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Blaenau Gwent

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THIS IS A MEETING WHICH THE PUBLIC ARE ENTITLED TO ATTEND

10th January 2023

Dear Sir/Madam

PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

A meeting of the People Scrutiny Committee will be held in Virtually via Microsoft Teams - if you would like to attend this meeting live via Microsoft Teams please contact committee.services@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk on Tuesday, 17th January, 2023 at 4.30 pm.

Yours faithfully

Damien McCann
Interim Chief Executive

AGENDA

Pages

1. SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION

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

2. APOLOGIES

To receive.

Mae'r Cyngor yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a Saesneg a byddwn yn cyfathrebu gyda chi yn eich dewis iaith, dim ond i chi rhoi gwybod i ni pa un sydd well gennych. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn creu unrhyw oedi.

The Council welcomes correspondence in Welsh and English and we will communicate with you in the language of your choice, as long as you let us know which you prefer. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to any delay.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS**
To receive.
4. **PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** 5 - 8
To receive the decisions of the People Scrutiny Committee held on 18th October, 2022.

(Please note the decisions are submitted for points of accuracy only).
5. **ACTION SHEET** 9 - 10
To receive.
6. **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES 2022/2023 (QUARTERS 1 AND 2)** 11 - 46
To consider the report of the Interim Corporate Director of Social Services.
7. **CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION SERVICES - QUARTER 1 AND 2 2022** 47 - 76
To consider the report of the Corporate Director of Education.
8. **IMPROVING SCHOOLS PROGRAMME** 77 - 104
To consider the report of the Corporate Director of Education.
9. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME: 28TH FEBRUARY 2023** 105 - 108
To receive.

To: Councillor T. Smith (Chair)
Councillor J. Morgan, J.P. (Vice-Chair)
Councillor C. Bainton
Councillor D. Bevan
Councillor K. Chaplin
Councillor G. A. Davies
Councillor J. Holt

Councillor G. Thomas
Councillor D. Wilkshire
T. Baxter
T. Pritchard
Lewis R

All other Members (for information)
Interim Chief Executive
Chief Officers

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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**SUBJECT: PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
- 19TH OCTOBER, 2022**

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: Councillor T. Smith (Chair)

Councillors C. Bainton
D. Bevan
K. Chaplin
G.A. Davies
J. Holt
G. Thomas
D. Wilkshire

WITH: Corporate Director of Education
Interim Corporate Director of Social Services
Head of Children's Services
Head of Governance & Partnerships
Service Manager Education Transformation &
Business Change
Service Manager Children's Services
Safeguarding in Education Officer
Adults Service Manager for Development & Commissioning
Press & Publicity Officer
Communications & Policy Officer
Scrutiny & Democratic Officer

AND: Councillor J. Thomas (Vice-Chair of the Corporate &
Performance Scrutiny Committee – Item No. 6)

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were reported for Councillors Jen Morgan, Rhianna Lewis (Co-opted Member), the Head of School Improvement & Inclusion; and the Strategic Education Improvement Manager.</p>	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>No declarations of interest or dispensations were reported.</p>	
No. 4	<p><u>PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The decisions of the Social Services Scrutiny Committee held on 6th September, 2022 were submitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the decisions be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
No. 5	<p><u>ACTION SHEET – PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 6TH SEPTEMBER, 2022</u></p> <p>The Action sheet arising from the meeting held on 6th September, was submitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the action sheet be noted.</p>	
No. 6	<p><u>CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING PERFORMANCE REPORT, INCLUDING INFORMATION FOR SOCIAL SERVICES 1ST APRIL TO 30TH JUNE 2022 AND EDUCATION SUMMER TERM-2022</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the joint report of the Interim Corporate Director of Social Services and the Corporate</p>	

	<p>Director of Education.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and considered the information provided and made recommendations on where improvements could be made to the current monitoring processes for approval by the Executive Committee. (Option 2)</p>	
No. 7	<p><u>IMPROVING SCHOOLS PROGRAMME</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director of Education.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted as provided (Option 1).</p>	
No. 8	<p><u>FINANCIAL LIABILITIES OF THE REGIONAL INTEGRATION FUND</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Interim Corporate Director of Social Services.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and recommend the Council <i>does not accept</i> the financial liabilities and implications of the new Regional Integration Fund and its tapered funding model. (Option 2)</p>	
No. 13	<p><u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 29TH NOVEMBER, 2022</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Scrutiny & Democratic Officer.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED the Forward Programme for the meeting 29th November, 2022, as presented. (Option 2)</p>	

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Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Action Sheet

People Scrutiny Committee

Date	Action to be Taken	By Whom	Action Taken
06.09.22	Item 16 – Proposal to explore and develop a Business Case for Children’s Residential provision in Blaenau Gwent Member Briefing Session in relation to Children Looked After and residential provision to be arranged.	Interim Corporate Director Social Services / Democratic Team	Briefing session included in Member Development Programme and will be arranged at an appropriate time.
18.10.22	Item 6 - Corporate Safeguarding Performance report, including Social Services and Education Member Briefing Session in relation to Community Safety to be arranged.	Community Safety / Democratic Team	A session has been included in the Member Development Programme and scheduled for 28 th October 2022. Action complete: 18.10.22
18.10.22	Item 7 – Improving Schools Programme Member Briefing Session in relation to The River Centre to be arranged.	Corporate Director Education / Democratic Team	Member briefing session arranged for 16 th December 2022. Action complete: 25.10.22

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Agenda Item 6

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer:

Committee: **People Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **17th January 2023**

Report Subject: **Annual Report of the Director of Social Services 2022/2023 (Quarters 1 and 2)**

Portfolio Holder: **Haydn Trollope, Cabinet Member for People and Social Services**

Report Submitted by: **Tanya Evans, Interim Director of Social Services**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Officers	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance and Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	People Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)
09/12/22	15/12/22	04.01.23			17.01.23	18/01/23		

1. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of the report is to present the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services, covering the quarter 1 and 2 period (April to September 2022) attached at Appendix 1.

2. Scope and Background

2.1 The performance of the department is monitored throughout the financial year from April to March, with six monthly reports presented to the relevant Scrutiny Committee. At the end of the year a comprehensive self-evaluation of performance is undertaken to inform the Statutory Annual Report of the Director of Social Services.

2.2 The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 places a statutory duty on all local authorities to produce an annual report on the discharge of its social services functions.

3. Options for Recommendation

Option 1

Members are asked to consider the detail contained in the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services 2022/2023 (quarters 1 and 2) and contribute to the continuous assessment of effectiveness by making appropriate comments and or recommendations for amendment to the report before consideration at Cabinet.

Option 2

Accept the report as provided.

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

It is a statutory responsibility of the Director of Social Services to assess the effectiveness of the delivery of Social Services and produce an Annual Report. The

Annual Report contributes to and forms part of the Annual Council Reporting Framework (ACRF).

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

The Director's Report includes budgetary information and identifies the pressures and budgetary implications for 2022/2023.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

Social Services maintain a directorate risk register which is aligned to both service level and corporate risk. The risk register is reviewed as part of the business planning process and included within the performance reporting of the Director of Social Services.

5.3 **Legal**

There is a statutory requirement, as part of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2015 for the Director of Social Services to produce an annual report following strict guidelines on content.

5.4 **Human Resources**

There are no staffing implications related in this report.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

Performance Information and Data

6.1 Detail is provided within the Director's Annual Report 2022/2023 (quarters 1 and 2)

6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***

The key theme of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 is to promote the well-being of people who need care and support. Within the annual report it is highlighted where the Directorate has worked closely with the public to improve service delivery and user outcomes. Reporting provides the public with the opportunity to view progress of the Directorate and ensure accountability.

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

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 looks to build and strengthen on existing arrangements by involving service users, carers and other key partners where possible in helping shape and influence future design of services.

6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

The Annual report enables the department to plan for the future as spend, risk and performance is continuously reported on and provides a baseline of where the department is currently and where it needs to be in the future.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

The work undertaken by the department looks to promote a preventative approach to practice through early identification and intervention. Having an active rather

than re active approach to service planning can also help with planning resources and not spending as much on services in the future.

6.6 Collaboration / partnership working

Social Services work collaboratively across boundaries to benefit citizens requiring health and social care services across Gwent.

6.7 Integration (across service areas)

The purpose of the SSWBA is to foster integration between Health and Social Services. The report enables the department to plan for the future as spend, risk and performance is continuously reported on and provides a baseline of where it needs to be in the future to support a sustainable and viable service.

6.8 Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions

The workforce who delivers the functions of the SSWBA have adopted the agile working policy of the council which will have a positive impact on car emissions as staff are now able to work from home to undertake paperwork and do not have to travel to the office.

6.9a Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment

All service provision and functions that sit under social services are subject to socio economic disadvantages for example, low income, material and area deprivation. All programmes work towards addressing these disadvantages.

6.9b Equality Impact Assessment

The overarching vision is to support the needs of the most vulnerable children and adults in our communities through a range of early intervention, prevention and support mechanisms. With the aim of building resilient individuals, resilient families and resilient communities.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

7.1 The Annual Report for 2022/2023 (quarters 1 and 2) will be monitored via six monthly monitoring reports to the Social Services Scrutiny Committee.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Report of the Director of Social Services

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Social Services

Annual Report of the Director of Social Services

Quarter 1 and 2 (April 2022 to September 2022)



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Introduction

Welcome to the Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Social Services Report of the Director of Social Services. The Report covers the period April to September 2022. The Report is used to highlight the key areas of progress and improvements that the service has experienced and is developed in line with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, referred to as 'the Act' throughout this document.

The Act aims to provide the most radical change to the way in which Social Services is provided since 1948. It focuses on improving the well-being of people who come to Social Services for support. It is person centred and focuses on prevention and reducing the need for care and support. It recognises that responsibility lies not only within Social Services Departments, but also within the wider Local Authority and with partners (particularly Health and the Third Sector). The Act shares similar principles with a number of key national/regional strategies that are being implemented throughout the Council, in particular the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The Director of Social Services has a statutory requirement to publish an annual report in relation to the delivery of its functions, to evaluate its performance and also include lessons learned. This Report provides a mid-year review of the activity undertaken to date. A key aspect of the report is showing how the six Quality Standards have been implemented in relation to well-being outcomes.



Director's Overview

The first 2 quarters of 22/23 has seen a great deal of change for the Council and the Social Services Directorate. The council has a new political administration which in turn has led to a change in the executive member for social services. Councillor Trollope is now our Executive Member bringing his previous years of being executive member of social services with him. We have seen a change in the way scrutiny committees have been designed. Social Services now report to the PEOPLE scrutiny committee to which our Education Directorate also report. Time is being taken to develop a new corporate plan to set the vision and priorities to take us through to 2027.

The change has also extended to the senior leadership of the Social Services Directorate. With myself Tanya Evans taking up the role of Interim Director and Alison Ramshaw stepping up as Interim Head of Children's services. Inevitably this change has caused some ripples due to the back filling arrangements but this has not impacted on service delivery. As a Directorate we have reviewed our Directorate priorities alongside the priorities for both children's and adult services. It is no surprise to see that both areas have very similar priorities in relation to safeguarding, workforce, the preventative agenda and the sustainability of services. With budget pressures looming due to meeting the cost of dealing with the pandemic and the starting of a cost of living crisis we anticipate some difficult time ahead.

The social services workforce has been working as hard as ever in the first 2 quarters of this year and have much to be proud of in relation to what has been achieved. Some of the achievements include

- Successful staff recruitment to areas we have been struggling to recruit to for some time
- The adult services new IAA structure went live in April 22 and is no longer reliant on grant funding
- Cwrt Mytton our residential home for people with dementia has been able to open back up to visitors following the pandemic and have held numerous successful events which have been shared on social media
- The Commissioning Team have continued to support the external sector by passporting the numerous grants received from Welsh Government
- We have opened our new SMART flat and progressing the use of technology to support people in Blaenau Gwent to remain independent and living at home for as long as possible.
- Community Meals take up is increasing including our 'tea time trays'
- We have maintained a strong outcomes based approach to the way in which we deliver practice ensuring we hear about "What Matters" to the people we serve balancing their rights and responsibilities
- Augusta House respite provision has been extended to include Children
- The 14 plus Team won a social care accolade for building brighter futures for children and families
- The child care and play sufficiency assessments have successfully been completed with 5-year action plan in place
- We have seen the launch of our own BG MyST which works intensively with children with complex needs to prevent them entering residential care and working with those in residential care to support their return to foster care or their families.
- The joint Youth Offending Services we have with Caerphilly had a positive inspection

- Our Children Looked After numbers continue to remain stable
- We have successfully placed 6 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children under the National Transfer Scheme

There are many challenges to be faced in Qtr. 3 and 4 of 22/23. We are starting to see a significant rise in the cost of living. If this continues it will naturally have a bigger impact on the people of Blaenau Gwent where deprivation levels are already extremely high. We will also be informed of the budget settlement we will receive from Welsh Government which will no doubt lead to prioritising and re prioritising of the services we deliver. That said we have much to deliver before the end of the financial year which includes

- The opening of the Augusta House reablement PODS which will give people with learning difficulties the opportunity to develop their independence skills in a purpose built supported environment
- We will be using new electric vehicles for Community Meals and home care to support the climate crisis agenda
- We will be Increasing our step up / down (CARIAD beds) including purpose built bariatric facility
- Review of our Community Resource Team structure
- Implementation of the new operating model for the children locality teams
- Looking to purchase our first residential home for children looked after
- Roll out of new flying start areas



**Tanya
Evans**
Interim
Corporate
Director of
Social
Services



**Haydn
Trollope**
Cabinet
Member for
People and
Social
Services

Local Political Leadership, Governance and Accountability

The structure of the Social Services Directorate provides clear levels of management and accountability. As a whole, the Council has a clear governance and accountability framework in place which all directorates are signed up to. This framework identifies how reporting and monitoring works throughout the Council to create a 'golden thread'. This framework is complied with by Social Services who also have additional monitoring requirements as part of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

The Social Services Directorate is subject to audit, inspection and review by the Care Inspectorate for Wales (CIW). On a quarterly basis the Director of Social Services and/or Heads of Adult and Children's Services meet with CIW to discuss achievements, performance and key challenges. The Directorate has one Cabinet Member who has portfolio responsibility for Social Services as a whole. The Directorate is scrutinised by the People Scrutiny Committee. Regular liaison meetings are held with the Directorate, the Cabinet Member and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Scrutiny Committee.

Blaenau Gwent continues to work with a wide range of partners where partnership opportunities provide better outcomes for local residents than the Council could achieve if working on its own. Social Services work in partnership with a variety of stakeholders including staff, residents and businesses. Some Social Services collaboration includes:

- Joint Partnership and Workforce Development Service with Caerphilly;
- South East Wales Adoption Service (SEWAS);
- South East Wales Emergency Duty Team;
- South East Wales Adult Placement Scheme;
- Gwent Frailty Programme Integrated Health and Social Care Teams;
- South East Wales Safeguarding Children Board (SEWSCB);
- Gwent Wide Adult Safeguarding Board (GWASB);
- Gwent Mental Health & Learning Disabilities Partnership Team;
- South East Wales Improvement Collaboration -4C's (SEWIC);
- Gwent Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) Team;
- Greater Gwent Regional Partnership Board;
- Gwent Regional Collaborative (RCC) - Supporting People;
- Gwent wide agreement with National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) to provide children's advocacy services; and
- Greater Gwent Workforce Development Board.

How People Are Shaping Our Services

The Social Services Directorate is committed to providing high quality services to its citizens and uses various engagement methodologies in order to understand if the service is making the intended outcomes or if amendments to service delivery need to be considered.

Throughout April to September 2022 a variety of engagement events have taken place and include the following

- Summer of Fun activities
- National Play Day
- Men's Health Week
- Child Safety Week
- Summer Platinum Jubilee events in Cwrt Mytton
- A Gwent regional stakeholder consultation
- National Children's Day - promoting the importance of a healthy childhood and the rights of a child
- National Smile Month

The Social Services Department is committed to providing high quality services to its users; however, despite best intentions, it is recognised that sometimes things can go wrong and the Social Services complaints procedure provides people with the opportunity to voice their concerns when they are dissatisfied with a service. The service uses learning from these complaints to improve services moving forward. The service also welcomes positive feedback and compliments and also uses this information to further improve services.

From 1st April 2022 to 30th September 2022 we have received no official complaints. Social Services complaints are dealt with 'informally' where possible as per Welsh Government guidance



Departmental Priorities 2022/23

Departmental Priorities

- To recruit and retain an appropriately skilled and qualified workforce to deliver quality services
- To improve accessibility, provision of information and advice to enable people to support their own well-being.
- To work with people to make sure they have a say in achieving what matters to them.
- To intervene early to prevent problems from becoming greater.
- To work with our partners including Aneurin Bevan Health Board and neighbouring authorities to deliver integrated responsive care and support.
- To have effective safeguarding arrangements in place to protect people from harm.
- To develop a partnership approach to reducing and alleviating the impacts of poverty.
- To ensure effective forward financial planning arrangements are in place to support the Council's financial resilience.
- Ensure long-term sustainability is at the forefront of our thinking and decision-making.

Children's Services Priorities

• Page 22

- Ensure all children are safeguarded
- Ensure we have an appropriately skilled, motivated and supported workforce with clear career development pathways in place that support our service delivery
- Ensure all teams deliver an outcomes based approach to practice and service delivery
- Ensure that we provide / commission modern, flexible, cost effective high quality support services that meet both current and future well-being needs of children
- Ensure that preventative support is available for children and their families, that promote early intervention and prevents needs from escalating.
- Manage the Children's Services budget to ensure expenditure comes within budget
- Ensure the Safe Reduction of Children Looked After Strategy 2020 – 2025 actions are regularly monitored and reviewed
- Ensure outcomes for children looked after continue to improve through the implementation of the Corporate Parenting action plan
- Review the way in which children's services operates and decide if a change is necessary in order to manage demand and workload.
- Children's Services contributes to meeting the Sustainable Development Principles

Adult Services Priorities

- Ensure all adults are safeguarded
- Ensure we have an appropriately skilled, motivated and supported workforce with clear career development pathways in place that support our service delivery
- Ensure all teams deliver an outcomes based approach to practice and service delivery
- Ensure that we provide / commission modern, flexible, cost effective high quality support services that meet both current and future well-being needs of vulnerable adults and their unpaid family carers
- Ensure that preventative support is available for adults and their unpaid carers, that promote and maintain personal independence
- Budget
- Undertake a review of the current model of Community Options
- Adult Services contributes to meeting the Sustainable Development Principles

Quality Standard 1 - Local Authorities must work with people who need care and support and carers who need support to define and co-produce personal well-being outcomes that people wish to achieve.

Children's Services Self-Assessment –

During quarter 1 2022/23 referrals into the Information Advice and Assistance (IAA) service continue to rise. IAA Service continues to approach referrals in an outcomes manner by establishing what matters to the customer.

A meeting has been arranged to discuss how the Family Information Service (FIS) can link into IAA and Families First Community Engagement Officers can support FIS and vice versa. Families First workers will also be linked to the flying start hubs. Flying Start has rolled out into Rassau as phase 1 of the roll out, phase 2 will happen after April 2023.

Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales, will undertake an inspection of Blaenau Gwent's Local Government Education Services later in the year. As part of this a number of areas, linked to education and supporting the work of children and young people will also be inspected and this will include Safeguarding Flying Start, Early Years and Play Service.

By end of the period, an Induction Programme was developed and advertised for Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQS) as part of the 2021 and 2022 cohorts. The first sessions started in June 2022 and will continue on a weekly basis. Feedback from the sessions revealed that the cohort of newly qualified social workers found the sessions extremely beneficial and that they felt much more prepared to carry out their roles confidently.

An offer of advocacy has been made to all new Children Looked After and those children on the child protection register. Capacity issues being experienced within the Locality Teams had an impact on the timeliness of referrals, however they have now all been done. As appropriate, cases have been presented to the Complex Needs Panel in order to access the relevant resources required and to ensure a multi-agency input in managing and progressing care plans.

Attendance at mentor's meetings which promote the outcome approach to practice has continued to be good with representation across all service areas. Live cases are discussed and feedback from families and children are included. Monthly reflective practice sessions continue in each of the service areas and refresher training is available to all staff through Workforce Development. New staff have attended training sessions on Collaborative Communication and accessed other learning opportunities available in order to support outcome focused practice, and deliver interventions based on an outcomes/strengths based approach, which has the voices of children and families at the centre of care planning.

Quality Standard 1 - Local Authorities must work with people who need care and support and carers who need support to define and co-produce personal well-being outcomes that people wish to achieve.

Adult Services Self-Assessment –

As in Children's Services, new staff into Adult Services have attended training sessions on What Matters and Balancing Rights and Responsibilities. and accessed other learning opportunities available, in order to support outcome focused practice, and deliver interventions based on an outcomes/strengths based approach. Adult Service staff have been undertaking this training collaboratively with colleagues from Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) as part of the project facilitated by Social Care Wales (SCW) and there has been a strong emphasis on assessments within our acute and community settings. This work is due to be evaluated by SCW in the Autumn of 2022 and a report produced in relation to good practice.

A new structure for the IAA Team was introduced in April 2022 and performance measure reported during 2022/23 quarters 1 and 2 are already indicating that 77% of new referrals are managed at the front door and 1 in 3 of our referrals being signposted to alternative preventative services. Within IAA a competency framework has been developed for all staff and a 'buddy' system is also in place for staff to further promote learning and development i.e. experienced social care staff supporting newer staff to the team. A full evaluation of the new front door / IAA service will be completed once it has been in operation for 12 months

Across Adult Services we continue to provide opportunities for wider case discussion and problem solving. We have weekly 'fish bowl' meetings which focus on presentation of complex cases, peer support, quality assurance and general opportunities for creative problem solving and case discussions.

Development of additional support for our unpaid family carers remain a priority and we are currently reviewing our capacity and outcomes to provide preventative support to people as part of both our GP engagement service (a partnership arrangement with Care Collective and ABUHB) and our in house support worker model. Outcomes of the review will be analysed in quarter 3.

We continue to offer advocacy support to our most vulnerable adults via our Gwent Advocacy Service.

Despite the ongoing COVID 19 pressures across our Provider Services we are re-establishing our engagement activities at Augusta House, Cwrt Mytton, Community Option and within Home Care, ensuring that outcomes are meeting care and support plans.

Quality Standard 2 - Local Authorities must work with people who need care and support and carers who need support and relevant partners to protect and promote people's physical and mental health and emotional well-being.

Children's Services Self-Assessment – Work has taken place to ensure that mandatory safeguarding training for foster carers is being delivered on a face-to-face basis rather than virtually. The training needs of foster carers continue to be monitored and promoted during annual reviews, appraisals and supervision sessions, however, due to Covid, there is a backlog of carers who are outstanding the safeguarding training, and this will continue to be monitored throughout the year. Foster Carers are also receiving Circle of Security training and early feedback is that they have found the parenting programme to be very beneficial and are adapting their parenting styles accordingly.

In April 2022, Blaenau Gwent established its own MyST (My Support Team) to provide greater capacity within the service. Since this time, staff from MyST have been attending News and Networking events and meeting Mentors in order to embed the service fully within Blaenau Gwent. Positively, the service is now working with children, under each of the operational teams, suggesting that the service is being utilised by all. A programme of training/reflective sessions for foster carers is being developed which will be delivered by the MyST which is due to commence January 2023. In respect of attendance at previous sessions, there has been some progress made and, from January 2023, an incentive will be offered to foster carers for completing the requirements of the training to increase motivation and compliance.

The MyST service continue to work with a number of young people in residential care on a 'step-down' basis as well as working with a number of young people who are at risk of entering residential care on a preventative basis. In order to improve the service offer discussions have taken place between the MyST and Placement Team in order to work collaboratively and have joint marketing going forward. Challenges remain regarding the availability of step down accommodation whether this is suitable foster care accommodation or the availability of semi-independent accommodation.

It has proven to be extremely difficult to recruit foster carers and interest in fostering at this current time is very low, despite efforts to increase awareness via social media and recruitment activity. There has been one new foster carer approval within the quarter, but unfortunately, there has also been two resignations resulting in an overall decrease in the number of foster carers. This has been despite the close working relationship with the Foster Wales Manager and the promotion of the Foster Wales brand. Unfortunately, within the period, demand for foster placements has increased and there has been a greater reliance on Independent Fostering Agency placements (IFA). By the end of September 2022, there were 26 children placed in IFA placements (an increase of eight since December 2021). It should be noted that the increase in IFAs has mostly been due to place asylum seeking children. We currently have 11 children placed in residential care.

A Worcester University Evaluation of the Disability Service has been undertaken. The Evaluation evidences good use of the disability index and the disability Facebook page and these services continue to be offered within the team. Work is underway in respect of supporting Provider Services, such as the Youth Service, to support young people. This includes the establishment of a sports session and the continuation of the Carers Support Group. The Disability Team now have access to a residential respite provision and within this period, four young people have been accessing this provision. Within the next quarter further communication will take place to understand the strategy for respite services. The work in respect of transition has been very successful with bi-monthly meetings taking place to discuss young people coming up to transition and these are open to both the Disability and the 14+ Teams.

Quality Standard 2 - Local Authorities must work with people who need care and support and carers who need support and relevant partners to protect and promote people's physical and mental health and emotional well-being.

Adult Services Self-Assessment – In partnership with our Gwent LA partners and ABUHB we have commenced a review of older person's community based services including potential for reviewing our current Gwent Frailty model and ensuring we meet the required standards of the Welsh Government Six Goals for Emergency and Unscheduled Care.

Initial meetings have been held with staff to discuss a review in relation to reablement and DASH. The Home Care Manager has been working closely with the Reablement Service within ABUHB with the outcome of having a more cohesive and sustainable service to meet the outcomes of vulnerable adults / A report on the future modernisation plans for the two services will be developed in quarter 3.

During quarter 2 we have commenced a review of our Community Resource Team and in partnership with our colleagues in ABUHB, we are developing additional capacity to support those people living with dementia who require early intervention reablement support and also those people who are living with sensory loss. We are currently reviewing the job functions of the manager of the Community Resource Team to reflect the modernisation agenda and the revised post will be advertised at the end of the summer.

An Assistive Technology Project Group has been established with representatives from Commissioning, Community Care and Provider Services in order to drive forward the assistive technology agenda. This includes consolidating all of the different workstreams and projects. The group is meeting on a bi-monthly basis. The Project Group is also working with care homes and supported living schemes to test some innovative equipment which has been provided by the Regional Assistive Technology Team. This includes the HUGS, Koms and Magic Tables. Feedback on all items has been extremely positive and case studies are being developed to share the positive outcomes this assistive technology has had on people's lives.

Our Better Care / Single Handed care project continues to promote people's independence and reduce their reliance on staff for manual handling and personal care tasks. The Better Care Team have developed a comprehensive training and support package for all staff across the Blaenau Gwent Health and Social Care community who provide frontline care and the Local Authority has utilised equipment purchased as part of the Welsh Government Promoting Independence Grant to provide the latest equipment (beds / hoists/ standing aids) to support the ethos of single handed care. The team are currently working with a registered social landlord to finalise the development of our latest step up / down facility which will provide much needed temporary assessment accommodation for people who require bariatric equipment.

Stability and sustainability of our domiciliary care and care home market is a significant priority for our teams both due to the impact of COVID 19, early indications of the impact of the rise in fuel and utility costs and severe staffing pressures. Many providers including our own in house services, are reporting high levels of staff vacancies which are impacting on their ability to provide support. Our commissioning team has continued to work with Providers in relation to the introduction to the real living wage and also by scoping the potential support that can be given to our domiciliary care workers to increase wages to compensate them for the increased costs of fuel. The rapidly increasing fuel prices caused concern amongst the domiciliary care market. To address this the Council acted swiftly and provided additional funding to staff to support the increase in fuel costs during quarter 2

In recognition of their work and commitment throughout the pandemic, Welsh Government awarded £1,498 to all eligible care workers. During quarter 2 our Commissioning Team has distributed £2million of Welsh Government funding to our frontline carers.

Quality Standard 3 - Local Authorities must take appropriate steps to protect and safeguard people who need care and support and carers who need support from abuse and neglect or any other kinds of harm.

Children's Services Self-Assessment –

All staff are trained in Collaborative Communication with all new staff entered onto training as part of their induction. Team managers are currently reviewing staff team training and ensuring safeguarding is a priority.

'What Matters' meetings have been implemented and used regularly in practice with multi-agency participation and high scrutiny of the Child Protection plans.

The South East Wales Adoption Service (SEWAS) is supporting the review and implementation of the National Adoption Service 2025 plan in respect of building capacity for access to records, and ensuring that Welsh Government investment monies promote multi agency work. 'Understanding the Child' Days are taking place for all children referred to the service from 18 months old, and transitions continue to follow the good practice guides to ensure all care plans are outcome based. Support workers are in the process of being recruited to support delivery of the objective in respect of trauma nurture timelines and adoption support check ins.

The Supporting Change Team has been working collaboratively with the Youth Service to run a small trauma informed, activity based group for some of the most hard to reach young people open to the team. More recently the team has just concluded a group work project working in partnership the youth service and alongside a targeted group of young girls looking at raising aspirations/self-esteem and self-worth. The project has been very well evaluated and the team are looking into how they can run a second project in the new year.

During this period, a Circle of Security Parenting Programme has been delivered to a small number of parents with young children, in collaboration with the Psychologist and Support Worker. Additionally, Circle of Security has been delivered to a cohort of foster carers, helping to stabilise children in care preventing a risk of breakdown in placement.

There continues to be a slow but steady reduction of Children Looked After, as while new children come into care we are also progressing with discharging Care Orders for children living at home or with kinship carers.

Quality Standard 3 - Local Authorities must take appropriate steps to protect and safeguard people who need care and support and carers who need support from abuse and neglect or any other kinds of harm.

Adult Services Self-Assessment –

The Department recognises the importance of a robust and sustainable Safeguarding Team to ensure we not only meet our legislative requirements, but that we are able to protect our most vulnerable citizens. A new Adults safeguarding team structure has been agreed and a new Safeguarding Manager has been appointed and is due to start in post in early quarter 3.

During quarter 1 and 2 we have continued to see increasing demands place on the Health and Social Care system including at our community and acute hospital sites. We have been working with our Gwent Local Authority colleagues and ABUHB staff to revise current models of support to enable patients who are ready for discharge to either safely return back to their own homes or move to alternative accommodation on a temporary basis whilst waiting for support to enable them to return home. We are using current partnership RIF grant funding to develop a menu of support services including increased step up / down beds, additional care home capacity and additional capacity within our assessment teams to address both the current demand as well as the anticipated pressures for winter 2022/23.

We continue to be a key partner of the Gwent Safeguarding Strategic Board and relevant operational sub groups. As a partner of the Gwent Deprivation of Liberty Safeguard board (DOLS) we are working to prepare for the implementation of the Liberty Protection Safeguards legislation (LPS) and during quarter 2 we have contributed to the consultation on the long-awaited codes of practice. As a partnership we have submitted a Welsh Government regional (Gwent) bid to support our capacity for the development of Liberty Protection Safeguards in order to provide important rights and protections for people who lack the mental capacity to agree to care, support or treatment arrangements, where these arrangements amount to a deprivation of liberty. In addition to this we are currently scoping the development of a senior practitioner post to lead on the development of LPS as well as leading on the oversight of the Continuing Care and Mental Capacity functions.

Following the restructure of our Service Manager portfolios across Adult Service at the end of 2021/22, we now have specific Service Managers aligned to our individual Provider teams. These managers are able to provide specific oversight in relation to the quality of support we are providing, our compliance with relevant mandatory policies and our requirements within the relevant regulatory legislation.

Quality Standard 4 - Local Authorities must work with people who need care and support and carers who need support to learn, develop and participate in society.

Children's Services Self-Assessment –

All grants are being monitored effectively and we maximise what grants are available to bring extra revenue and capital into the area.

At the end of academic year 2021-2022, 142 children of statutory school age were looked after by Blaenau Gwent local authority. The majority of children who are looked after by Blaenau Gwent continue to be educated within Blaenau Gwent and attend mainstream schools. A small proportion of our children looked after attend more specialist education settings. Of the 142 children of statutory school age who remained looked after at the end of the school year 2021-2022, there were slightly more children of secondary school age than primary. The overall figure is a decrease when compared with the previous academic year when 154 children of statutory school age were looked after at the end of the year. Almost all learners achieved recognised qualifications at the end of their statutory school studies in 2021-2022 with the majority now engaged in post 16 educational and/ or training opportunities.

During academic year 2021-2022 54% of Personal Education Plans for newly accommodated children were initiated within statutory timescales. A total of 11 plans were not initiated within 10 days. Eight were as a result of delay in the CLA education team being notified at the point that the children became looked after. Three were as a result of the learners being Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children who were not in school at the point of becoming looked after.

A small proportion of children looked after experienced a change of school during the course of the year. This is an increase when compared with the previous year. Consistency of schooling continues to be considered as part of the matching process when a child looked after moves placement and transport is provided where necessary to ensure stability of schooling. When a child does have to move school, processes are in place to ensure that delays in admissions are avoided, wherever possible.

During 2021-2022, incidents of exclusions issued in respect of children looked after have increased. The number of individual children looked after who have received fixed term exclusions during the year has also increased, as has the total number of days lost to exclusions when compared with the previous year. The primary reason why exclusions are issued continues to be for persistent disruptive behaviour. The majority of exclusions continue to be issued in respect of secondary aged pupils. The number of exclusions being issued for primary aged children remains low.

The Welsh Government has continued to provide funding for a set number of children to participate in the Letterbox Club each year. The Letterbox Club encourages reading for pleasure and learning at home. It helps to improve the educational outlook for children who are looked after. Parcels have continued to be distributed to our children on a monthly basis between October and May with an additional festive parcel provided in December. A total of 36 Blaenau Gwent children looked after between the ages of 5 to 13 have received parcels throughout the year.

Quality Standard 4 - Local Authorities must work with people who need care and support and carers who need support to learn, develop and participate in society.

Adult Services Self-Assessment –

Post COVID 19 we have during quarter 1 and 2 now been able to re-open our work-based services within our Community Options and Day Activities teams. Students have now returned to placements within our catering enterprise in partnership with Vison 21 and we are also scoping the further development of a Community Café which will be opened in late 2022 as part of our employment and training opportunities for people with a Learning Disability or living with poor mental health.

Our community meals and tea tray options offer continue to grow and we are working in partnership with learners from Abertillery Learning Community to re-brand the service as part of the implementation of our new electric delivery vans in late 2022.

A cultural change is needed to consider assistive technology as a solution that enables people to achieve their outcomes and live independently. This in turn will help to prevent or delay costly health and social care interventions. To promote this opportunity, we are working with our key partners of Tai Calon, ABUHB and Community Housing Cymru to develop a SMART technology flat in a sheltered scheme in Six Bells Abertillery. The development of the smart flat will assist with this solution by further promoting assistive technology to professionals, individuals and their families/carers. The flat is due to open in late 2022.

Provider managers have commenced engagement with Coleg Gwent (Ebbw Vale Campus) Health and Social Care students and will be offering work based placements to approximately 15 students during the 2022/23 academic year. This will enable our tenants / residents to engage with the students and in addition we are planning for students from the Hair and Beauty courses to provide sessions at our Care Homes.

Augusta House has requested registration from our regulator Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) to provide respite support to young children in addition to Adults and if agreed, following additional support and training for our staff, we will begin offering respite sessions to children in early quarter 3.

Quality Standard 5 - Local Authorities must support local people who need care and support and carers who need support to safely develop and maintain healthy domestic, family and personal relationships.

Children's Services Self-Assessment –

The teams continue to practice in an outcome focused way where we identify family options early in the intervention process, which we prioritise if children have to be admitted into the care of the Local Authority. However, there are situations when appropriate placements are not available locally leading to access to Independent Fostering Agency placements and residential care for young children. Supervision is used consistently to review the plans of Children Looked After (CLA) and consider opportunities for discharging the Care Orders. Poor placement availability is influencing the planning for CLA leading to an increase in use of Independent Fostering Agency's and residential care. Regular review of care planning for these children is a priority and for those with a high level of needs referrals to MyST are considered and prioritised.

The adoption service continues to promote sibling contact and also one off birth parent meetings are increasing, with 9 being held since the implementation of the Good Practice Guide.

Step-down from residential care to foster care is largely dependent on the availability of step-down foster placements. With the demand on placements and the difficulties with recruitment of foster carers it has not been possible to reduce the population of young people in residential care further.

Quality Standard 5 - Local Authorities must support local people who need care and support and carers who need support to safely develop and maintain healthy domestic, family and personal relationships.

Adult's Services Self-Assessment –

Covid restrictions have often impacted greatly on our vulnerable adults and we are prioritising support to those who have been lonely and isolated including their carers. Pre-covid family support across our Provider teams has been re-established with families now able to visit their loved ones in a safe way. We have a planned launch of our new social media for Cwrt Mytton to coincide with the relaxation of the Welsh Government care home visiting guidance which will enable us to safely restart community events and visits at the home. The home has a range of events planned for 2022/23 to incorporate a number of national and local celebrations such as summer parties for the Platinum Jubilee.

The Age Cymru floating support services was piloted in 2021/22 and was a success. This service has now continued and has been reconfigured to provide not only floating support, but also a dedicated benefits worker.

Quality Standard 6 - Local Authorities must work with and support people who need care and support and carers who need to support to achieve greater economic well-being, have a social life and live in suitable accommodation that meets their needs.

Children's Services Self-Assessment –

During 2019/20 and 2020/21, the Council incurred costs in excess of £2m per annum (£2.5M & £2M respectively) on residential placements for Children Looked After. Costs have been reducing as a result of lower numbers of children requiring residential provision, however, the local authority will always need to provide residential care for some children. To address these high costs, in September 2022 it was agreed to proceed with the development of a business case to deliver local authority residential placements for children looked after; and to enter into a collaborative arrangement with a neighbouring authority in order for them to provide the management, staffing and oversight required to provide quality residential care for our children looked after. This will reduce our reliance on private childcare providers, provide care closer to home and remove the profit element included within the current charges made by private providers. The development of our own children's home will take place over two stages. The first stage will include the acquisition of a suitable property. The grant of 1.2 million has recently been approved, and the process that will need to be followed are progressing such as working with CIW to ensure the home meets the regulatory requirements, following the 'change of use' processes and completing the refurbishment. The second stage will be the refurbishment and a second grant application to meet the costs of this has been submitted.

SEWAS are working with the National Adoption service central team and other regions to ensure marketing is targeted to increase the number of adopters for more complex children. We have been able to provide in house adopters for a number of siblings during quarters 1 and 2 in a timelier manner. At present, the number of children waiting for placements is decreasing as is the rate of referrals from prospective adopters. This could be linked to the cost of living crisis and will need to be monitored more closely moving forward.

During the period, the Placement Team prioritised matching meetings for placements outside of the framework, and consistently delivered monthly foster carer supervisions where this level of involvement has been required with annual appraisals also being maintained.

Quality Standard 6 - Local Authorities must work with and support people who need care and support and carers who need to support to achieve greater economic well-being, have a social life and live in suitable accommodation that meets their needs.

Adult Services Self-Assessment –

Ty Parc Homelessness Hostel – It has been approved for the existing contract with the current service provider is to be extended for a further 12 months to enable a review to be undertaken on the future services needed to be commissioned which will meet the needs of people who are homeless in Blaenau Gwent. A Gwent regional stakeholder consultation event has been held to inform the future commissioning of Housing Support Grant services and future commissioning priorities will be based on the feedback received.

Initial meetings have been held with TEC Cymru regarding the digital switchover and the possibility of a regional approach to this. TEC Cymru are in discussion with the regional RIF Team about this and will also be willing to help develop a business case for Blaenau Gwent in relation to the impact of the switchover. An exercise is currently being undertaken to determine how many analogue units will need to be updated to digital units on a town by town basis within the borough. This will help to inform the total funding required for the switchover to take place in Blaenau Gwent. It is expected for the financial implications to be significant which is due to take place in 2025. It will be critical that, as a service, we fully understand these implications, so we are able to continue to provide a service that meets the needs of the citizens of Blaenau Gwent.

CARIAD (Collaborative Assessment Reducing Interventions, Admissions and Delayed transfers of care) bariatric flat is due to be completed in September 2022 and will now form part of the Blaenau Gwent CARIAD offer from quarter 3. The coordination and monitoring will be facilitated by our Community Resource Team as part of the review of the functions and to ensure that we have a reablement and promote independence for our most vulnerable people.

As outlined in standard 4 above – our Community Options team are continuing to develop learning and employment opportunities for our vulnerable adults.

Since Covid, Support Providers have been providing a hybrid model of support where support is provided either face to face or virtually. The HSG Contract Monitoring Officers have now returned to onsite visits to monitor the effectiveness of this model to ensure appropriate housing related support is meeting the assessed needs. Three reviews have been undertaken to date whereby both staff and service users are spoken to in order to understand the success of the hybrid model and if it is working better to meet people's needs.

Departmental Priorities Quarter 1 and 2 – How We Have Performed

Priority Title	Self-Assessment
Ensure all children / adults are safeguarded	Children's Services - Green
	Adult Services - Green
Ensure we have an appropriately skilled, motivated and supported workforce with clear career development pathways in place that support our service delivery	Children's Services – Green
	Adult Services - Green
Ensure all teams deliver an outcomes based approach to practice and service delivery	Children's Services – Green
	Adult Services - Green
Ensure that we provide / commission modern, flexible, cost effective high quality support services that meet both current and future well-being needs of children / vulnerable adults and their unpaid family carers	Children's Services – Green
	Adult Services - Green
Ensure that preventative support is available for children and their families, that promote early intervention and prevents needs from escalating.	Children's Services – Green
Ensure that preventative support is available for adults and their unpaid carers, that promote and maintain personal independence	Adult Services – Green
Manage the Children's Services / Adults Services budget to ensure expenditure comes within budget	Children's Services – Amber
	Adult Services – Amber
Ensure the Safe Reduction of Children Looked After Strategy 2020 – 2025 actions are regularly monitored and reviewed	Children's Services – Green
Undertake a review of the current model of Community Options	Adult Services – Green
Ensure outcomes for children looked after continue to improve through the implementation of the Corporate Parenting action plan	Children's Services – Green
Review the way in which children's services operates and decide if a change is necessary in order to manage demand and workload.	Children's Services – Green
Children's Services / Adults Services contributes to meeting the Sustainable Development Principles	Children's Services – Green
	Adult Services – Green

Children's Services Performance Indicators

Performance Indicator Description	Outturn 2019/20	Outturn 2020/21	Outturn 2021/22	Annual Trend	Performance 2022/23		
					Q1	Q2	Quarterly Trend
Number of children on Child Protection Register	61	52	64	↓	77	67	↑
Rate of Children on the Child Protection Register per 10,000 population	45	38	47	↓	57	49	↑
The percentage of re-registrations of children on local authority Child Protection Registers (CPR)	6.1%	5.2%	7.6%	↓	6.5%	2.6%	↑
The average length of time for all children who were on the CPR during the year	295	219	285	↓	271	251	↑
Number of Children Looked After	208	200	198	↑	198	200	↓
Rate of Children Looked After per 10,000 population	153	147	145	↑	145	147	↓
The percentage of Children Looked After who have had three or more placements during the year	11.1%	9%	7.1%	↑	9.1%	13%	↓
Proportion of children's services cases supported by preventative services	54.6%	59.3%	53.7%	↑	53.9%	58.8%	↑
Percentage of referrals signposted to preventative services (children)	15%	10.1%	9.4%	↓	12.1%	15.1%	↑

Adult Services Performance Indicators

Performance Indicator Description	Outturn 2019/20	Outturn 2020/21	Outturn 2021/22	Annual Trend	Performance 2022/23		
					Q1	Q2	Quarterly Trend
Rate of delayed transfer for social care reasons per 1,000 population aged 75 and over	0.98	N/A*	N/A*		N/A	N/A	
Rate of older people in residential & nursing home care per 1,000 population aged 65 or over	14.64 (204)	11.70 (166)	12.20 (173)	↓	12.06 (171)	11.29 (160)	↑
The number of adults (aged 18+) receiving a service in the community who receive a direct payment	120	111	110	↔	107	111	↑
Percentage of referrals signposted to preventative services (adults)	17.9%	17.6%	11.7%	↓	15.6%	31.3%	↑
Proportion of adult services cases supported by preventative services (New)	33.8%	31.9%	37.4%	↑	35.1%	37.4%	↑
Percentage of adult protection enquiries completed within statutory timescales	95.3%	62.1%	67.9%	↑	66.7%	67.0%	↔
Percentage of proportionate assessments that led to a more comprehensive assessment for care and support - adults	14.4%	44.5%	52.3%	↓	46.2%	30.1%	↑

Case Studies

Mum had previously fled a domestic abuse relationship and her mental health had suffered considerably. Mum has depression and social anxiety disorder/social phobia and believed this was a direct result of her past relationship. Mum's anxiety meant she was extremely worried about leaving the house and engaging in groups, socialising or even going to the shop. Mum wanted to go back to work, unfortunately her mental health difficulties caused considerable barriers in achieving this. Mum is also a previous 'child looked after'.

Family Support Workers have supported Mum for the last two years. Initially she attended Elklan programme which is a speech and language course and Baby Massage at a Flying Start Hub. Mum was very anxious before attending the sessions. The Family Support Worker met with Mum before each programme session started to support her engagement. The structure of the session was explained, and the delivery room explored to ensure Mum felt confident in attending. Mum was initially extremely nervous, therefore the Family Support Worker sat with Mum throughout the session, ensuring she felt at ease and comfortable. Support continued each week and Mum completed both Elklan and Massage programmes. Mum then completed numerous groups and accredited courses, serving to continue to build her confidence and qualification portfolio.

Groups and accreditations completed by Mum:

- Elklan and baby massage
- Confidence building
- Messy Play and Elklan
- Swimming and Elklan
- Confidence building
- Incredible Years
- Tiny Talkers
- Accredited Parenting
- Accredited Elklan Lets Talk with Under 5's
- Accredited Introduction to Teaching Assistant
- Accredited Introduction to Play



Not only has Mum completed numerous courses/groups with Flying Start (which she highly recommends to other parents), she has expressed how the groups have been transformative for her. Mum has come such a long way since first engaging with Flying Start. She appears more confident, will engage in conversations with other parents, appears relaxed in groups and has made the considerable achievements.

Up to date comment from Mum: *"I completed some courses with the Flying Start Team. Due to suffering with social anxiety the girls put me at ease, and I really enjoyed going to these courses with other people I didn't know. The girls give me the strength, ambition and willpower to attend college to study Access to Higher Education in Humanities. I have now been offered two places for University in Social Work and Psychology with Developmental Disorders. Without Flying Start I would have never had the courage to do this before and without their help and support I wouldn't be where I am now and of achieved so much"*

Case Studies

Mr C has a diagnosis of mixed dementia and COPD and has been a long standing patient at Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan after recurring infections which lead to delirium. Mr C was reported to have been found wandering on the ward throughout the night by staff on numerous occasions during his time at the hospital. Mr C wished to return home to his property which is directly next door to his eldest daughter who would provide support daily with meals, cleaning and shopping. Mr C reported what mattered to him was that he could return home and go for his daily walk along the back pathway behind the property with his great grandchildren after school. A multi-disciplinary team meeting was held on the ward with Mr C and family, as Mr C was medically fit for discharge. Family were concerned if Mr C was to leave the property at night if he was suffering with delirium, although it was not certain it would happen again they felt this was a risk to him returning home as the house is situated near a main road.



WHAT WE INSTALLED It was agreed a door sensor and care assist could be installed at the property; the daughter would then be able to operate the care assist from her property as it was directly next door. This would then monitor the front door during the night time and alert the daughter if the door was opened. It was agreed the door sensor was to be set active from 21:00 to 07:00. A discharge date was set and the assistive technology support worker and installer agreed to meet with daughter at the property the day of discharge. The Assistive technology support worker and installer met the daughter at the property to fit and demonstrate safe use of the equipment as Mr C was returning home later that day

HOW HAS THIS HELPED This case study demonstrates how the use of assistive technology supported a hospital discharge allowing Mr C to return home in a timely manner and also allowed Mr C to remain able to go for his daily walk without depriving him of his liberty and reducing the risk of carer stress, as the daughter also cares for grand children and family members visiting throughout the day.



How We Do What We Do - Our Workforce and How We Support their Professional Roles

A full programme of learning is once again available and based on needs analysis. All statutory, legislative, and registration linked requirements are planned and accounted for. There is provision of developmental opportunities for the workforce and offers that support resilience and well-being. Whilst some barriers to learning may have lessened i.e. pandemic related, the challenges for the workforce to fully embrace learning opportunities remain higher than ever. The crisis in recruitment to the sector forces harsh choices that inevitably impact on workforce capacity available for development above that of meeting the essentials. The first half of the year continued its support for the registration of residential workers ahead of October.

Local Welsh language champions are meeting to contribute to action plans and promote the wide resources and opportunities available as part of 'More Than Just Words'. A regional group for implementing the Welsh Government's Strategy includes a newly revised policy working towards a bilingual health and social care service with five-year plan.

Various initiatives within the organisation are in place to support improving digital confidence and access to digital learning. The authority underpins its approach with the recognition of barriers that exist for parts of the social care workforce.

- Classroom activities using digital devices enabling facilitator and peer support
- Provision of equipment to settings enabling group-based participation in digital learning
- Promotion of digital learning opportunities
- All Wales project on securing an organisational level, fit for purpose, future proof, platform that will meet the needs of the whole sector, communities and volunteers. Funding bid for and secured from the WG Digital Transformation fund 2022/23.
- Using the power of social media to engage and communicate with the sector
- Supporting the design of unbranded resources to enable Wales wide sharing across partners.
- Using blended approaches and in some situations introducing a choice of digital and face to face.
- Positively, the engagement from the workforce with new ways of learning is exceptional and they continue to reward the community with their ongoing resilience and determination.

Additional funding from Social Care Wales has enabled the authority to continue its investment in its 'grow your own' recruitment strategy, particularly for the current hard to recruit roles.

Benefits continue to be realised for and by the workforce through the scale of opportunity possible due to the joint workforce development service model hosted by Blaenau Gwent in partnership with Caerphilly.

Budget 2022/23 - Quarter 1 & 2 (April 2022 to September 2022)

Budget Area		Budget	Forecast	Variance	
		£	£	£	%
1	Commissioning & Social Work	3,939,340	4,074,375	(135,035)	(3.43)
2	Children Looked After	7,501,660	8,062,920	(561,260)	(7.48)
3	Family Support Services	192,370	198,478	(6,108)	(3.18)
4	Youth Justice	237,580	250,930	(13,350)	(5.62)
5	Other Children's and Family Services	2,417,850	2,386,886	30,964	1.28
6	Older People Aged 65 and Over	7,154,970	7,090,061	64,909	0.91
7	Adults under 65 with Physical Disabilities	18,290	18,210	80	0.44
8	Adults under 65 with Learning Disabilities	3,684,090	3,755,969	(71,879)	(1.95)
9	Adults under 65 with Mental Health Needs	571,660	582,873	(11,213)	(1.96)
10	Other Adult Services	463,570	502,482	(38,912)	(8.39)
11	Community Care	17,338,860	17,002,627	336,233	1.94
12	Support Service & Management Costs	934,170	910,567	23,603	2.53
13	Corporate Recharges	5,487,140	5,487,135	5	0.00
Grand Total		49,941,550	50,323,512	(381,962)	

Social Services Corporate Risks

Risk Description	Quarter 1 & 2 Update (April – September 2022)	Status
<p>CRR 4 - Safeguarding - Failure to ensure adequate safeguarding arrangements are in place for vulnerable people in Blaenau Gwent</p>	<p><u>Quarter 1 Progress (April – June 2022)</u></p> <p>Vacancy rates are improving which was anticipated. Staff turnover is still an issue; this has affected the number of experienced staff in post. There is a robust induction programme for newly qualified staff and for staff that started during COVID. Induction programme covers basic training on all aspects of social work tasks.</p> <p><u>Quarter 2 Progress (July – September 2022)</u></p> <p>Risk reviewed 16/08/22 by Director of Social Services no change to score.</p> <p>Structural review of Adult Safeguarding team has been completed following resignation of current safeguarding manager. Job Description has been reviewed and advert for new safeguarding manager has gone live. Departmental Management Team is also reviewing the current composition of the service and it is proposed that a new post of senior practitioner (safeguarding) will be established following report to Senior Leadership Team. Work is being scoped to enhance the current links between Adult Safeguarding team and our internal Organisational Department because of recent safeguarding concerns relating to outcomes of professional strategy meetings. An elected member Adult Services Safeguarding briefing has been arranged for quarter 3. Numbers of safeguarding referrals received during quarter 2 have increased from quarter 1 at 157 compared to 139 of which 88 proceeded to an enquiry compared to 57 in previous quarter.</p>	<p>High</p>

Risk Description	Quarter 1 & 2 Update (April – September 2022)	Status
CRR20 - There is a risk that increasingly complex needs and demand for services provided by Social Services and Education, in particular for Looked After Children, will put further significant pressure on the Council's budget.	<p><u>Quarter 1 Progress (April – June 2022)</u></p> <p>Children Looked After children numbers have remained around the same levels; residential placement numbers are down slightly. Outturn showing small underspend for Quarter 1 which is positive. To remain at current score.</p> <p><u>Quarter 2 Progress (July – September 2022)</u></p> <p>Change in residential numbers means that there is a forecast overspend. Collaboration for legal services commenced in April 2022. This is a transition year. Rise in referrals into IAA, increase in numbers from the national transfer scheme.</p>	High
Risk Description	Quarter 1 & 2 Update (April – September 2022)	Status
CRR27- There is a risk that identified staffing pressures in social services will result in an inability to deliver services particularly in provider services and domiciliary care.	<p><u>Quarter 1 Progress (April – June 2022)</u></p> <p>Staffing levels in Supported living bungalows and Cwrt Mytton remain one of the highest internal pressures with senior managers looking to mitigate those pressures on a daily basis. Staffing pressures in Supported Living Team mean the implementation of a number of measures to relieve pressure on this service including offer for overtime, potential implementation of business critical operations only for community options / day services to release staff to support SL team. Both services have a high level of agency support. At present there have been no external domiciliary care providers handing back packages of care. Workforce development plan being finalised which should assist in mitigating the risks.</p> <p><u>Quarter 2 Progress (July – September 2022)</u></p> <p>Risk reviewed 16/08/22 by Director of Social Services. Risk to be escalated back to the CRR and risk score increased to Critical.</p>	Critical

Glossary

ABUHB – Aneurin Bevan University Health Board

ACRF – Annual Council Reporting Framework

ADSS - Association of Directors of Social Services

BG – Blaenau Gwent

CCG – Children & Communities Grant

CIW – Care Inspectorate for Wales

CLA – Children looked After

CRT – Community Resource Team

DoLS – Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards

GATA – Gwent Access to Advocacy

GP – General Practitioner

GWASB – Gwent Wide Adult Safeguarding Board

HSG – Housing Support Grant

IAA – Information, Advice and Assistance

ICF – Integrated Care Fund

LA – Local Authority

LPS - Liberty Protection Safeguards

NYAS – National Youth Advocacy Service

PHW – Public Health Wales

Quarter 1 – April to June

Quarter 2 – July to September

Quarter 3 – October to December

Quarter 4 – January to March

RCC – Regional Collaborative Committee

RISCA - Regulation and Inspection Social Care Act

SEWAS – South East Wales Adoption Service

SEWIC – South East Wales Improvement Collaboration

SEWSCB – South East Wales Safeguarding Children Board

SGO - Special Guardianship Order

SLA – Service Level Agreement

SPACE - Single Point of Access for Children’s Emotional Well-being and Mental Health

SLT – Senior Leadership Team

TESSA - therapeutic educational support services in adoption

The ‘Act’ or SSWB Act – Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014

WAST – Welsh Ambulance Service Trust

WG – Welsh Government

Contact Details

If you require any further information or have any feedback you wish to share, please:

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Annual Council Reporting Framework
Social Services Department
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Abertillery
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Call us:

(01495) 311 556

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www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

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Agenda Item 7

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

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

Committee: **People Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **17th January 2023**

Report Subject: **Corporate Director of Education Services - Quarter 1 and 2 2022**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Sue Edmunds, Cabinet Member for Education**

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

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance and Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)
6/12/22	15.12.22	04.01.23			17.01.23	18.01.23		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to present the Corporate Director of Education's Report covering the quarter 1 and 2 period 2022 and is attached as Appendix 1.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 It is a statutory responsibility of the Corporate Director of Education to assess the effectiveness of the delivery of Education and produce updates for Members that forms part of the Annual Council Reporting Framework. The provision of Education is regulated under the Estyn Local Government Education Services (LGES) framework and this report will complement the Directorate's self-evaluation arrangements.

3. Options for Recommendation

- 3.1 The report has been considered by Education's DMT and the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT).

3.2 Option 1

Members are asked to scrutinise the information detailed within the Corporate Director of Education's Report and contribute to the continuous assessment of effectiveness by making appropriate recommendations to Cabinet.

3.3 Option 2

Accept the report as provided.

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

- 4.1 It is a statutory responsibility of the Corporate Director of Education to assess the effectiveness of the delivery of Education and an annual report will be produced, in line with the Scrutiny and Cabinet Forward Work Programmes.

5. Implications Against Each Option

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

The attached report identifies the financial and budgetary implications from April 2022 to September 2022.

5.2 **Risk including Mitigating Actions**

The Education service maintains a Directorate Risk Register, which is aligned to both service level and corporate risks. The attached report highlights the main risks currently under consideration and the mitigation. The risk register is reviewed as part of the business planning process and included within the performance reporting of the Education service.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 The detailed performance information is included within Appendix 1. The Education Directorate is working together with key stakeholders on a joint purpose to deliver 'Better Schools, Better Citizens and Better Communities – all through a children and young person centred approach'.

6.2 The Education Directorate's priorities outlined in the Education Improvement Plan (EIP) are as follows:

- **Improving educational standards and wellbeing** for pupils, particularly at KS4;
- **Securing quality ALN/Inclusion provision**, particularly to support Vulnerable groups of learners and those who are eFSM;
- **Transforming education** in line with responsive school support services and a school estate that is fit for the 21st Century;
- **Delivering effective young people and partnership provision**, with a focus on lifelong learning and leisure/recreation provision to meet community need; and,
- **Enhancing the performance culture for Education and Leisure** that delivers **better educational outcomes and improved value for money**.

6.3 Progress against these priorities is included within appendix 1, as well as an overview on key areas of progress and areas where further improvement is required.

6.5 **Expected outcome for the public**

Reporting performance provides the public with the opportunity to view progress of the Education Directorate and ensure accountability.

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

Pupil voice is a key area for the Education Directorate and examples of this are included within appendix 1, it should be noted that a member of the Youth Forum now sits on the People Scrutiny Committee.

6.7 **Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)**

The report enables the Education Directorate to plan for the future as spend, risk and performance is continuously reported on and provides a baseline of where the department is currently and where it needs to be in the future.

6.8 Preventative focus

The work undertaken by the Education Directorate promotes a preventative approach to practice through early identification and intervention. The respective teams have an active rather than re-active approach to service planning can also help with planning resources and ensuring value for money services are delivered.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

7.1 The performance of the Education Directorate is monitored via the business planning process and reported through the democratic process via various reporting mechanisms including the Finance and Performance Report, the Assessment of Performance and various performance monitoring reports.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 –Report of the Corporate Director of Education Services

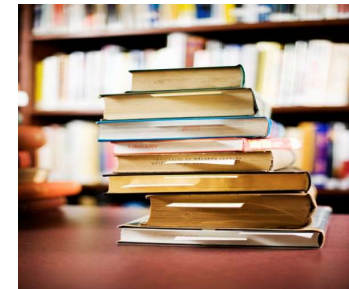
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Education Directorate

Director of Education Report

Quarter 1 and 2 (April 2022 to September 2022)



*'The Education Directorate, working together with key stakeholders on a joint purpose to deliver **better schools, better citizens and better communities** – all through a children and young person centred approach'*

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Introduction

Welcome to the Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's report of the Corporate Director of Education. The report is used to highlight the key areas of progress and improvements that the service has experienced. This report provides a mid-year review of the activity undertaken to date in academic year 2022-23.

The Council will continue to work with partners across the Council, for example, Children's Services, Regeneration, Legal, Finance and Organisational Development to focus the work on improving pupil outcomes and supporting school leaders. The Council will also continue to work with partners, such as the Education Achievement Service (EAS) to support school leaders to improve pupil outcomes and wellbeing.

Blaenau Gwent Context

Blaenau Gwent is a place of heritage and dramatic change, with a sense of its past but its eyes firmly on the future. The area is relatively small geographically, being at most 15 miles north to south, and 8 miles east to west. Blaenau Gwent is defined physically by high hillsides dividing the three main valleys. These valleys are home to towns and villages which are largely post-heavy industrial in nature. However, each community proudly maintains its own character and traditions. Although the towns give the county borough a busy, urban feel, Blaenau Gwent is a largely rural area. Wherever you are, beautiful countryside is never far away. Figure BG01 below looks to give a visual representation of Blaenau Gwent, highlighting some of our distinctive local features.

Blaenau Gwent has 25 schools across 31 school sites and their status is detailed below:

- 2 Maintained 3-16 Learning Communities
- 1 Foundation Comprehensive
- 1 Maintained Comprehensive
- 1 x Maintained 3-18 Special School
- 1 x Maintained 3-16 SEBD Special School
- 19 Primaries (of which 4 are voluntary aided / faith schools)

There are currently circa 9,000+ pupils on roll across all Blaenau Gwent schools.

The organisation, End Child Poverty, released new data in October 2020 with findings showing that the highest rates of child poverty in Wales are in Pembrokeshire and Blaenau Gwent. Blaenau Gwent is one of 5 counties in Wales to have seen a rise in the proportion of children living in poverty since 2015. The impact of poverty on children is well documented, with children from low-income families more likely to experience worse physical and mental health; do less well in school; and have fewer opportunities in the future. The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) captures the extent of deprivation as a proportion of residents living in each lower super output area (LSOA). The eight considerations of the WIMD are: income; employment; health; education, skills and training; geographical access to services; housing; physical environment; and community safety. Blaenau Gwent has the highest percentage of LSOAs in the most deprived areas across Wales at 10%, for income (19.1%), education (27.7%), and community safety (23.4%). New research from the Education Policy Institute (EPI) released in 2022 into the impact of educational inequalities across England and Wales, funded by the Nuffield Foundation, highlights the relative disadvantage experienced across the County Borough. The impact of poverty on children is well documented, with children from low-income families more likely to experience worse physical and mental health; do less well in school; and have fewer opportunities in the future.



The level of pupils eligible for free school meals (eFSM) in Blaenau Gwent, as of PLASC 2022, have seen a significant increase to 33.3% from the pre-Covid level of 25.5%. This represents the highest level of all LAs in Wales by a significant margin, as has been the case every year for at least the past 10 years, excepting 2018-19 where BG had the second highest level. This is reflected in schools where eFSM levels have been highest or 2nd highest in Primary, and highest in Secondary for the past 5 years. Given the evidential relationship between pupil performance and deprivation (using eFSM as a proxy indicator), pupil outcomes in BG would be expected to be among the lowest in Wales, but the LA has high aspirations for our learners.

Overall, the 2019 WIMD figures and high eFSM eligibility reflect very high levels of deprivation within the authority. They indicate significant challenges required to improve educational outcomes to levels within other similar LAs and to consistently match the all-Wales averages. 2018-19 performance figures show that Blaenau Gwent has achieved parity, and indeed, outperformed some LAs in several measures confirming the progress being made within its schools. In Blaenau Gwent, we have high ambitions for all our learners and our socio-economic standing is a challenge that we are working to overcome to the benefit of all our children and young people and we do not accept that poverty is an excuse for poor educational achievement.

Director's Overview

Blaenau Gwent is a relatively small geographical area, with big ambitions for our schools and learners. We are determined to play our part in Wales being a first class education system with a clear ambition to increase the skills and standards of education across the County Borough. We fully support and are committed to the Welsh Government's national mission for educational transformation, including Curriculum and ALN Reforms. Blaenau Gwent's vision, purpose and strategic priorities are as follows;

Vision and Purpose

- The **Vision** for the Education Directorate is to realise a **school-led self-improving system**.
- The **Purpose** for the Education Directorate is to create '**Better Schools, Better Citizens and Better Communities**'.
- The **Vision and Purpose** are both driven by a **child centred approach** and placing **children and young people** at the **heart** of all our **work and decisions**.

Education Improvement Plan (EIP) – 5 Priorities

- **Improving educational standards and wellbeing** for pupils, particularly at KS4;
- **Securing quality ALN/Inclusion provision**, particularly to support Vulnerable groups of learners and those who are eFSM;
- **Transforming education** in line with responsive school support services and a school estate that is fit for the 21st Century;
- **Delivering effective young people and partnership provision**, with a focus on lifelong learning and leisure/recreation provision to meet community need; and,
- **Enhancing the performance culture for Education and Leisure** that delivers **better educational outcomes and improved value for money**.



Lynn Phillips - Director Education



Cllr Sue Edmunds - Cabinet Member Education

Local Political Leadership, Governance and Accountability

The structure of the Education Directorate provides clear levels of management and accountability. The Council has a clear governance and accountability framework in place which all directorates are signed up to. This framework identifies how reporting and monitoring works throughout the Council to create a 'golden thread'. This framework is produced corporately, and Education is compliant, the services also have additional regulatory requirements as part of the Estyn Local Government Education Services (LGES) framework.

The Education Directorate is subject to external/internal audit, inspection and regulatory review by Estyn. On a termly basis, the Director of Education and/or Senior Education Managers meet with Estyn to discuss achievements, performance and key challenges. The Directorate has one Cabinet Member who has portfolio responsibility for People - Education (including the Aneurin Leisure Trust). The Directorate is scrutinised by the People Scrutiny Committee. Regular liaison meetings are held with the Directorate, the Cabinet Member and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Scrutiny Committee.

Engagement with Members

Aside from the work programmes for Scrutiny, Cabinet and Council, the Education Directorate also regularly engages with all Elected Members via a series of briefing sessions, aimed at informing Members of key areas of the Directorate to enhance their learning and understanding. The following sessions have taken place or are scheduled as part of the Member Development Programme:

Induction Programme:

- The Work of the Individual Directorates – Education
- Corporate Parenting/Safeguarding Responsibilities

Member Development Programme

- Directorate Briefing Session for the People Scrutiny Committee
- Safeguarding Online Course - Mandatory for All Members
- Safeguarding in Education
- Education Transformation
- Youth Service
- Estyn Preparedness
- Working with the EAS
- Post 16 Learner Outcomes
- Aneurin Leisure Trust

How People Are Shaping Our Services

The Education Directorate is committed to providing high quality services to its citizens and uses various engagement methodologies to understand if the service is making the intended outcomes or if amendments to service delivery need to be considered. Throughout the period a variety of engagement events have taken place:

- Focus group sessions undertaken to understand what C & YP understand about wellbeing and mental health

- VAWSDSV
- 4 Children's Grand Council sessions were run over the last academic year.
- School councils continue to operate across school settings
- 4 LGBTQ+ support groups available within schools to understand C & YP views, it's a place where they can meet discuss, express and offload if needed.
- Focus group carried out with Young Carers to understand the impact of the Young Carers passport.
- A democracy event took place where school from secondary came to understand the democracy journey and how they can be involved. 6 sessions took place throughout the day with 30-32 children attending each session.
- Schools receive weekly bulletins covering strategic and operational developments.
- Schools have received links to surveys for C & YP to have input into programme or policy development.
- Young people from Blaenau Gwent Youth Forum contribute to the scrutiny committee arrangements.
- C & YP from schools attend the Youth Forum which meets every month, there are 8 members of the forum and it focusses on working on priorities that matter to them as well as feeding into policy or consultations. Some of the Youth Forum have now started college, however, were part of the BG Education System.
- Positive Body Image Campaign | [Decide Me - Positive Body Image Campaign | Blaenau Gwent CBC \(blaenau-gwent.gov.uk\)](#)
- Let's Go Zero https://youtube.com/watch?v=KKFGQ_q90CM&feature=share&si=EMSlkaECMiOmarE6JChQQ Regional Mental Health Campaign Development.
- Youth Question time event 22-[Gwent Youth Question Time 2022 | Blaenau Gwent CBC \(blaenau-gwent.gov.uk\)](#)

In September 2022, Blaenau Gwent Council received a letter from Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales, stating that the Council will be subject to an Estyn inspection, in line with the Local Government Education Services (LGES) framework, and that the inspection will take place between 28th November to 2nd December 2022.

The inspection is to be carried out in accordance with the inspection framework and the guidance 'for the inspection of Local Government Education Services'.

The three inspection areas of the Local Government Education Services Framework (LGES) inspection framework are:

Inspection Area 1 – Outcomes

- Standards and progress overall
- Standards and progress of specific groups
- Wellbeing and attitudes to learning

Inspection Area 2 – Education Services and Provision

- Support for school improvement
- Support for vulnerable learners

- Other education support services

Inspection Area 3 – Leadership and Management

- Quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers
- Self-evaluation and improvement planning
- Professional learning
- Safeguarding arrangements
- Use of resources

Blaenau Gwent's 4 Local Questions for the Inspection

1. How well does the local authority challenge and support non-maintained settings and schools to improve?
2. How well does the local authority tackle inequalities in education experiences and outcomes for children living in poverty?
3. How well does the local authority support schools to promote respectful relationships and address negative behaviour effectively?
4. How well does the local authority ensure that the interests of learners are above all others in its planning for schools and other education provision?

Prior to the core inspection week, Estyn will look to survey local staff, learners, parents and other local citizens with an interest in education services. A preliminary visit will also be held around 2 weeks before the core inspection week to interview key stakeholders.

As per usual practice, the Council is to receive preliminary feedback and findings from the Inspection team on 2nd December 2022. This will be followed up by a final letter which will include findings and any recommendations for improvement. This letter is not expected until February in the New Year.

Departmental Priorities 2022/27

Education Directorate Plan

- Improving educational standards and wellbeing for pupils, particularly at KS4;
- Securing quality ALN/Inclusion provision, particularly to support vulnerable groups of learners and those who are eFSM;
- Transforming education in line with responsive school support services and a school estate that is fit for the 21st Century;
- Delivering effective young people and partnership provision, with a focus on lifelong learning and leisure/recreation provision to meet community need; and
 - Enhancing the performance culture for Education and Leisure that delivers better educational outcomes and improved value for money.

Education Transformation and Business Change – Tier 1

- To ensure an effective Admissions and the Planning of Pupil places process to secure effective access to education, whilst also fulfilling the team's statutory responsibilities and ensuring regulatory compliance;
- To ensure an effective Home to School transport provision is in place statutory responsibilities and ensuring regulatory compliance;
- Delivery of projects to transform the ICT and digitalisation education provision and to ensure strategies and sustainability plans are in place;
- Managing and improving the existing school estate provision Facilities management, Health & Safety, emergency planning;
- Effective delivery of transformation projects to ensure an informed approach to school organisation and the school estate is fit for the future -The Sustainable Community for Learning agenda (21st Century Schools), capacity [reviews](#);
- Development & delivery of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) and associated projects;
- Education Transformation to support delivery of the Sustainable Development Principles; and
- Deliver Strong human, financial, risk and performance management within the Education Transformation Team.

Improvement and Inclusion Plan – Tier 2

- Minimise the impact and recovery from COVID-19 on learner development and progress;
- Improve wellbeing for learners at all stages of development, with a focus on attendance, exclusions and equity;
- Secure strong progress in skills, particularly with reading;
- Support schools to ensure all ALN processes are in place in order to meet statutory requirements;
- Ensure high quality provision is in place to support vulnerable learners in mainstream schools, resource bases and in special schools, including eFSM learners;
- Ensure high quality leadership that secures good progress for all learners;
- Support schools who are identified as causing concern through regional and local protocols to secure improvement;
- Development and management of workforce capacity and capability whilst delivering effective services within financial resources available; and
- Inclusion & Improvement contributes to meeting the Sustainable Development Principles.

Improvement and Inclusion Plan – Tier 1

- Support schools to ensure pupils with ALN and vulnerable learners make good progress;
- Ensure the ALN and Inclusion service have policies and procedures in place in order to meet statutory requirements, including a review of Resource Bases;
- Ensure the IPS service remains responsive to learners' and schools' needs;
- Development and management of workforce capacity and capability whilst delivering effective services within financial resources available;
- Ensure safeguarding quality assurance processes remain effective and inform the work of the directorate;
- Work in partnership with the EAS to support schools with Curriculum for Wales and skills;
- Ensure school improvement policies and procedures are in place in order to meet statutory requirements;
- Work in partnership with the EAS to support schools with leadership; and
- As appropriate, develop packages of support for schools.

Young People and Partnership Plan and Aneurin Leisure Trust – Tier 1

- Create and maintain sustainability of the youth service by securing funding and spaces to deliver effective youth services;
- Deliver a wide range of support and provision to young people aged 11-25 based on identified need;
- Implement the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF) across the Borough, to ensure young people remain in or enter education, employment or training (reducing NEET figures);
- Ensure consistency and quality in service delivery across the youth service and wider youth support services;
- Ensure the Youth Service and Inclusion Services work collaboratively;
- Manage the Young People and Partnerships service area effectively in terms of staff and financial resources available (both internal and external);
- Post 16 – Ensure Effective Post 16 Partnership arrangements are in place and embedded;
- ALT/Awen/Head 4 Arts: - Ensure Effective Partnership and Commissioning arrangements are in place for Sports and Leisure, Arts and Culture, Adult Community Learning and Libraries; and
- Young People and Partnerships to support delivery of the Sustainable Development Principles.

Areas of Progress and Improvement

- The Education Directorate received Full Council approval (2020-2021) to establish a new leadership and management structure that includes additional capacity for school improvement and inclusion. Although interim capacity has been affected by staff changes and maternity leave;
- There have been strong appointments made to the Education Directorate's leadership team, including a Head of School Improvement and Inclusion and Service Managers for Education Transformation and Business Change, Young People and Partnerships and the Service Manager – Inclusion;
- The WG ALN National Transformation secondment has concluded, however BG and WG have agreed a collaborative approach for the officer to work part-time via a grant award and part-time for BG's ALN Reform implementation, which provides additional strategic capacity within the SI&I team;
- The Corporate and Education Directorate's response to COVID-19 has been effective and this is discussed in the Estyn Thematic Review, and has been followed up in the Summer Letter (2021) commentary;
- BG knows its schools well overall as identified in the annual regulatory feedback. School inspection and school categorisation profile has improved significantly with no primary schools in follow up and notable practice identified in a number of schools;
- There has been an incremental reduction in Schools Causing Concern from 6 schools in 2019 to only 2 schools in 2022. ALC has been removed from Estyn Significant Improvement category;
- GCSE L2 English, Maths, Science and Capped 9 improved across the board since 2019, the results in 2021-22 were realised through external examinations, but noting the post Centre Determined Grades moderation;
- The 2022 KS4 results were positive and in line with the SDP targets set by the 4 secondary settings. There were improvements in 29 out of 32 key measures. The results are shown in the Performance Data Pack as well as the Main SER for self-evaluation purposes;
- GCSE A* - A and A*- C grades improved in English and Maths;
- Planning arrangements for Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Reform are well developed and Phase 1 and Phase 2 summary evaluation implementation documents evidence the progress made across the schools;
- The partnership with Schools, Coleg Gwent and Post 16 providers has strengthened through the establishment of the Post 16 Strategic Partnership Board. A-level A*- C and A*- E grades continue to be good with a 97.8% overall pass rate for A*- E, which is in line with the Welsh average of 98% and the pass rate for grades A*- C and A*- A have improved significantly;
- Value-added progress in English and Maths, reading and numeracy for our 7 and 11 year olds improved in 2019-20. BG's schools are working towards the use of progress assessments across the board in 2022 to assess learner progress. This data will only be used to inform self-evaluation and not for accountability purposes;
- The Youth Service exceeded that of the all-Wales means for reach and accredited learning outcomes. The levels of NEETs at 1.6% remain at low levels i.e., 9 young people;
- The School Based Counselling Service provides good support, and this is evidenced through the evaluation reports;

- Strong progress through the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme (formerly 21st Century Schools) programme with robust programme management arrangements in place as acknowledged in the WG facilitated Gateway Review. The Band B programme is well underway, an investment of circa £31m into the school estate;
- Good progress against the Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP), including WG approval of the BG 10 Year WESP and the new Welsh medium seedling school moving to project implementation stage (full planning approval);
- Headteacher induction and support programme very well received by aspiring and new Headteachers (September 2022);
- Schools are strategically contributing to a full systems approach e.g., self-evaluation work as well as collaborative leadership arrangements and this will continue moving forward through the on-going work of the Headteacher Working Groups (covering Self-Evaluation/Curriculum/ALN Reforms);
- Effective ICT support provided particularly to digitally disadvantaged learners to engage in digital platforms including the co-ordination and distribution of technology. ICT in School Strategy to be finalised in the Spring term;
- Good Early Years provision;
- The Education components of the corporate staff wellbeing survey results were good;
- Overall, the revenue financial position of the Education Directorate and schools has improved significantly with school balances at £4.3m in 2021-22; including redressing the budget deficit in one school i.e., Abertillery Learning Community. The ALC Corporate Group monitors performance and financial sustainability of the setting. The LA has passported an 8.4% uplift to schools via the ISB in 2022-23; and,
- The Council and EAS are evidencing improving value for money returns i.e., improvement in standards overall with less resources.

Areas where further improvement is required

- Higher levels of language acquisition and reading across the board, but particularly in our very young children in early years.
- Improve attainment of eFSM pupils and closing the achievement gap, particularly our more-able pupils throughout education;
- Improve school attendance in both primary and secondary sectors;
- Focus on Schools Causing Concern (SCC), particularly the two schools currently in an Estyn category. It is recognised that in both schools there needs to be pace injected into their improvement journeys. 'One Plan' monitoring in place for both schools;
- Reduce school exclusions and support parents/carers who opt to Elective Home Educate (EHE), with increases linked to COVID. There are 3 schools with identified higher-levels of exclusions that will require targeted interventions;
- Secure external funding for European Social Fund (ESF) programmes e.g. Inspire;
- Pupil progress monitoring at an LA level for self-evaluation purposes; and,
- The revenue financial position of Education is likely to be impacted in the medium to long-term by the continued response to the COVID-19 and the Cost-of-Living crisis. The provisional settlement received from Welsh Government in December 2021 indicates an uplift to funding of 3.5% and 2.4% for 2023/24 and 2024/25 respectively. However, given the current economic and political climate and the Cost-of-Living crisis there is a risk that this could impact on the financial position of the Council and Education and this is currently being reviewed in line with the MTFs.

Progress against the Priorities

Improving educational standards and wellbeing for pupils, particularly at KS4

Self-Assessment – The Education Directorate knows its schools well overall, and this is evidenced by the regulatory feedback received annually.

School inspection and school categorisation profiling has improved significantly with no primary schools in follow up. There has been a reduction in Schools Causing Concern from 6 schools in 2019 to only 2 schools in 2022. ALC has been formally removed from an Estyn Significant Improvement category and the SWN has been lifted. There is a monitoring visit that took place for BFS in the Summer term and the focus remains on the quality and consistency of T&L. The pace of improvement remains under review. The River Centre has been the subject to an Estyn inspection and the pre-inspection report has been returned to the inspectorate. This setting has gone into an Estyn category following a recent inspection and will be supported via a Multi-Agency approach. The Post Inspection Action Plan has been produced and weekly monitoring is in place.

The Local Authority has requested that EAS support schools on reading skills as a priority following discussions with Joint Headteachers. ALN Reform implementation is on-going with increasing confidence across schools. Education DMT has agreed half-termly monitoring of attendance and exclusions with an attendance campaign planned for the Autumn, in conjunction with Corporate Communications.

2022 results for GCSE L2 English, Maths, Science and Capped 9 improved across the board since 2019, the results in 2021-22 were realised through external examinations, but noting the post Centre Determined Grades moderation. The 2022 KS4 results were in line with the SDP targets set by the 4 secondary settings. The results are shown in the Performance Data Pack for self-evaluation purposes. GCSE A*/A and A*-C grades improved in English, Science and Maths. The partnership with Schools, Coleg Gwent and Post 16 providers has strengthened through the establishment of the Post 16 Strategic Partnership Board. A-level A*-C and A*-E grades continue to be strong and were in line with the all-Wales means at 98.4% for BG learners at Coleg Gwent settings.

The Youth Service exceeded that of the all-Wales means for reach and accredited learning outcomes. The levels of NEETs at 1.6% are at their lowest levels i.e., 9 young people.

Securing quality ALN/Inclusion provision, particularly to support vulnerable groups of learners and those who are eFSM

Self-Assessment –

The Education Directorate has recently made permanent appointments to the Inclusion team, including the Service Manager for Inclusion.

The Welsh Government ALN National Transformation secondment has concluded; however, it has been agreed between the Council and Welsh Government for the officer to continue to work collaboratively, part time via a grant award and part time for the Council's ALN Reform implementation, which provides additional strategic capacity within the School Improvement and Inclusion Team.

Planning arrangements for Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Reform are well developed and a Phase 1 summary evaluation implementation document evidences the progress made across the school estate.

Data updates including eFSM, attendance and exclusions will be reviewed in the autumn term, however, there are initial indications that the KS4 eFSM gap has reduced.

A review of the ALN/Inclusion Strategy and associated policies has been undertaken taken through the democratic process via People Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet for approval. However, there is a need to engage Headteachers in strategic ALN developments more consistently.

Discussions have been taking place with Headteachers with regards to creating a Vulnerable Learner Panel (VLP), which will undertake school level monitoring to support a reduction in school exclusions and also provide support to parents and carers who opt to elective home educate, which has seen an increase since COVID.

The River Centre is a School Causing Concern and is subject to Statutory Warning Notice (SWN) letter for improvement. This setting has gone into an Estyn category following a recent inspection and will be supported via a Multi-Agency approach. There are very early signs of progress and the primary provision is stable for learners.

Transforming education in line with responsive school support services and a school estate that is fit for the 21st Century

Self-Assessment –

The Council has an enhanced knowledge of school capacity linked to the effective annual monitoring processes that are in place; along with an on-going facilities review/management protocols and effective admissions processes. This is evidenced by the annual review and publication of the school Admissions Policy which has recently been agreed by Cabinet.

Good progress has been made against the Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP), including Welsh Government approval of the Blaenau Gwent 10 Year WESP and the new Welsh medium seedling school moving to project implementation stage (full planning approval). The delivery of the WESP targets will be largely delivered through the Welsh medium seedling and immersion proposals. Momentum needs to be maintained with regards to securing additional Welsh-medium education provision for Blaenau Gwent for the Council to deliver on the outcomes of the Blaenau Gwent Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and meet WG deadlines for completion of the 10-year plan.

Surplus places are reducing to the targets set in the School Organisation Policy at 15%. The LA does have some elements of sufficiency of school places emerging that will need to be monitored closely, especially in the secondary/ special school sectors.

Strong progress through the 21st Century Schools programme with robust programme management arrangements in place as acknowledged in the WG facilitated Gateway Review. The Band B programme is well underway an investment of circa £26m into the school estate and this funding opportunity has been identified to target resources for ALN learners. The suitability and condition of the school estate is improving with circa 61% categorised as A/B and the only D category (Glyncoed) forms part of the Band D investment programme.

Education ICT strategic planning processes are strong, with the project team having successfully delivered the ICP and HWB EdTech projects to date. Good progress has been made in line with the development of the Education ICT Strategy, which is scheduled for implementation in Spring 2023.

Medium and long term plans for Pen-y-Cwm are to be developed in line with the increasing demand. The LA will work with the new leadership team to ensure the school's capacity requirements are met.

Delivering effective young people and partnership provision, with a focus on lifelong learning and leisure/recreation provision to meet community need

Self-Assessment – The Youth Services provide effective information, support and learning opportunities for young people aged 11-25 and supports young people through earlier transitions from 10 years old, based on a voluntary relationship between the young person and youth worker. In addition, the Youth Service co-ordinates the 11-18 Counselling Service (statutory), the extended 18-25 Counselling Service, Play Therapy Service (year 3 -5) and the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPP), which aims to reduce the numbers of young people who become NEET (not in Education, Employment or Training) up to the age of 25 through a partnership approach. The partnership now includes a focus on Youth Homelessness and Wellbeing.

The Youth Service is delivering against its priorities with its latest report demonstrating continued progress. The work of the team is comprehensive and highlights demonstrable progress against the key success criteria. However, there is still work to do in relation to the sustainability of the ESF Programmes e.g., Inspire however, this is potentially being mitigated through the Shared Prosperity Funding.

The relationship with the Leisure Trust has improved significantly and their performance reporting post COVID is strong, particularly the investment in fitness provision realising new memberships. Leisure Trust developments are captured effectively through the Leisure and Libraries Strategic Board and the ALT performance reports e.g., Welsh Public Library Standards (WPLS).

Some challenges have been faced within recruitment into the Youth Service, owing to the part time nature of the work and also the requirements for all new staff to be qualified to level 2 and registered with EWC. This has been mitigated by allowing youth support worker roles to be filled without the required qualification but with an agreed timeframe for when the level 2 and 3 qualifications can be achieved.

- In 2021/22, 17% (1961 individual young people) of 11–25-year-olds voluntarily registered with the Youth Service with an additional 9524 contacts made with anonymous (not registered with the service) young people. This is 1% lower than the 2019/20 pre Covid data and shows that the reach has almost returned to pre-pandemic levels, despite still working within restrictions at the beginning of the year.
- In 2020/21, the last available all Wales data, Blaenau Gwent placed 4th (best) across Wales and above the Welsh national average (9%) for population reach and 2nd across the region and 2nd across the family mean.
- The Youth Service 9,524 anonymous contacts during 2120/22 were made through the 11-25 Counselling Service, detached youth work, outreach and out of school activities and events.
- The Youth Service has a well-trained workforce highlighted again in the Youth Work in Wales 2020/2021 Statistical Release where Blaenau Gwent is 3rd (best) in Wales, as having a trained, skilled and qualified workforce. Blaenau Gwent was 1st across the region and 1st across the family mean.
- Current data indicates 1.6% of learners becoming NEET (9 learners) at the end of 2020/2021. The all-Wales figure has not yet been published. However, this is consistently maintaining the lowest number of young people becoming NEET.
- KS5 outcomes continue to improve especially for the higher grades, but remain below the Wales mean average.

Enhancing the performance culture for Education and Leisure that delivers better educational outcomes and improved value for money

Self-Assessment – The revenue financial position of the Education Directorate and schools has improved significantly with school provisional balances in a favourable positing and a break even budget out turn for the capital budget. This financial position has been achieved by redressing the budget deficit in one school (Abertillery Learning Community). The ALC Corporate Group monitors performance and financial sustainability of the setting.

The LA has passported an 8.4% uplift to schools via the ISB in 2022-23.

The Council's financial position for 2023-24 is anticipated to be difficult, so mitigation through the revenue budget setting process will be crucial for sustainability reasons. Initial proposals for revenue savings to be identified.

Schools are now strategically contributing to a full systems approach and performance culture. Self-evaluation work is embedded as well as collaborative leadership arrangements which will continue through the Headteacher Working Groups (covering Self-Evaluation/Curriculum/ALN Reforms).

The Council's Corporate Risk Register includes one corporate risk with a specific link to the Education Directorate and this is relating to schools in an Estyn category. The Education Directorate Risk Register has 7 risks, with 3 having a high residual status.

The Education Directorate Workforce Plan has been adopted for 2022-26 and is now in the implementation stages.

The Headteacher induction and support programme has been well received by new and aspiring Headteachers.

The Member Development Programme is underway and new Members are engaging and providing very good feedback.

Effective ICT support has been provided to support learners who are digitally disadvantaged to enable them to engage in digital platforms including the coordination and distribution of technology.

Pupil progress monitoring at a LA and school level for self-evaluation purposes is an area for development, therefore, the commissioning of progress and assessment in conjunction with all schools for 2022-23 is under consideration.

Education Performance Indicators – Key Stage 4

This summary represents KS4 performance in 2022. This data is only used for self-evaluation purposes and not for accountability reasons.

Blaenau Gwent Performance Summary

- With the suspension of the requirement to report attainment levels on GCSE Results Day, there is insufficient data to analyse the performance of eFSM and non eFSM pupils.
- Of the 7 Performance Indicators reported in 2022, Blaenau Gwent saw an improvement in performance in all indicators, except for Level 1 which declined.

Capped 9

- Blaenau Gwent performance improved from 331.4 in 2019 to 344.2 in 2022 (All Schools).
- Blaenau Gwent performance improved from 347.1 in 2019 to 361.0 in 2022 (4 Secondary Schools).
- Improved performance in all Secondary Schools.

Literacy Measure

- Blaenau Gwent performance improved from 35.8 in 2019 to 38.3 in 2022 (All Schools).
- Blaenau Gwent performance improved from 37.5 in 2019 to 40.1 in 2022 (4 Secondary Schools).
- Improved performance in all Secondary Schools.

Numeracy Measure

- Blaenau Gwent performance improved from 32.7 in 2019 to 35.1 in 2022 (All Schools).
- Blaenau Gwent performance improved from 34.3 in 2019 to 36.8 in 2022 (4 Secondary Schools).
- Improved performance in all Secondary Schools.

Science Measure

- Blaenau Gwent performance improved from 31.5 in 2019 to 36.1 in 2022 (All Schools).
- Blaenau Gwent performance improved from 33.0 in 2019 to 37.8 in 2022 (4 Secondary Schools).
- Improved performance in all Secondary Schools

Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge

- Blaenau Gwent performance improved from 35.8 in 2019 to 37.3 in 2022 (All Schools).
- Blaenau Gwent performance improved from 37.5 in 2019 to 39.1 in 2022 (4 Secondary Schools).
- Improved performance in all Secondary Schools

Level 1 Threshold

- Blaenau Gwent performance improved from 92.5% in 2019 to 91.1% in 2022 (All Schools).
- Blaenau Gwent performance improved from 96.9% in 2019 to 95.5% in 2022 (4 Secondary Schools).
- Improved performance in 2 out of 4 Secondary Schools.
- One of the schools where performance declined has a Resource Base. The second school where performance declined went from 100% to 98.6%.

5A*-A Grade GCSEs

- Blaenau Gwent performance improved from 9.9% in 2019 to 14.8% in 2022 (All Schools).
- Blaenau Gwent performance improved from 10.4% in 2019 to 15.5% in 2022 (4 Secondary Schools).
- Improved performance 3 Secondary schools, with a slight decline (-0.1%) in 4th Secondary School.

Legacy L2 Inc. E/W & M

- Despite this indicator being removed from the GCSE suite of performance indicators, all 4 schools calculated the measure.
- Blaenau Gwent performance improved from 43.0% in 2019 to 49.2% in 2022 (All Schools).
- Blaenau Gwent performance improved from 45.0% in 2019 to 51.6% in 2022 (4 Secondary Schools).
- Improved performance all 4 Secondary schools.

Budget - Quarter 1 & 2 (April 2022 to September 2022)

Budget Area		Budget	Forecast	Variance	
		£	£	£	%
1	Individual Schools Budget	50,430,260	50,430,260	0	0.00
2	Education Improvement Grant	267,730	267,730	0	0.00
3	Other Costs	725,420	736,864	-11,444	-1.58
4	Supporting SEN - Schools	1,730,430	1,583,211	147,219	8.51
5	Strategic Management	2,264,410	2,265,610	-1,200	-0.05
6	Assuring Access to Schools	2,439,820	2,925,714	-485,894	-19.92
7	Facilitating School Improvement	396,350	398,131	-1,781	-0.45
8	Supporting SEN - LEA	380,730	296,112	84,618	22.23
9	Further Education & Training	135,960	144,996	-9,036	-6.65
10	Youth Service	345,390	370,218	-24,828	-7.19
11	Other Expenditure	143,850	123,075	20,775	14.44
12	Education Departmental Budget	195,970	133,430	62,540	31.91
13	Corporate Recharges	4,671,690	4,671,689	1	0.00
	Leisure	4,176,620	4,171,106	5,514	0.13
	Grand Total	68,304,630	68,518,146	-213,516	-0.31

Education Risk Register

Ref No.	Description of Risk	Update	Residual Score
EDDRR7 CRR25	The school currently in receipt of Council Intervention fails to make appropriate progress against the Statutory Warning Notice to Improve and their Post Inspection Action Plans.	Continuing the work with Schools Causing Concern (SCC), particularly the two schools currently in an Estyn category. BFS 'One Plan' monitoring and Multi-Agency approach for the River Centre. The River Centre is subject to Statutory Warning Notice (SWN) letter for improvement. This setting has gone into the Estyn category of Special Measures following a recent inspection and will be supported via a Multi-Agency approach similar to the BFS model. The Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) has been produced and returned to Estyn together with a Health and safety response letter with weekly RC PIAP meetings with LA partners to support with and monitor progress against the PIAP in place. The setting has significant shortcomings identified, however, very early-stage progress is being made through the leadership of the Interim Executive Head teacher and the LA appointed Chair of Governors. Planning for further work in the secondary site scheduled to start October 2022.	High
EDDRR8	Failure to minimise the risks associated with pupil regression linked to COVID-19 learning disruption and to maximise learner progression.	<p>The Recovery and Renewal Plan is in place as well as the performance data pack. There has been a reduction in Schools Causing Concern from 6 schools in 2019 to only 2 schools in 2022. ALC has been removed from Estyn Significant Improvement category. KS4 2022 results for GCSE L2 English, Maths, Science and Capped 9 improved across the board since 2019, the results in 2021-22 were realised through external examinations, but noting the post Centre Determined Grades moderation. The 2022 KS4 results were positive and in line with the SDP targets set by the 4 secondary settings. The results are shown in the Performance Data Pack for self-evaluation purposes. GCSE A*/A and A*-C grades improved in English, Science and Maths. The partnership with Schools, Coleg Gwent and Post 16 providers has strengthened through the establishment of the Post 16 Strategic Partnership Board. A-level A*-C and A*-E grades continue to be strong and were in line with the all-Wales means at 98.4% for BG learners at Coleg Gwent settings. Post 16 vocational results to be released in October 2022. BG's schools across the board are working towards the use of progress methods across the board in 2022 to assess learner progress. This data will only be used to inform self-evaluation purposes. Reading and supporting learners entitled to eFSM are LA priorities, however, the attainment gap to non eFSM is closing at KS4.</p> <p>Discussions with headteachers and assessment company about an LA approach to assessment partly funded by the LA, to help identify where pupils currently are and what support they need/next steps. Arrangements to be finalised October 2022</p>	High

Ref No.	Description of Risk	Update	Residual Score
EDDRR9	Dependency on funding around ESF Inspire projects in youth service	Risk reviewed - positive trajectory	High
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"	<p>Schools are strategically contributing to a full systems approach e.g., self-evaluation work as well as collaborative leadership arrangements and this will continue moving forward through the on-going work of the Headteacher Working Groups (covering Self-Evaluation/Curriculum for Wales/ALN Reforms). 2 secondary schools have adopted CfW from September 2022. Phase 1 ALN Reform implementation is effective as discussed in the TCS Evaluative Summary Report and the 4 recommendations are being taken forward for action.</p> <p>WG have provided schools with further support on the implementation of the RSE Curriculum. All schools involved in Professional Discussions in September 2022 show good progress towards/implementation of CfW.</p>	Medium
EDDRR3 CRR4	Safeguarding - Failure to ensure adequate. Safeguarding arrangements are in place for children & young adults in Blaenau Gwent.	<p>Schools are presently updating the Keeping Learners Safe self-evaluation returns for the 2022/23 academic year. The Safeguarding in Education Manager continues to work closely with the setting that was identified as needing specific support in last year's self- evaluation report and progress is being made to address those areas. Quality assurance visits to school's settings have also been undertaken during the period.</p> <p>One school, which is identified as a School Causing Concern, has been inspected with the team identifying safeguarding and health and safety concerns, which encompassed site and building issues. The areas of improvements identified have either been completed or are in train. The Directorate is undertaking a quality assurance review of all health and safety facilities functions to ensure that any further potential risks are identified and appropriately managed.</p> <p>All schools have now registered to use the My Concern System with one school requiring training. Informal feedback received is promising but a more detailed review will be completed at the end of the autumn term.</p> <p>The annual self- evaluation of safeguarding for the 2021/22 academic year has been completed which includes the establishment of the Strategic Safer Schools Partnership Board and the need to progress the Peer-on-Peer Sexual abuse action plan and Respect and Resilience action plan.</p> <p>There remains an invariable link to the risks identified in Social Services.</p>	Medium

Ref No.	Description of Risk	Update	Residual Score
EDDRR4	Failure to create a sustainable and successful Abertillery Learning Community that delivers good outcomes for learners.	The ALC Corporate Group will be considering the commissioning on an independent consultant to review ALC's medium term financial planning arrangements in the Autumn term. The ALC out-turn position for financial year 2021-22 was a surplus circa £240,000, which maintains their positive position for 2 years.	Medium
EDDRR5	Failure to deliver an effective ICT strategy in line with the WG Education Digital Standards, which facilitates and enhances delivery aligned to the Digital Competency Framework and the new Curriculum for Wales.	Draft Strategy to be reviewed and agreed with schools in the Autumn/Spring term	Low
EDDRR10 CRR25	Failure of school (RC) to improve following the issue of a pre-warning and statutory warning notice	The River Centre Learning Community has been identified as a School Causing Concern and the LA has used its powers of intervention including appointment of a LA chair of governors as well as additional governors. There is an interim Exec Headteacher in place in collaboration with Ebbw Fawr Learning Community. The RC Learning Community was subject to an Estyn inspection in July 2022. This risk can now be retired as updates are being provided in Corporate Risk CRR25.	High
EDDRR11	Internet connectivity in schools affected by PSBA Websafe Internet Filtering.	The PSBA monitoring is effective at a national, regional and local level and BG's schools and the associated ICT platforms are stable. Likelihood reduced to low but to remain on the Directorate Risk Register to be kept under review.	Low
EDDRR12	Impact on the deliverability 21st Century School Programme	Contract awarded for Glyncoed project, however due to market forces this was 20% higher than originally anticipated, this is therefore having an impact on the current programme and the Council will ultimately deliver less schemes than was originally anticipated within the programme envelope. Representations are being made with Welsh Government.	High

Ref No.	Description of Risk	Update	Residual Score
EDDRR13	Lack of sustainability for open access provision has resulted in a reduction in the support and provision for young people and children in community settings.	The Young People and Partnership FADE is comprehensive and highlights demonstrable progress against the key success criteria. However, there is still work to do in relation to sustainability of the ESF Programmes. Leisure Trust developments are captured effectively through the Leisure and Libraries Strategic Board and the ALT performance reports e.g., Welsh Public Library Standards (WPLS) return from WG. Provisional NEETs data released at 1.6% so remaining stable and in line with the Wales mean average.	Medium
EDDRR6	If the Directorate does not have the appropriate capacity and capability in the workforce, the result will be an unacceptable impact on the ability to deliver services effectively.	All leadership appointments now made – risk to be deescalated from the Education DRR.	Low

Glossary

ALC – Abertillery Learning Community

ALN – Additional Learning Needs

ALT – Aneurin Leisure Trust

BFS – Brynmawr Foundation School

CAGs – Centre Assessed Grades

CDGs – Centre Determined Grades

CLT – Corporate Leadership Team

CSSR – Celebrate, Support, Share and Refine

EAS – Education Achievement Service

eFSM – eligible for Free School Meals

EIP – Education Improvement Plan

ESF – European Social Fund

EWC – Education Workforce Council

FADE – Self Evaluation (Focus, Analysis, Do, Evaluation)

FWPs – Forward Work Programmes

GAVO – Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations

I2A – Inspire to Achieve

I2W – Inspire to Work

KS – Key Stage

LA – Local Authority

LGES – Local Government Education Services

LSOA – Lower Super Output Area

NEET – Not in Education, Employment or Training

RPIs – Restricted Physical Interventions

SCC – Schools Causing Concern

SE – Self-Evaluation

SEBD – Social, Emotional, Behavioural Difficulties

SER – Self-Evaluation Report

SDP – School Development Plan

SOP – Strategic Outline Plan

WBL – Work Based Learning

WIMD – Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation

WG – Welsh Government

Contact Details

If you require any further information or have any feedback you wish to share, please:

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Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

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Agenda Item 8

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer:

Committee: **People Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **17th January 2023**

Report Subject: **Improving Schools Programme**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr S Edmunds, Cabinet Member People and Education**

Report Submitted by: **Luisa Munro Morris Head of School Improvement and Inclusion and Michelle Jones Strategic Education Improvement Manager**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)
✓	22.12.22	04.01.23			17.01.23	18.01.23		

The Education Directorate's purpose is to deliver '**Better Schools, Better Citizens and Better Communities**' / Pwrpas y Gyfarwyddiaeth Addysg yw darparu '**Ysgolion Gwell, Dinasyddion Gwell a Chymunedau Gwell**'

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Members with an update on the BG Improving Schools Programme, in line with national changes to school evaluation, improvement and accountability.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The report covers all schools and settings within the County Borough that have been identified by the Education Directorate, supported by the Education Achievement Service (EAS), and/or Estyn as needing to improve. The Blaenau Gwent Improving Schools Programme operates within the regional arrangements for supporting schools across South East Wales.
- 2.2 During the autumn term 2022 schools have continued to engage in the Professional Discussion with the LA, EAS and other partners. Professional Discussions focus on the school's priorities for improvement, implementation of national reform, the support it requires and identified practice that is worth sharing. This method of engaging with schools is now in its second year. Blaenau Gwent has seen a reduction in schools requiring the high levels of support; presently, there are two schools formally within the Schools Causing Concern category

3. Options for Recommendation

3.1 Option 1

Members are asked to consider and accept the information detailed within the report and contribute to the continuous assessment of effectiveness by making appropriate recommendations.

3.2 **Option 2**

Accept the report as provided.

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

4.1 Education remains a priority in the Corporate Plan. The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 consolidates, clarifies, and reforms the law in relation to intervention in schools causing concern. The Welsh Government's statutory guidance for schools causing concern (February 2014) details a local authority's powers of intervention in schools causing concern, the grounds on which those powers can be invoked and the procedures governing the intervention process.

4.2 Through our education provision we seek to ensure that provision is appropriate and able to meet the needs of children and young people so that their progress and performance is ambitious and raises aspiration levels.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

The Council allocates approximately £50.4 million to schools via the Individual Schools Budget (ISB) to provide high quality education and to improve pupil outcomes. In addition, Blaenau Gwent continues to make a financial contribution to the regional EAS arrangements of approximately £350,000 from the core Education Directorate Budget, and processes such as monthly LA/EAS Partnership meetings are in place to ensure the LA can hold the EAS to account for the support and challenge they provide to schools and ensure value for money for the Local Authority.

There are financial implications in supporting schools to improve and this is identified in the individual school support plan and is funded from within existing revenue budgets.

5.2 **Risk Including Mitigating Actions**

5.2.1 Risk is associated with ineffective processes to ensure progress against priorities in identified schools. Failure to raise standards features in the corporate risk register of the Council in relation to schools causing concern. This risk is also reflected in the Education Directorate and EAS risk registers. A graduated response is in place to mitigate these risks; this approach is based on an early identification and support model:

5.2.2 **Universal provision:** areas for improvement in relation to individual schools may be raised by a School Improvement Partner (SIP) or an LA Officer, and these are discussed in weekly LA/EAS meetings and more formally in monthly LA/EAS Partnership meetings and appropriate courses of action agreed. **NB.** Professional Discussions are held with all schools once per year. These are timetabled for the whole year. Within schools where there are emerging risks, these are prioritised early in the academic year.

5.2.3 **Targeted support/provision:** If a school is identified as needing more support by the LA, a 'Team Around the School' approach will be adopted. Key partners are brought together on at least a half-termly basis, to support and challenge a school with specific areas for improvement.

5.2.4 **Specialist support/provision:** A school that has been issued with a statutory warning notice by the LA or has been placed in an Estyn category will receive further bespoke support, in addition to at least half-termly meetings. For example, a school will be supported with creating and delivering against a Post Inspection Action Plan. There are also the Multi-Agency Support for Secondary Schools in Special Measures arrangements in association with Welsh Government. This forum is currently used for Brynmawr Foundation School and will be introduced for the River Centre in the new calendar year.

5.2.5 As a result of the Welsh Government's changes to the accountability framework, which culminated in the suspension of the routine collection of qualitative data, there is a risk associated with making informed judgements on school progress/performance. To partially mitigate this risk, BG's schools have agreed to share Assessment data on reading and wellbeing to support with self-evaluation of these two areas. The LA has partly funded this assessment provision through grant allocation. In addition, schools have shared their KS3 and KS4 data for self-evaluation purposes. This data will not be used to hold schools to account but may be used to support schools for self-evaluation purposes as well as the sharing of good practice.

5.2.6 School attendance and exclusion figures are monitored by DMT on a fortnightly basis. School's safeguarding processes are also closely monitored. The quality assurance arrangements that are in place include the safeguarding matrix, keeping learners safe audit tool and the quality assurance visits which the Safeguarding in Education Manager completes and reports findings through a FADE approach to Education DMT. Holistic support packages are devised via regular intra Council services meetings between OD, finance, health and safety, education, and school governor support services. The quality of provision in schools and leadership is monitored and evaluated in conjunction with the EAS and is in addition to the work the LA undertakes directly with its schools.

5.3 **Legal**

The Improving Schools Programme operates within the legal framework of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.

5.4 **Human Resources**

There are implications arising from the action identified to support those schools identified as a school causing concern and/or in an Estyn category. This information is in the support plan for the school, the Post Inspection Action Plan and the Local Authority Statement of Action. In most cases, a single-plan approach is now in place where the above action plans are incorporated into one working plan, which all stakeholders work with and are held to account.

6. Performance Information and Data

6.1.1 Schools in an Estyn Category

6.1.2 Brynmawr Foundation School

- The school was inspected in October 2019 and placed within the category of schools requiring Special Measures.
- The school continues to be subject to an LA statutory warning notice to improve and intervention is now in place
- Governance and the work of the Governing Body has significantly improved. Governors continue to receive tailored support to develop their effectiveness in the role.
- The school now has an established Senior Leadership Team in place.
- The school continues to access support through the EAS Learning SIP + Network School model, working closely with Cardiff High School, with the Headteacher of Cardiff High School undertaking the role of School Improvement Partner. During the autumn term the school has been supported by the EAS with assisted self-evaluation activities regarding teaching and learning, which concluded that teaching has improved but that in the majority of lessons pupils did not make sufficient progress in learning. There is still too much inconsistency in the quality of teaching.
- The school continues to be part of the Welsh Government's national pilot for multi-agency support for schools in special measures, which involves a range of partners supporting the school and monitoring its progress in a systematic and responsive way. The October meeting focused on leading teaching and learning and the role of leaders in the school with a view to accelerating the pace of improvements.
- Estyn completed its third routine monitoring visit during the late autumn term 2022. Estyn recognised that progress has been made but that learner progress remains variable. Estyn concluded that 'Brynmawr Foundation School is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the most recent core inspection.
- Since the last monitoring visit, however, senior leaders are beginning to identify the aspects of pupils' skills most in need of improvement. However, this work has not led to sufficient improvements in pupils' knowledge, understanding or skills.
- Overall, teaching has too limited an impact on pupil progress. Estyn identified that in around half of lessons, there remain shortcomings in classroom practice that prevent pupils from making suitable progress.
- There is recognition by the Inspectorate, however, that teachers are beginning to use some worthwhile strategies, but teachers need to refine their use of the strategies and apply them more effectively. Estyn commented that it is important to share with BFS staff some of the positive messages from the visit to give staff the confidence to build on the strategies they are starting to use.
- The Education Directorate is working with the EAS and the school in relation to the pace of progress in improving teaching and learning. The Estyn monitoring feedback report is attached as **Appendix 1**.

6.1.3 **River Centre**

- The Governing Body of the school remains under statutory intervention because of the Statutory Warning Notice to improve dated November 2021.
- Staffing - The Headteacher remains absent from work. The school was previously supported by an Executive Headteacher arrangement. More recently since November 2022 a dedicated Acting Headteacher is now in post to provide consistent support for the school.
- The senior leadership team has been further strengthened through a secondment to the post of Head of Secondary Campus since November 2022.
- The Corporate Director of Education and the Acting Headteacher have engaged with all staff and the Trade Unions via monthly sessions.
- Following an Estyn inspection July 2022, where the school was placed in Special Measures, the Post Inspection Action Plan has been submitted to Estyn and an initial monitoring visit took place on 15th December 2022 which reviewed the PIAP and the LA Statement of Action. The outcome of this visit was that the PIAP was viewed as appropriate for addressing the setting's recommendations.
- A positive coffee morning was held with parents/ carers and both school and LA representatives on 14th December 2022.
- The Head of School Improvement and Inclusion has established and chairs a weekly PIAP progress meeting, to which school representatives and LA officers are invited with a view to secure progress against the seven Estyn recommendations. The following are the high-level actions points from this term's activities:
 - Extensive remodelling work to the secondary campus including the provision of CCTV on site. The deadline for this work to be completed is Spring half-term 2023. This is funded by the LA and WG ALN grant circa £250,000.
 - Alternative provision has been put in place for secondary aged pupils.
 - Processes have been introduced to improve staff and family communication, tracking of pupils and record keeping.
 - It has been agreed with WG and Estyn that early in 2023 that the River Centre will form part of the Multi-Agency Support for Schools in Special Measures.

6.1.4 **School Inspections**

6.1.5 **Coed-y-Garn Primary School (Appendix 2)**

Coed-y-Garn Primary School was inspected in October 2022. Estyn commented that 'Coed-y-Garn Primary is a warm and inclusive school, which promotes a positive atmosphere and ethos. Pupils enjoy learning and they are enthusiastic during lessons and in activities. This is due to the very strong working relationships that they have with their teachers and other staff. The learning resource base, and its pupils, play a very important part in the school's daily life.'

Estyn have requested that the school prepares a case study for dissemination on Estyn's website in respect of its work in relation to the impact of the teaching and the use of the learning environment to promote authentic learning experiences in the learning resource base. There were four recommendations for improvement that were identified which are:

- R1 Address the issues related to the school site, identified at the time of the inspection
- R2 Challenge all pupils through consistent and effective teaching
- R3 Ensure that teachers provide opportunities for extended independent writing
- R4 Ensure that teachers' feedback moves individual pupils on to the next stage in their learning effectively

The school has drawn up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection. The first recommendation relating to health and safety has been largely addressed and Estyn have replied acknowledging the joint response that is being provided by the school and LA in planning to finalise these site-specific issues.

6.1.6 Professional Discussions

Professional discussions take place between the LA, EAS and our schools on an annual basis to discuss school priorities and progress, in line with the School Development Plan (SDP). During the autumn term professional discussions were held in six schools with further visits planned for the Spring term. This included Abertillery Learning Community which was recently removed from an Estyn category and this school will receive a second professional discussion later in the academic year to ensure that the progress made at the setting continues. Of the other professional discussions held during the autumn term, one school has been asked to engage in a Teaching CSSR to provide evidence of improvement in specific aspects of provision identified through work scrutiny in the autumn term. In the new year, if after receiving this report the LA feel the school needs additional support, the setting will be engaged through the early intervention 'Team Around the School' approach.

6.2 Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)

The regional pilot of new ways of working to reflect the new national arrangements for school evaluation, improvement and accountability has been evolved through the engagement of a variety of stakeholders including schools and members of governing bodies. A range of Council services and external partners are involved in delivering programmes to support schools requiring improvement. Monitoring progress towards school development plans enables effective targeting of support.

6.3 Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)

Monitoring school progress against priorities facilitates support for schools to ensure that they achieve and maintain high quality outcomes in the long term.

The format of this report will be reviewed in the Spring term 2023. The aim of the review is to ensure that the report provides Members with the most relevant information to scrutinise school improvement.

6.4 Preventative Focus

Through effective monitoring and evaluation of school performance, early identification of emerging areas for improvement can be achieved with consequent early intervention to secure improvement. The effectiveness of the LA's monitoring, evaluation and intervention programmes ensure that preventative action is taken early in order to minimise the escalation of concerns.

6.5 Collaboration / partnership working

The LA collaborates with neighbouring local authorities through the South East Wales Consortium for the provision of School Improvement services through the Education Achievement Service (EAS). The LA also works closely with colleagues in the SEWC region.

The LA also secures a range of pupil support services such as Hearing Impaired, Visually Impaired, Speech and Language, and Ethnic Minority support services through regional collaboration. Within the LA, the school improvement and inclusion leadership teams ensure that there is a co-ordinated approach to supporting schools within the Education Directorate and across the Council corporately as a whole.

6.6 Integration (across service areas)

The LA commissions its school improvement function on a regional basis.

6.7 Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions

There are no implications arising from this report.

6.8 Integrated Impact Assessment

There are no implications arising from this report.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

7.1 Monitoring of improvement pathways is an important mechanism for ensuring that Members of the People Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet are sufficiently informed to enable them to hold the authority to account effectively for the quality of education provision and hence pupil progress and outcomes.

Background Documents / Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Brynmawr Foundation School Monitoring report

Appendix 2 – Coed-y-Garn Primary School Inspection report

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Arolygiaeth Ei Fawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

Report following monitoring

Level of follow-up: Special measures

**Brynmawr Foundation School
Rhydwr
Intermediate Road
Brynmawr
Blaenau Gwent
NP23 4XT**

Date of visit: December 2022

by

**Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and
Training in Wales**

Outcome of visit

Brynmawr Foundation School is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the most recent core inspection. As a result, His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn will re-visit the school in around four - six months' time to monitor progress against a sample of the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. as described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

Progress since the last inspection

R1. Improve pupils' standards across the school, including their literacy and numeracy skills

Since the last monitoring visit, senior leaders are beginning to identify the aspects of pupils' skills most in need of improvement. However, this work has not led to sufficient improvements in pupils' knowledge, understanding or skills.

In the lessons observed during this visit, around half of pupils recall prior learning suitably. In a few instances they apply this learning well to a range of new and more challenging contexts, for example when applying Pythagoras' Theorem to three-dimensional shapes.

In around half of lessons, pupils' build suitably on their prior knowledge and go on to make appropriate progress in their learning. In a few cases, pupils make good progress, such as when they use a variety of tenses when writing in Spanish. However, around half of pupils make limited progress overall. This is often because they do not have sufficient opportunities to apply their learning or skills independently in a range of contexts.

Many pupils listen well to their teachers. The majority express their ideas suitably when responding to questions or sharing their views. A few provide extended and well-considered verbal responses, using subject-specific terms and justifying their opinions confidently. However, a minority of pupils' verbal responses are too brief, or they do not explain their ideas clearly, often due to their limited vocabulary.

Many pupils locate relevant facts from texts suitably. In a few subject areas, pupils annotate texts appropriately to highlight facts or features of writing. Although a majority of pupils are developing basic inference skills appropriately, they often do not analyse language accurately enough. A minority of pupils use their knowledge to explore themes in a novel, and a few draw links to the social and historical context competently. Overall, however, pupils' use of reading strategies across the curriculum is limited.

In a few subjects, pupils write at suitable length and structure extended pieces of writing appropriately. In these areas, a minority of pupils write confidently for their audience with sound technical accuracy and use a suitably range of vocabulary. However, across the curriculum, only a minority of pupils write independently and at length. Here, many pupils rely too heavily on support or copy work from their teachers, verbatim. Overall, the technical accuracy of pupils' writing remains too variable. For example, there are too many errors in the use of capital letters and punctuation. The handwriting of many pupils, particularly in Key Stage 3, is often ill-formed and difficult to read. This is partly a legacy of school closures owing to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Many pupils use the four number operations suitably and the majority recall basic multiplication facts well. These pupils work suitably with basic fractions, decimals and percentages and solve simple equations successfully. The majority of pupils produce a range of suitably accurate graphs. However, they rarely have sufficient opportunities to analyse these graphs.

R2. Improve pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit

R3. Improve the effectiveness of teaching to motivate, engage and challenge pupils to make good progress in lessons

Senior leaders have continued to promote suitably the helpful teaching guidelines exemplified in the 'Brynmawr Way'. Working with their external partners, leaders have enabled staff to access beneficial professional learning focused particularly on planning, questioning and feedback. Most teachers are enthusiastic about the opportunities they have to strengthen their classroom practice. Around half of them have begun to implement suitably a range of the strategies they have been trained to

deliver, including approaches to plan more effective lessons. As yet, however, the impact of this work on improving pupils' learning and progress remains too variable.

In around half of lessons, teaching enables pupils to make suitable progress. In these cases, teachers build on pupils' prior learning appropriately and provide engaging resources. These teachers provide clear explanations using subject specific vocabulary and question pupils appropriately to assess their basic understanding and progress.

In a few cases, where teaching is more effective, teachers plan challenging work that is matched well to pupils' prior attainment. They model their high expectations and enable pupils to work independently at a suitable pace. As a result, pupils in these classes make secure progress.

In around half of lessons, there are shortcomings in classroom practice that prevent pupils from making suitable progress. Teachers in these lessons do not employ well enough the strategies they discuss in their professional learning sessions. They continue to plan undemanding activities that do not provide pupils with sufficient challenge or help to develop their independence. In general, these teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low and this makes the pace of learning too slow.

There are now more opportunities for pupils to apply their writing and speaking skills across the curriculum. However, the impact of this on improving pupils' skills is too variable. This is often because teachers do not help pupils to develop or improve their responses. Opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills, other than through graph work, are underdeveloped.

In the main, teachers offer appropriate verbal feedback. In a few instances, teachers' feedback helps pupils to make improvements to their work. However, staff frequently reward modest pupil responses with overly generous praise. In addition, many teachers do not provide pupils with sufficiently specific guidance as to how they can improve their work or ensure that pupils respond robustly to any feedback. Overall, teachers' feedback has too limited an impact on pupils' progress.

R4. Strengthen leadership at all levels to improve leaders' ability to identify areas for development and to plan effectively for improvement

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit

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Arolygiaeth Ei Fawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

Coed -y- Garn Primary School

**Parrot Row
Blaina
NP13 3AH**

Date of inspection: October 2022

by

**Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**

This report is also available in Welsh.

About Coed -y- Garn Primary School

Name of provider	Coed -y- Garn Primary School
Local authority	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	Not applicable
Number of pupils on roll	212
Pupils of statutory school age	164
Number in nursery classes	30
Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average (The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in Primary is 21.3%)	33.8%
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in Primary is 22.2%)	21.3%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	2.5%
Date of headteacher appointment	January 2019
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	03/03/2014
Start date of inspection	17/10/2022

Data reported is sourced from the latest available Pupil Level Annual School Census. These figures may be slightly different to those observed during the inspection.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website: mylocalschool.gov.wales

- a. The term 'additional learning needs' is being used to describe those pupils on the SEN/ALN register of the school.

Overview

Coed-y-Garn Primary is a warm and inclusive school, which promotes a positive atmosphere and ethos. Pupils enjoy learning and they are enthusiastic during lessons and in activities. This is due to the very strong working relationships that they have with their teachers and other staff. The learning resource base, and its pupils, play a very important part in the school's daily life.

Learning is particularly successful where the teaching and feedback to pupils are purposeful and challenge pupils to perform at their best. This helps many pupils to make strong progress in developing their listening, speaking, reading and number skills. However, the quality of teaching and feedback is not consistently challenging across the school. Overall, teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to use and develop their independent learning skills, especially when writing extended pieces of work.

All staff promote a very positive ethos of support and care for pupils in all areas of the school. This encourages pupils to take responsibility for their own well-being and behaviour extremely well. This contributes to their positive attitudes to learning and their resilience to persevere with tasks. The school helps pupils to build confidence in themselves as individuals, while also developing a strong respect for the feelings of others. Overall, the school environment promotes beneficial learning opportunities, which includes a stimulating woodland area.

Leaders evaluate the school's work to plan for improvements thoroughly. The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership. She has a determination to succeed for the benefit of pupils and the community. The senior leadership team, the staff and the governors share her purposeful vision. They work together well to ensure that the school is inclusive and that it promotes good learning opportunities.

The headteacher shares responsibilities effectively among staff and provides beneficial opportunities for professional learning. This contributes to a positive whole-school ethos, where staff and pupils feel valued for their contributions to school life.

Recommendations

- R1 Address the issues related to the school site, identified at the time of the inspection
- R2 Challenge all pupils through consistent and effective teaching
- R3 Ensure that teachers provide opportunities for extended independent writing
- R4 Ensure that teachers' feedback moves individual pupils on to the next stage in their learning effectively

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

Estyn will invite the school to prepare a case study on its work in relation to the impact of the teaching and the use of the learning environment to promote authentic learning experiences in the learning resource base, for dissemination on Estyn's website.

Main evaluation

Learning

Most pupils enter the school with skills that are below the expected level for their age. Most pupils achieve well across all areas of the curriculum, with many of them making effective progress in their speaking, listening, reading and number skills.

Most pupils with additional learning needs achieve well and pupils in the learning resource base (LRB) make very strong gains in their learning. Across the school, pupils needing support access all aspects of the curriculum successfully and they make purposeful progress from their starting points.

Many pupils' speaking and listening skills develop quickly. As they move from nursery to Year 2, they gain confidence and answer questions sensibly while discussing tasks with their peers. For example, Year 2 pupils express their feelings eloquently in the woodland area while roasting marshmallows over the fire pit. From Year 3 onwards, pupils make good progress and develop a wider vocabulary. They listen well to each other and engage in attentive discussions, such as reflecting on the Aberfan disaster. Many pupils in the LRB develop beneficial speaking and listening skills, to access a wide range of interesting and very stimulating activities.

Many pupils make rapid progress in developing their reading skills. Many of the youngest pupils learn the sounds of letters quickly and, by Year 2, many pupils' progress in reading is good. They attempt unfamiliar words using a variety of phonic strategies purposefully. By Year 6, many pupils are competent readers, and they are well equipped to tackle a variety of different texts. For example, they discuss the characteristics of mythical beasts and the dangers involved if they encountered one.

Many pupils make effective progress in their writing considering their starting points. By Year 2, the majority of pupils are beginning to write suitably, using basic punctuation and grammar. As pupils progress from Year 3 to Year 6, many write effectively in a prescriptive set of genres. For example, Year 5 pupils write diary entries on the life of a miner in a coal mine. Many pupils edit their work carefully and use more advanced vocabulary successfully to improve their final drafts. As a result of a lack of opportunity, pupils do not develop their independent extended writing skills sufficiently.

When speaking Welsh, most of the youngest pupils develop basic vocabulary and phrases and respond to commands and greetings appropriately. By Year 2, most pupils use simple phrases occasionally, such as expressing their feelings. Progress for most pupils slows as they get older and by Year 6 pupils demonstrate a limited recall of simple sentence structures and relevant vocabulary. As a result, their Welsh oracy skills are underdeveloped.

Many pupils develop effective mathematical skills. By Year 4, many pupils partition and compare three- and four-digit numbers effectively. Older pupils develop their number skills competently and many use an appropriate range of skills, such as decimals and percentages purposefully. They measure and draw angles accurately and begin to use fractions confidently, for example to share jacket potatoes at

lunchtime. Many pupils transfer their mathematical skills to a variety of contexts well. For instance, they interrogate a set of data to find the mean, median and mode of an Olympic medal table, and they plot co-ordinates in four quadrants to draw different shapes.

Many pupils have good digital skills, which they use across the curriculum successfully. For example, many younger pupils programme robots to travel around a course efficiently. Most older pupils manipulate text effectively, such as creating fact files on important characters from Black History and whilst preparing presentations on renewable energy. Many pupils create and use simple databases and spreadsheets confidently.

Most pupils develop their artistic and creative skills well. This is particularly true of the youngest pupils, who create art and role-play in a wide variety of contexts. For example, reception pupils wash socks enthusiastically before pegging them to dry on a washing line. Additionally, nearly all pupils in the LRB embrace the freedom to experiment and develop their creativity, whilst role playing in the fake mine shaft.

Across the school, most pupils develop their thinking skills well. They use effective strategies to resolve tasks and they persevere diligently when problem-solving. They state coherently that finding challenging tasks difficult is beneficial to their learning.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils are happy and demonstrate a positive attitude towards school and their learning. They are ready to participate in lessons and enjoy their learning experiences in a nurturing, caring and purposeful environment.

In classes and around the school the behaviour of nearly all pupils is exemplary and they move between classes and other areas in a polite and controlled way. They are well-mannered and show kindness and respect to all adults and each other. They welcome visitors warmly with a smile and demonstrate positive attitudes to others, for example by holding doors open for adults in the corridors. The elected 'Well-being Warriors' and 'Calm Area Monitors' support this ethos of calmness and help to provide pupils with a sense of ownership and responsibility for their own well-being.

Nearly all pupils feel valued at school and state that inclusion and equity are strong features of the school. Many pupils with additional learning needs and those eligible for free school meals embrace leadership roles and responsibilities willingly and play a successful part in the daily life of the school. Nearly all pupils feel safe in school and know whom to approach if they have any worries. They are confident that staff will address their concerns and this strong emphasis on caring for each other permeates throughout the whole school. Nearly all pupils delight in the welcome that they get every morning during their 'meet and greet' sessions at the door of their classes.

Nearly all pupils can draw on strategies to support their emotional well-being effectively. For example, pupils use their own 'coping wheels' to regulate their feelings purposefully through practices that include meditation, listening to music and drawing. As a result, nearly all pupils develop confidence and resilience, when persevering with their work. Nearly all learners are developing as ethical, informed

citizens through their awareness of fairness, the way they show care towards others, and their knowledge of children's rights. For example, older pupils consider the impact of food miles on their favourite food and the negative impact this has on the environment.

Nearly all pupils are keen to talk about their work and are proud of their achievements. They engage purposefully in lessons and demonstrate an interest in their learning, which includes listening sensibly to the views of others. Pupils who require additional help to manage their feelings respond well to the highly skilled support provided in the school's 'Cwtsh', as and when the need arises in classes.

Pupil voice groups are fully inclusive and well-established. They contribute positively to improvements around the school. For example, representatives of pupil voice groups inform the headteacher about aspects of the school development plan. For example, pupils set targets for the school to develop its grounds and outdoor learning opportunities. Representatives undertake their work proudly and make a valuable contribution to the school's life and work. This includes leading whole school assemblies on matters that are important to them, such as peer support on improving each other's well-being.

Most pupils are developing skills to encourage enterprising and creative collaboration. Older pupils approach and explore problem solving enthusiastically in science and engineering experiments. For example, they apply their knowledge of the position of the sun to place a solar panel accurately to produce energy efficiently on a windowsill.

Most pupils have a good understanding of the importance of eating and drinking healthily and sing and sign songs to encourage healthy lifestyles in assemblies. They understand the benefit of physical exercise on their health and well-being, such as running a mile a day is good for their heart health. Additionally, the younger pupils access the school's woodland area passionately and embrace their outdoor learning experiences with joy.

Nearly all pupils demonstrate a firm grasp on how to remain safe in everyday life. This includes road safety and first aid practices. Nearly all pupils know how to stay safe online and remind each other sensibly that they do not share passwords.

Attendance figures for the school dropped significantly after the pandemic. The school has an action plan to improve attendance and the actions have already raised the attendance in this new academic year from 88% to over 90%.

Teaching and learning experiences

Across the school, teachers and support staff develop positive working relationships with pupils and create a supportive and inclusive learning environment. They encourage respect among pupils and each other and have high expectations of behaviour. This contributes positively to the calm and caring ethos of the school.

Staff know the local community and the needs of its children very well and adapt their teaching to develop pupils' learning effectively. The school's provision for personal and social education effectively encourages pupils' understanding of their own well-

being . Staff use a wide range of initiatives and strategies very well to support the mental and physical health of pupils. These have been particularly effective in supporting pupils on the return to school after the pandemic. They have helped pupils to manage their anxieties and emotions by giving them the appropriate vocabulary with which to express their feelings.

Teachers plan interesting activities and tasks that contribute to a purposeful working environment. Staff ensure that pupils feel listened to and can ask questions if they need help with their learning. Support staff work alongside teachers skilfully and contribute effectively to planning and to pupils' learning and well-being.

The school has started to implement a curriculum that is broad and balanced and reflects the requirements of the Curriculum for Wales. This includes planned theme weeks and celebratory events that engage pupils' interests well, such as Welsh history week, re-cycling week and fairness week. Teachers in the LRB plan highly effective authentic learning experiences that are integral to the class's theme. This outstanding practice targets pupils' learning very successfully.

Provision to develop pupils' speaking, listening and reading skills is successful across the school. Teachers ensure suitable arrangements to develop pupils' writing skills, however, an over reliance on worksheets limits the opportunities for pupils to write at length independently. The development of pupils' Welsh language skills is adequate. A minority of staff use basic Welsh vocabulary appropriately in the classroom, for example to give instructions to their pupils. However, teachers do not make the most of opportunities to model the language or encourage pupils to speak, ask and answer questions in Welsh.

Provision to develop pupils' mathematics is effective. Opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills authentically across the curriculum are beginning to impact on pupils' understanding of how to use mathematics in real life situations. The planning of opportunities for pupils to develop their digital skills is good. For instance, teachers plan useful activities where pupils interrogate simple databases and spreadsheets and prepare presentations on their personal aspirations.

Through valuable and stimulating learning experiences, the school celebrates the language, culture and heritage of Wales with pride. Each year, the school marks the anniversary of the Aberfan disaster with every class studying a different aspect of the tragedy. For example, Year 3 learned about the Queen visiting the village after the disaster, and they planted a tree in her memory and for all who lost their lives.

The school uses a detailed approach to tracking pupil progress in literacy and numeracy. Teachers and leaders use this and other sources of information to inform their planning and to identify pupils who require targeted intervention well. For example, they use termly benchmarking data for reading to select individuals for specific support.

The teaching is generally good across the school and where it is most effective, teachers challenge pupils to produce their best work in lessons. However, the level of challenge for pupils varies from class-to-class and it is not consistent across the school.

Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to respond to feedback and suggest improvements to their work using newly developed planning sheets. However, the quality of feedback across the school is variable and current approaches do not support pupils well enough to improve their work and develop their skills effectively. For example, teachers do not address spelling, handwriting and basic punctuation errors consistently. Teachers repeat the same feedback often without any impact on the pupils' next pieces of work.

The school collaborates closely with colleagues in the cluster, including the feeder high school, to ensure consistency of approach and to share good practice as well as maximising training opportunities. As a result of this positive provision, pupils are becoming more ambitious and innovative learners, such as through the older pupils' work on Rube Goldberg's designs.

School reports to parents and carers provide suitable information about their child's progress and attitudes to learning. They contain useful targets to highlight the next steps for learning for individual pupils.

Care, support and guidance

The school is a very caring community, and the staff encourage pupils to contribute positively to its supportive and friendly ethos. The beneficial relationships between staff and pupils, and between pupils of different ages, are a strong feature of the school. Teachers and support staff understand pupils' needs effectively and they respond with sensitivity to the pupils' emotional and social needs. This supportive and warm atmosphere helps nearly all pupils settle in easily to school life and it contributes significantly to their happiness in school and their overall well-being. These diligent and thoughtful practices encourage pupils to develop resilient attitudes to their learning.

The school operates a comprehensive system to gather information on pupils' progress as they move through the school. Teachers use the tracking process effectively to monitor pupils' achievements and well-being in their classes regularly. As a result, staff have a clear understanding of individual pupils' needs. Where staff identify issues for improvement, the school provides effective support and interventions to improve pupils' learning and their personal and social development. This includes counselling and therapy sessions from external providers and staff's use of the 'Cwtsh' areas, which provide nurturing and calming activities for pupils.

Staff ensure a broad and well-structured range of intervention strategies to improve pupils' basic skills. Most pupils enjoy taking part in these activities and, as a result, nearly all targeted pupils make good progress from their individual starting points. Specific sessions that focus on pupils' well-being and self-esteem are effective and enable pupils to participate in lessons successfully. This helps to support their positive attitudes to learning, improves their social skills and encourages them to share their feelings openly with one another and adults.

The care and support provided by staff in the LRB is outstanding. The school provides personalised learning programmes and authentic learning experiences for pupils attending the LRB, which match their needs exceptionally well. These have a very positive impact on their individual progress and achievements. Staff in the LRB

work effectively with the staff in mainstream classes to facilitate pupils' integration into the daily life of the school.

The school works effectively with external agencies, such as educational psychologists, to provide specialist support and guidance for pupils. This collaboration successfully develops a range of skills and coping mechanisms for pupils with educational, emotional and social needs. It also supports staff to develop their professional practice to better support the specific requirements of pupils with additional needs. As a result of these arrangements, pupils receive caring and inclusive support from nursery to Year 6 and in the LRB.

The school provides an interesting range of visits and visitors to support the curriculum and engage pupils in their learning. This includes trips to a nearby mining museum and engineering sessions to construct model rollercoasters. In addition, studies of global atrocities, such as wars and famines, promote pupils' understanding of the importance of values, such as tolerance, and the right to a life without hunger and thirst. These activities make a positive contribution to pupils' social skills and cultural understanding. Additionally, there are stimulating opportunities provided to celebrate Welsh heritage and culture. These include studying the fate of Dic Penderyn after the Merthyr Risings and Owain Glyndŵr's battles against the English, when attempting to establish an independent Wales.

Teachers provide thought-provoking lessons that explore human rights and make a worthwhile contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. A strong feature of these lessons is that they encourage valuable pupil discussions, which successfully develop pupils' thinking and communication skills. These structured approaches in personal and social lessons include useful opportunities to explore issues of equality, diversity and inclusion from around the world.

The school ensures that persistent absences are monitored thoroughly, and any instances of bullying are addressed promptly by the school. The school provides a good range of opportunities for pupils to learn the importance of staying safe. The school has a strong culture of safeguarding, and all staff understand clearly that pupils' welfare and safety are an integral part of their daily responsibilities. In most respects, the school's arrangements to keep pupils safe meet requirements. However, the inspection team identified issues around the school site that need attention.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and newly appointed senior leaders focus on placing the school at the centre of its community and promote the well-being of pupils and their families effectively. The governors and staff support this vision and endeavour to implement it purposefully in their daily practices. This includes the staff in the LRB, which staff and pupils embrace as an integral part of the school.

Leaders ensure that a caring and supportive atmosphere is evident across the school. All staff engage willingly with the school's motto, 'Together We Can', which promotes inclusivity successfully amongst the pupils. This has a positive effect on their attitudes to learning and their care for each other. As a result, leaders ensure

that an inclusive and warm ethos exists throughout the school, which the pupils embrace willingly.

Leaders allocate roles of responsibility sensibly and they hold staff to account for the quality and impact of their work purposefully. They use the findings of rigorous performance management practices to improve the provision. Leaders focus on refining the quality of teaching and instilling a common understanding of professional values among staff. As a result, they ensure that most pupils make good progress from their individual starting points.

The processes used by the leadership team to evaluate the effectiveness of provision are robust and based on a wide range of first-hand evidence. Systems to improve quality include detailed scrutiny of pupils' books, monitoring teaching and analysing internal and external data on pupils' progress. Leaders gather the views of other stakeholders about the school to inform their practice well. For example, they consider the views of the local community and act on any findings promptly, such as re-distributing local food bank collections to vulnerable families.

The school's shared leadership responsibilities ensure that leaders have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas for development. The links between the self-evaluation processes and improvement planning is well-established and secure. As a result, leaders prioritise their findings diligently and set purposeful targets to move the school forward.

Leaders embed strong practices to promote a thorough safeguarding culture with staff. Governors ensure that pupils eat and drink healthily and encourage parents to provide nutritious food in pupils' lunch boxes. Leaders work hard to develop effective engagement opportunities with parents and carers. This includes parents and children working together on creative and artistic tasks in classes.

The leadership team ensure that staff make the best use of the premises. This includes utilising outdoor spaces such as the woodland and planting areas. However, resources in the outdoor areas that lead from classrooms are not shared equitably across the school. Leaders allocate resources in the classrooms beneficially and use the pupil development grant wisely to support basic skills across the school. This results in targeted pupils making good progress with their learning.

Governors are knowledgeable about the work of the school and their regular input creates systematic improvements throughout the school. They are very supportive of the headteacher and hold her and other senior leaders to account as critical friends. The headteacher informs governors about pupils' learning regularly and advises them realistically on how to improve provision, such as creating the 'Cwtsh' for nurture activities. Governors develop a sound first-hand understanding of the school's activities. Alongside teacher, they undertake learning walks and discuss pupils' work to measure its quality. This promotes a valuable understanding of the school's current practices. Governors monitor the budget carefully and ensure that spending decisions are in line with the school's priorities for improvement, such as investments in digital hardware and outdoor equipment.

Leaders ensure that staff have access to high quality learning opportunities to support their professional development, which link closely to school improvement

priorities. Notable examples are training to develop cross-curricular planning to enhance pupils' learning and emotional coaching sessions to support pupils' well-being.

The school shares effective practices with local schools and this supports the school's capacity for improving assessment practices in line with curriculum reform. It provides valuable opportunities for teachers to compare and share their effectiveness with other professionals. As a result, the culture of continuous professional learning creates useful learning opportunities for pupils, which focus on developing ambitious and enthusiastic learners.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carer and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and the governing body through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents/carers to hear their views on the school and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, governors, senior and middle leaders (where appropriate) and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work, to listen to them read and to gain their views about various aspects of their school
- meet groups of pupils in leadership roles, such as representatives from the school council and eco-committee
- visit a broad sample of classes, including learning support groups and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning and to see staff teaching in a range of settings, including classrooms, support groups and in outdoor areas
- where appropriate, visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs, where appropriate
- attend assemblies and daily acts of collective worship
- look closely at the school's self-evaluation processes
- consider the school's improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the school has taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of school documents, including information on pupil assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the governing body, information on pupils' well-being, including the safeguarding of pupils, and records of staff training and professional development

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- review the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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Publication date: 19/12/2022

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Agenda Item 9

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

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

Committee: **People Scrutiny Committee**
Date of meeting: **17th January 2023**
Report Subject: **Forward Work Programme: 28th February 2023**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Sue Edmunds, Cabinet Member People and Education**
Cllr Haydn Trollope, Cabinet Member People and Social Services
Report Submitted by: **Scrutiny and Democratic Officer**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)
x	x	04.01.23			18.10.22			

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 To present to Members the People Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme for the Meeting on 29th November 2022 for discussion and agreement.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 The Scrutiny Work Programmes are key aspects of the Council's planning and governance arrangements and support the requirements of the Constitution.
 - 2.2 The topics set out in the Forward Work Programme link to the strategic work of the Council as identified by the Council's revised Corporate Plan, corporate documents and supporting business plans.
 - 2.3 Effective work programmes are essential to ensure that the work of scrutiny makes a positive impact upon the Council's delivery of services.
 - 2.4 The Committee's Forward Work Programme was agreed in September 2022, recognising the fluidity of the document to enable the Committee to respond to urgent and emerging issues, and included timescales when reports will be considered by the Committee. The work programme is managed and implemented by the Scrutiny and Democratic Officer under the direction of the Chair and Committee.
 - 2.5 The forward work programme for the forthcoming meeting will be presented to Committee on a 6 weekly cycle in order that Members can consider the programme of work; request information is included within the reports, as appropriate and / or make amendments to the work programme.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 **Option 1:** The Scrutiny Committee consider the Forward Work Programme for the meeting 28th February 2023, and

- Make any amendments to the topics scheduled for the meetings;
- Suggest any additional invitees that the committee requires to fully consider the reports; and
- Request any additional information to be included with regards to the topics to be discussed.

3.2 **Option 2:** The Scrutiny Committee agree the Forward Programme for the meeting 28th February 2023, as presented.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 – Forward Work Programme – Meeting on 28th February 2023

People Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme

Dates	Scrutiny Topic	Purpose	Lead Officer	Cabinet / Council
Tuesday 28th February 2023	School Admissions Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education Statutory deadline for the policy to be published by 15th April	Pre-Decision To consider the draft School Admissions Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education 2023/24 prior to approval by the Cabinet.	Lynn Phillips	Cabinet – 01.03.23
	Safeguarding Performance reporting	Performance Monitoring To provide members with Corporate, Children’s and Adult Safeguarding Performance.	Lynn Phillips Tanya Evans	Cabinet – 01.03.23

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