription criteria, in order to meet the 1st preference requested.

In instances where fraud is suspected, or accusations of fraudulent claims have been made, an investigation will take place. Places may be withdrawn if it is discovered that parents/ guardians or carers have knowingly provided false information in order to obtain the advantage of a particular school place.

Information provided within the application in respect of additional learning needs, will require further consultation with the SEN team. This will ensure effective, suitable provision and placement in line with additional educational needs and/ or a successful transition for the pupil.

5. Oversubscription Nursery, Primary and Secondary Criteria for the Normal Round of Admissions

The admissions authority will consider each individual application received by the published closing date. If the number of applications for an individual school is greater than the admission number, the allocation of places will be carried out using the following criteria, which are listed in order of priority below:

i) Children Looked After

Priority to be given to children looked after/previously looked after (children under Local Authority care); following consultation on the appropriateness of the named school.

Children in care means children who are in care of a Local Authority in accordance with Section 22 Children Act 1989.

ii) Catchment School

Children who live in the catchment area of the school on or before the published closing date.

iii) Social/Medical

Children who the Authority accepts have an exceptional medical or social need for a place at one specific school. Applications will only be considered under this category if they are supported by a medical consultant's report. The information must specify the medical advantage of the child attending the preferred school. Please note that reports from family doctors are NOT accepted for this purpose.

iv) Brother or Sister

Children who will have a brother or sister at the school to which the parent is applying, after the date of admission, will be given a higher priority than those who do not. Please note however, that having a sibling at the school does not guarantee admission for any other children in the family. Where there is more than one such case, priority will be given to those children closest in age to the sibling already attending the preferred school as of the admission date. Brothers and sisters whether half, full, step or foster will be considered relevant where living in the same household.

v) Distance

Children living closest to the preferred school measured by the shortest recognised permitted walking route between the pupils' front door of the home and school gate using a digital mapping system.

It should be noted that a child with a statement of special educational need or equivalent (i.e. individual development plan) which names a specific school, will be admitted in accordance with Section 343 of the Education Act 1996.

6. Deciding Factors associated with prioritising Admissions

In the event of oversubscription and/or the requirement to prioritise admission based on distance, places will be allocated on the basis of distance between the shortest recognised walking route between the pupils' front door of the home and the main school gate. Distance is calculated using a digital mapping system. Children living closest to the school are given the highest priority.

7. Shared residency

In the event that the residency of a child is shared between two parents, the address where the child concerned resides for the majority of the school week will be used for allocation purposes. This is the address that should be declared on the application.

However, if the residency with both parents during the school week is equal, the address for where the child benefit is paid will be used for allocation purposes.

8. Person making the application form

Only persons holding parental responsibility for the named child are able to make an application and they will be required to make a declaration to this effect as part of the application process. Ordinarily it is expected that this person resides at the same address as the child and is referred to as the parent for admission purposes.

Where parental responsibility is equally shared, the Council will ask the child's parents to determine which parent should submit the application.

It is expected that parents will also agree on school preferences for a child before an application is made. The Council is not in a position to intervene in disputes between parents over school applications and will request that these are resolved privately.

If parents cannot agree and neither has obtained a court order stating who should be making the application/what the preference should be, the Council will accept an application from the parent in receipt of Child Benefit for the child.

9. Multiple births

In the case of multiple births relating to a single family, if only one place is available at the school and the second child who qualifies for a place is a

sibling, the school will exceed their published admission number to accommodate both pupils.

10. **Timeframe for Processing Admissions as Part of the 2023/24 Admission Round**

Nursery

For places to be allocated in spring summer and autumn term of 2023;

Admission round commences on	5 th September 2022
Closing date for applications	5pm on 14 th October 2022
Offer date	21 st November 2022

Reception

Admission round commences on	9 th January 2023
Closing date for applications	5pm on 27 th February 2022
Offer date	24 th April 2022

Secondary

Admission round commences on	26 th September 2022
Closing date for applications	5pm on 21 st November 2022
Offer date	1 st March 2023

11. **Arrangements with Neighbouring Admissions Authorities and Neighbouring Local Authorities**

If you are a Blaenau Gwent resident and wish to apply to schools which are situated in Merthyr, Monmouthshire, Torfaen, Caerphilly or Powys you are required to apply to Blaenau Gwent, either on line or via paper copy and we will liaise with the relevant Authority.

12. **Late Applications**

Applications received '**after the closing date**' will be classed as late. These will be considered as a secondary priority to applications received on time. Incomplete applications and those without relevant supporting evidence will also be considered as late, if the information requested is not received by the closing date for admission round to which the application relates.

Late applicants are unlikely to be offered a place at their preferred school, due to places being allocated to on-time applicants, particularly where there are high levels of demand.

13. **Change of Preferences**

Should a parent/guardian or carer wish to change their preference, they will need to do so in writing. Letters expressing a change of preference are to be

directed to the admission authority. Any request of a change in preference received after the closing date will be treated as a late application.

14. Waiting Lists

Following the allocation of places during the normal admission round, children will remain on the waiting list for their preferred school until 30th September the following academic year. Thereafter, parents/ guardians or carers will be required to make a new application for admission. If additional places become available, they will be allocated to children on the waiting list on the basis of the published oversubscription criteria. **Waiting lists do not give priority to children based on the date the application was added to the list.**

15. Children of UK Service Personnel and other Crown Servants (including diplomats).

Families of UK personnel and other Crown Servants are subject to frequent movement within the UK and from abroad, often at relatively short notice. School places should be allocated to children and their families in advance of the approaching school year if accompanied by an official Ministry of Defence(MOD) or Foreign or Commonwealth Office (FCO) letter declaring a return date and confirmation of the new address wherever possible.

16. Children Housed via Domestic Violence Services and Organisations

Children temporarily housed under the protection of approved Domestic Violence agencies will be admitted as a priority to the catchment school if the application form is accompanied by an official letter from the relevant agency.

17. Gypsy and Traveller Children

The Council is obliged, by statute, to ensure that all children of compulsory school age receive education that is appropriate to their age, abilities and any special educational needs, and promotes high standards in the provision of education and the welfare of children. These obligations apply to all children whether they are permanent residents in the area.

18. Notifying Parents, Guardians or Carers of the Outcome of the Application

The Council will inform parents/ guardians or carers of the outcome of their application on the published offer date (please refer to pages 13 and 14 for more information). If the application is rejected, parents will receive written confirmation informing them of the outcome and will also be provided with the 'Appeals Guidance for Parents' document, which provides details of the appeals procedure. As part of the refusal letter the Council will allocate a place at the 2nd or 3rd preference school, if a 2nd and/or 3rd preference has been indicated within the application. A place will be allocated at the next nearest available school, should all preferences be unavailable or if an alternative preference has not been specified.

19. Admission Appeals for Primary and Secondary School Places

The Council endeavours to fulfil parental preference wherever possible; however, where there are more applications than places available at a school it is not always possible to fulfil parent preference.

The 1996 Education Act provides parents with an opportunity to appeal against the decision of a Local Authority in the matter of **statutory** school admissions - ***please note appeals cannot be made for non-statutory nursery admissions**. The appeal will be heard before and considered by an independent appeal panel.

Post receipt of the offer letter detailing the outcome of an application, should a parent/ guardian or carer wish to appeal against the decision of the admissions authority, they will need to complete the form issued with the letter and return it to the:

Head of Law and Standards,
General Offices,
Steelworks Road,
Ebbw Vale,
Blaenau Gwent.
NP23 6DN

Parents will have 10 working days to submit an appeal and their appeal will be heard within 30 school days from the specific closing date indicated within the refusal letter.

The Minister has given his approval for officials to issue instructions for amendments regulations that will extend the temporary amendments for another year. This means the following temporary arrangements will be in force until 30 September 2022.

- Put beyond doubt that appeals do not have to take place face-to-face and expressly provide the flexibility to meet virtually or by telephone.
- Disapply the normal requirements relating to the venue for admission appeals where they are happening remotely or on paper instead of in person.
- Relax the rules with regard to what happens if one of the members of a panel of three withdraws (temporarily or permanently) to make it permissible for the panel to continue with and conclude the appeal as a panel of two.

The new amendment regulations are expected to be laid to the Senedd in early September. All going well, the amendments regulations will come into force from 29 September 2021, a day before the current amendments regulations are due to cease. This will ensure a smooth continuation of the temporary arrangements.

Once the new regulations come into force, updated guidance will be published to support admission authorities and local authorities in carrying out admission appeals over the year.

The regulations aim to support continuity within the appeals process, allowing appeal panels to complete applications received during the admission round.

20. Home to School and Post 16 Transports

Blaenau Gwent Council will provide free transport for children attending their nearest suitable school, where the distance from home to school is over the specified walking distance detailed below:

- more than 1.5 miles from home for children aged under 8 years but of statutory school age; and,
- more than 2 miles from home for children aged 8 years and over.

Distances are measured by using the Council's Digital Information Mapping System, to determine the shortest available safe walking route between the home address and the main gate of the school to be attended.

Parents are able to choose an English-medium, Welsh-medium or a denominational school for their child. The child will qualify for home to school transport to the appropriate catchment area of the school. When the catchment area school is full and unable to admit a pupil, free transport will be provided to the next nearest available school that has room to take the child, as long as the home is 1.5 miles or more away from the school for pupils under the age of 8 years, or 2 miles for pupils aged 8 and over.

The provision of free school transport will be arranged to coincide with the start and end of the normal school day and shall be provided during the school term time. Home to School transport is not provided for breakfast clubs, after school clubs or summer schools. Transport will be provided from pick-up points at approved bus stops on the nearest public transport route to the learner's home, where possible.

21. Post 16 Travel

All students living in Blaenau Gwent will be provided with a discounted bus ticket or travel grant to the Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone, Ebbw Vale Campus as their designated Post 16 provider; or, the nearest institution where their course is available depending on the following criteria:

- students must be between the ages of 16 to 19 (under 19 prior to the 1st September of the commencement of their course) to qualify;
- students shall reside in the County Borough of Blaenau Gwent;
- students must reside 2 miles or over (nearest walking distance) from their nearest college campus; and, the students should attend a full time course which requires attendance of 16 or more hours per week or a minimum 4 days attendance per week at the institution.

Students and pupils aged 19 or over at the commencement of the course are not eligible for travel assistance from the Council and in these circumstances they are advised to contact their respective college for details of any available transport provision.

All transport for Post 16 pupils including those with additional learning needs is agreed on a case by case basis by the SEN team in consultation with the Transport Officer. The Council may provide transport up to a maximum of three years.

22. Travel Grant

The Council's present policy is to provide travel assistance to those who meet the criteria up to a maximum of £150 per academic session. This will be paid termly as follows: £50 autumn, £50 spring and £50 summer.

23. Welsh Medium / Faith Education

Pupils who wish to undertake their Post 16 studies via the medium of Welsh or attend a Faith school are required to travel further distances for their education, with no direct public service bus routes. These students have the opportunity to utilise the existing contract bus provision in lieu of the Travel Grant, if appropriate.

All awarded transport will be reviewed periodically. For more detailed information on home to school and post 16 transport, along with details on how to apply, please refer to the Blaenau Gwent Home to School and Post 16 Transport Policy (2021/22) via the following link: <https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/en/resident/schools-learning/school-transport/>

Appendix 1 – Published Admission Numbers

***Please note in order to apply for a place in one of the following schools/early years' education providers, an application will need to be made directly to the school of your choice:**

- Acorns Nursery
- All Saints Roman Catholic Primary School
- Brynmawr Foundation School
- **Cylch Meithrin Brynithel**
- Mrs Tiggywinkles Day Nursery
- St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School
- St Mary's Church in Wales Primary School
- St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School

Published Admission Numbers for 2022/23

School *The school highlighted in red are responsible for their own admission arrangements and as such, applications need to be submitted directly to the school.	Nursery Admission Number	Session	Statutory Admission Number (Reception or Year 7)
All Saints R.C. Primary School	30	am	26
Beaufort Hill Primary School	30	am	30
Blaen y Cwm Primary School	26	full-time	38
Brynbach Primary School	30	am	30
Coed y Garn Primary School	30	full-time	30
Cwm Primary School	52	am	30
	52	pm	
Deighton Primary School	30	am	30
	30	pm	
Georgetown Primary School	30	am	60
	30	pm	
Glanhowy Primary School	65	am	42
	65	pm	
Glyncoed Primary School	52	am	45
	52	pm	
Rhos y Fedwen Primary School	26	full-time	25

St. Illtyd's Primary School	30	am	30
St. Joseph's R.C. Primary School	41	full-time	15
St. Mary's Church-in-Wales Primary School	30	am	30
St. Mary's R.C Primary School	53	full-time	30
Sofrydd Primary School	19	am	23
	19	pm	
Willowtown Primary School	30	am	60
	30	pm	
Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg	60	full-time	30
Ystruth Primary School	37	am	42
	37	pm	

	Nursery Admission Number	Session	Statutory Admission Number (Reception or Year 7)
<u>Secondary School</u>			
Brynmawr Foundation School			151
Tredegar Comprehensive School			152
<u>Middle School</u>			
Abertillery Learning Community – Primary Phase	141	-	140
Abertillery Learning Community – Secondary Phase			150
Ebbw Fawr Learning Community - Primary Phase	58	am	40
Ebbw Fawr Learning Community - Secondary Phase			238

Appendix 2 - Blaenau Gwent Schools Catchment Area Overview Map



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Analysis:**School Admissions – 2021/22 Admissions Round Analysis**

The Admissions team have successfully implemented the School Admissions Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education 2021/22, which is evidenced by the following assessment:

- 100% of applications were processed within 48 hours and 100% of standard in-year transfer requests were processed within 15 days of receipt in accordance with the WG School Admissions Code (2013) and Blaenau Gwent's School Admissions Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education 2020/21.
- Transfer rates have remained steady over the last 4 academic sessions, from 343 in 2017/18 and then a slight increase of 355 in 2018/19. The rate of 229 in 2019/2020 - Figures were much lower due to the pandemic. The transfer rates increased slightly in 2020/2021 to 295 with the primary reason for in-year transfer being inward migration of families into the Blaenau Gwent area.
- Complex transfers were received on a weekly basis and referred to the SEN team for consideration at ALN Panel.
- The admissions officer has attended all ALN Panel meetings and/ or liaised directly with the SEN team on pupil placement.
- No appeals were held for the reception or secondary admission rounds during the summer period 2021.
- The numbers of in-time applications received for pupils who applied for a school place during the 2021/22 admission round, increased for nursery, reception and secondary when compared to 2020/21. Please refer to Figure 1 below for the in-time percentage comparisons:

Figure 1: In-time Application (%)

Percentage of In-time Applications 2019/20	Percentage of In-time Applications 2020/21	Percentage of In-time Applications 2021/22
Nursery – 51%	Nursery – 60%	Nursery – 71%
Reception – 74%	Reception – 75%	Reception – 83%
Secondary – 89%	Secondary – 79%	Secondary – 80%

- The Council were able to sustain 100% of parental first preferences for a 4-year period in respect of both nursery and secondary place allocation, and 99% of first preferences were met for the reception year group, however, for the 2021/2022 academic year 100% of first preferences have now been met (please refer to **Figure 2** below). This is attributable to the effective monitoring and management of school capacities and pupil places along with the continued achievement of surplus place reduction, whereby school admission numbers for primary schools with a high surplus have been reduced over the last year and in turn the admission number has also been reduced.
- First preferences met for late applications are also extremely high due to effective pupil place management processes

Figure 2: First Preferences Met %

% of First Preferences Met for In-time Applications 2018/19	% of First Preferences Met for In-time Applications 2019/20	% of First Preferences Met for In-time Applications 2020/21	% of First Preferences Met for In-time Applications 2021/22
Nursery – 100%	Nursery – 100%	Nursery – 100%	Nursery – 100%
Reception – 99%	Reception – 99%	Reception – 99%	Reception – 100%
Secondary – 100%	Secondary – 100%	Secondary – 100%	Secondary – 100%
% of First Preferences Met for Late Applications 2018/19	% of First Preferences Met for Late Applications 2019/20	% of First Preferences Met for Late Applications 2020/21	% of First Preferences Met for Late Applications 2021/22
Nursery – 100%	Nursery – 99%	Nursery – 100%	Nursery – 100%
Reception – 96%	Reception – 99%	Reception – 100%	Reception – 100%
Secondary – 100%	Secondary – 100%	Secondary – 100%	Secondary – 99%

The Welsh Government School Admissions Code (2013) dictates that Councils must review their admissions policies annually for consultation and publication by April 15th in the academic year preceding the admissions round. Blaenau Gwent School Admissions Policy outlines the arrangements, criteria and relevant legislation that underpin school admission processes and methodology. The primary changes to the policy document for the 2021/22 academic session were as follows:

- A review of the nursery, primary and secondary admission numbers in line with the annual capacity review. This is an annual process which reviews changes to school plans and physical space within the school, which affect the provision of teaching and learning. This is carried out in line with the Welsh Government Measuring the Capacity of Schools in Wales Guidance (2011). The final agreed capacity calculations are then used to inform admission numbers.
- A review of the dates for the admission round(s), associated processing and offer deadlines.

The Admissions Policy for 2022/23 was consulted upon and published in line with the Welsh Government's deadline (April 2021).

We went fully online for the 2021/2022 admission rounds using AVABUS (My council services) – with parents being fully supported by the team in their application process and submission.

The Admissions Forum met three times over the last year (September 2020 – August 2021).

The Forum has sustained a good level of attendance at each meeting. The Forum has worked closely with the Education Transformation team in order to:

- improve school and Council awareness and partnership approaches in respect of the implementation and monitoring of the admissions round;
- improve tracking processes from live birth to secondary education (whilst ensuring alignment with Inclusion);
- address issues i.e. ensure that when in-year transfers are allocated a place a start date is offered within 10 days; and,
- explore a wider ranging data set i.e. Flying Start, placement outside of the chronological year group, home tuition and attendance data etc. Ensuring that there is a holistic approach to the management of pupil places.

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