

T: 01495 355001

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



Our Ref./Ein Cyf.
Your Ref./Eich Cyf.
Contact:/Cysylltwch â:

THIS IS A MEETING WHICH THE PUBLIC ARE ENTITLED TO ATTEND

25th April 2023

Dear Sir/Madam

CABINET

A meeting of the Cabinet will be held in via MS Teams (if you would like to view this meeting please contact michelle.hicks@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk) on Wednesday, 3rd May, 2023 at 9.30 am.

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 any apologies for absence.

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 any declarations of interest or dispensations.

DECISION SHEET

4. **CABINET** 3 - 8

To consider the decisions of the Cabinet Meeting held on 19th April, 2023.

PEOPLE AND EDUCATION PORTFOLIO

5. **BLAENAU GWENT RESPONSE TO ESTYN LOCAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATION SERVICES (LGES) INSPECTION** 9 - 46

To consider the report of the Head of School Improvement and Inclusion.

6. **CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION SERVICES ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2022/23** 47 - 96

To consider the report of the Corporate Director Education.

PLACE AND ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

7. **ENFORCEMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE ENERGY PERFORMANCE OF BUILDINGS (ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 2012 (AS AMENDED)** 97 - 128

To consider the report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services.

To: Councillor S. Thomas
Councillor H. Cunningham
Councillor J. C. Morgan
Councillor H. Trollope
Councillor S. Edmunds

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

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE CABINET
SUBJECT: CABINET – 19TH APRIL, 2023
REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: **Leader/**
 Cabinet Member - Corporate Overview & Performance
 Councillor S. Thomas

Deputy Leader/Cabinet Member – Place & Environment
 Councillor H. Cunningham

Cabinet Member – Place & Regeneration
 Councillor J.C. Morgan

Cabinet Member – People & Social Services
 Councillor H. Trollope

Cabinet Member – People & Education
 Councillor S. Edmunds

WITH: Interim Chief Executive
 Chief Officer Resources
 Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services
 Head of School Improvement & Inclusion
 Chief Officer Customer and Commercial
 Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance
 Communications, Marketing & Customer Access Manager
 Press & Publicity Officer

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</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>No apologies for absence were reported.</p>
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>No declarations of interest or dispensations were reported.</p>
	<p><u>DECISION SHEET</u></p>
No. 4	<p><u>CABINET</u></p> <p>To receive the decisions of the Special Cabinet held on the 22nd February, 2023.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the decisions be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>
No. 5	<p><u>CABINET</u></p> <p>To receive the decisions of the Cabinet held on the 1st March, 2023.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the decisions be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>
	<p><u>CORPORATE AND PERFORMANCE PORTFOLIO</u></p>
No. 6	<p><u>REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING - 2022/2023, FORECAST OUTTURN TO 31ST MARCH 2023 (AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2022)</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted, and Members note the forecast application of reserves. (Option 1)</p>

No. 7	<u>CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING, FORECAST FOR 2022/2023 FINANCIAL YEAR (AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2022)</u>
	Consideration was given to report of the Chief Officer Resources.
	RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Members:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support appropriate financial control procedures agreed by Council; and • Note the budgetary control and monitoring procedures in place within the Capital Team, to safeguard Authority funding. (Option 1)
No. 8	<u>BUSINESS RATES RELIEF – RETAIL, LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY RATES RELIEF – 2023/24</u>
	Consideration was given to report of the Chief Officer Resources.
	RESOLVED that the report be accepted, and Cabinet adopt the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rates Relief – 2023/24 scheme on behalf of the Council, to supplement the Council’s Discretionary Rate Relief Scheme. (Option 2)
	<u>PLACE AND ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO</u>
No. 9	<u>PROGRESS REPORT CONTRACTS OVER £500K</u>
	Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services.
	RESOLVED that the information included within the report be accepted (Option 1).
No. 10	<u>LOCAL AIR QUALITY PROGRESS REPORT – 2022 (FOR 2021)</u>
	Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services.
	RESOLVED that the report be accepted, and Members note the content of the 2022 Air Quality Progress Report for Blaenau Gwent CBC in relation to the continued monitoring and ongoing review of air quality within Blaenau Gwent by the Environmental Health Section in fulfilment

	<p>of the Authority's statutory duties in compliance with Part IV of the Environment Act 1995.</p>
No. 11	<p><u>ECO4 FLEXIBLE ELIGIBILITY - MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING AND JOINT 'STATEMENT OF INTENT'</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted, and Members note the content of the report in relation to the implementation of ECO4 Flex in the borough.</p>
	<p><u>PLACE AND REGENERATION PORTFOLIO</u></p>
No. 12	<p><u>BRYNMAWR PLACEMAKING PLAN</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services.</p> <p>The Leader emphasised that progression of any projects contained within the Placemaking Plan would be subject to funding being identified.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted, and Cabinet endorse the Brynmawr Placemaking Plan, its vision and core ambitions for the future. This will enable us to finalise the draft of the delivery plan and steps towards implementation of the projects that will be contained within it. (Option 2)</p>
No. 13	<p><u>SHARED PROSPERITY FUND</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted, and Members to endorse the SLA between BGCBC and RCTCBC, subject to clarification received from RCTCBC and for the Director of Regeneration and Community Services alongside the S151 Officer to be given delegated authority to accept revisions to the SLA to facilitate the implementation of the SPF within Blaenau Gwent. (Option 2)</p>

	<u>PEOPLE & EDUCATION PORTFOLIO</u>
No. 14	<p><u>EAS BUSINESS PLAN 2023-2025 (CONSULTATION VERSION – ACCESSIBLE)</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director of Education.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report and business plan be accepted. (Option 1)</p>
No. 15	<p><u>PROPOSAL TO CONSULT ON ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS RESOURCE BASE CAPACITY</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director of Education.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted, and Cabinet support the associated consultation document and course of action. (Option 1)</p>
	<u>JOINT PORTFOLIO - PLACE AND ENVIRONMENT / PLACE AND REGENERATION</u>
No. 16	<p><u>ADVANCED ENGINEERING CENTRE (HIVE) EBBW VALE</u></p> <p>Having regard to the views expressed by the Proper Officer regarding the public interest test, that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and that the report should be exempt.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the public be excluded whilst this item of business is transacted as it is likely there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).</p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services.</p>

RESOLVED that the report which contained exempt information relating to the financial/business affairs of persons other than the Authority be accepted, and Option 1 be approved.

Agenda Item 5

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 25.04.23

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 25.04.23

Committee: **Cabinet**

Date of meeting: **3rd May 2023**

Report Subject: **Blaenau Gwent Response to Estyn Local Government Education Services (LGES) Inspection**

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

Report Submitted by: **Luisa Munro-Morris, Head of School Improvement and Inclusion**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)
05.04.23	06.04.23	21.04.23			28.04.23	03.05.23		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to present the Education Directorate's response to the Estyn Local Government Education Services (LGES) Inspection, the full report is attached as (Appendix 1).

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The provision of Education is regulated under the Estyn Local Government Education Services (LGES) framework. The Local Authority was inspected between 28th November and 2nd December and the report was published February 2023. The outcome of the Inspection is positive overall, progress since the last inspection has been made and there is no requirement for follow-up activity. The inspectorate identified 3 recommendations for improvement, and the local authority will use these recommendations to update its improvement plans.

- 2.2 The recommendations are:

R1. Improve the corporate leadership of education services,

R2. Improve the quality of self-evaluation, strategic planning and performance management; and,

R3. Accelerate improvements in provision for secondary age pupils in schools causing concern.

- 2.3 In addition to the three recommendations, key areas for improvement have been identified within the body of the Estyn Report. These will be addressed alongside the 3 recommendations.

- 2.4 This report is the first update reporting on progress against the 3 recommendations to Members.

2.5 Local Authority Link Inspection Visits

Estyn have confirmed that there is no requirement for the LA to prepare a Post Inspection Action plan following the inspection. Instead, as part of the termly Local Authority Link Inspection Visits (LALI), the LA will be required to provide evidence to the inspectorate that shows improvements are being made both corporately and operationally in relation to the 3 recommendations.

2.6 The first LALI visit post inspection took place on 16th March 2023. A range of evidence was presented to demonstrate progress towards the 3 recommendations.

2.7 **Business Planning**

The Education Directorate has revised its business plan (improvement plan) to incorporate the 3 recommendations at both a strategic and an operational level. Progress on relevant actions within the business plan will be reviewed on a quarterly basis, in line with other actions.

2.8 **Self-evaluation Report**

Estyn identified in their report that overall, the quality of self-evaluation is not strong enough. In response to this, the Education Directorate have revised the format of the self-evaluation report. The report is now structured so that it reports directly on each of the 5 corporate school improvement priorities. There is a clear focus on progress against the priority, impact and next steps. There is also a section to identify and evidence progress against the 3 recommendations (Appendix 2). Progress has been made on identifying suitable data to use as evidence and this will be reported on in the next update.

2.9 **Action Plans**

Half-termly action planning sessions, which commenced in the Spring term, are in place with key stakeholders from across the LA. The aim of these sessions is to create action plans to address the recommendations and the key areas for improvement from within the report. An initial action plan has been created, which includes measurable success criteria and identifies responsible persons for each action (Appendix 3). The next step is to identify timeframes for each of the actions.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 The report has been considered by Education's DMT and CLT.

3.2 The report will be considered by the People Scrutiny Committee on 28th April 2023, and any comments will be provided verbally to Cabinet.

3.3 **Option 1**

For members to consider the report and suggest any amendments prior to approval in relation to:

- the action plan in response to Estyn's recommendations;
- the structure of the revised Self-evaluation Report; and
- to accept future monitoring reports against the action plan and Self-evaluation Report.

Option 2

For members to consider the report and accept the information as provided and to receive future monitoring reports against the action plan and self-evaluation report.

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

It is a statutory responsibility of the Corporate Director of Education to assess the effectiveness of the delivery of Education and regular monitoring reports 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)***

There are no direct financial considerations associated with this report, however, it is pleasing to note the findings from the Inspectorate on resource management. There was acknowledgement that the LA has a track record of spending within its education budget in recent years, with relatively small underspends for the past three years against the overall education budget. The financial outlook, however, for the public sector will be challenging over the period of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and close financial management will be essential to achieve value for money.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

There is one corporate risk for the Education service in the Corporate Risk Register relating to the 2 Schools Causing Concern. Education also maintains a Directorate Risk Register, which is aligned to both service level and corporate risks. One of the Estyn recommendations relates to the slow pace of change in one of these schools causing concern. The risk register is reviewed as part of the business planning process and included within the performance reporting for the service. The inspection findings are to be included in the risk registers.

5.3 ***Legal***

There are no legal requirements as part of this report, however, there is a requirement to respond to the Estyn recommendations within three months of receiving the letter.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

There are no direct implications for staff relating to this report.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

The detailed inspection findings are included within (Appendix 1). The Education Directorate is working together with key stakeholders to deliver 'Better Schools, Better Citizens and Better Communities – all through a child and young person-centred approach'. The Education Directorate are working with corporate colleagues and key partners to ensure that the vision and strategic aims for education are fully understood across the board.

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

The Estyn report was published early in February and the reporting of findings provides the public with the opportunity to view progress of the LA/ Education Directorate and partners to ensure public accountability for our citizens.

- 6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***
The LA has shared the inspection findings with stakeholders, including Headteachers and partners. Pupil voice is a key area for the Education Directorate and examples of this are included within the inspection findings, it should also be noted that a member of the Youth Forum contributes to the work the People Scrutiny Committee.
- 6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***
The report enables the Education Directorate to plan as resourcing, risk and performance is continuously reported. The Estyn findings provide a baseline of where the services are currently placed, and most importantly, where we need to be in the future.
- 6.5 ***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 and can also help with planning resources and ensuring value for money services are delivered.
- 6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***
Work will be undertaken across the Education Directorate alongside working with the EAS and schools.
- 6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***
The whole Education Directorate as well as other key service areas, such as Governance and Partnerships, and the Regeneration and Community Services Directorate will be involved in supporting education across the borough.
- 6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***
There are no direct implications in relation to decarbonisation as part of this report, however, school buildings and adaptations consider how to reduce carbon emissions.
- 6.9 ***Integrated Impact Assessment (IAA)***
As this is not a decision-making report an IAA is not required, however, Education work to support all those with protected characteristics.
7. **Monitoring Arrangements**
- 7.1 The performance of the Education Directorate is monitored via 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 – Blaenau Gwent LGES Inspection](#)
- [Appendix 2 – Draft revised SER](#)
- [Appendix 3 – Action plan](#)

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A report on education services in

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

**The General Offices
Steelworks Road
Ebbw Vale
Blaenau Gwent
NP23 6DN**

Date of inspection: November 2022

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh.

About Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Blaenau Gwent has a total population of around 67,000 people, and a school population of around 9,400 pupils. There are 25 schools in the local authority, including one that provides Welsh-medium education.

The local authority works in partnership with four other local authorities in South East Wales for some of its education services, including a regional school improvement services (the EAS), a regional ethnic minority support service (GEMS) and a regional support service for learners with sensory and communication needs (SENCOM).

The Council Leader and Executive Member People & Education were both elected to their roles in May 2022. The interim Chief Executive took up post in April 2022, and the Corporate Director for Education took up post in November 2020.

In 2022-2023, the local authority's education budget is around £66,637,000. The delegated school budget per pupil in 2022-2023 is £5,697, slightly higher than the Wales average of £5,032.

The local authority's last inspection was in January 2013. Inspectors take account of a wide range of information about the local population when evaluating outcomes and the quality of education services. They consider this information alongside information about the national population. Some of the most useful information about children and young people in Blaenau Gwent is noted below:

- Over a three-year average, 31.2% of pupils aged 5 to 15 are eligible for free school meals, higher than the Wales average of 23%
- 6.1% of pupils aged 5 to 15 are from ethnic minorities, lower than the Wales average of 13.3%
- 1.8% of pupils aged 5 to 15 have English as an additional language
- 1.1% of pupils aged 5 or over are fluent in Welsh, lower than the Wales average of 15.6%
- 15.5% of pupils aged 5 to 15 have additional learning or special educational needs

Summary

The local authority has made good progress with its education services since it was last inspected around ten years ago as important areas for improvement have largely been addressed. One of the local authority's four priorities in its current corporate plan for 2022-2027 is to 'maximise learning and skills for all learners to create a prosperous, thriving, resilient Blaenau Gwent'. Senior officers and elected members have a strong commitment to education and this is reflected in the funding given to schools and education services.

The local authority generally plans well to make sure that it has suitable education provision to meet the needs of every child and young person. Over the past decade, the local authority has successfully reduced surplus places in schools and improved the conditions of its school buildings. The local authority is suitably developing its Welsh-medium education provision. Whilst there have been some positive developments in provision for pupils with additional learning needs, the quality of planning for future provision is variable.

There are many strengths in the local authority's work to reduce the impact of deprivation on education outcomes and its support for families in low-income households. There are also many strengths in the services to support children and young people's well-being and promote positive relationships.

The authority has worked with its regional school improvement service to strengthen the challenge and support it provides to schools. This work has greater impact for children in non-maintained and primary age settings than for young people in secondary age settings. Provision for young people was too slow to improve in two schools placed in statutory categories.

Despite strengths in education services, corporate leaders have not ensured that their vision and strategic aims for education are fully understood by other officers, elected members, school staff and external partners. Also, corporate leaders have not ensured that the corporate plan is supported by coherent delivery plans for education that include related actions and measurable success criteria. Overall, the quality of self-evaluation, planning for improvement, and performance management is not strong enough.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve the corporate leadership of education services
- R2 Improve the quality of self-evaluation, strategic planning and performance management
- R3 Accelerate improvements in provision for secondary age pupils in schools causing concern

What happens next

Following the publication of the inspection report, the local authority should update its plans to address the recommendations and to take account of shortcomings identified through the inspection process. The local authority should update its plans within three months of the publication of the inspection report.

Main findings

Outcomes

We are unable to provide a full evaluation of outcomes. This is due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused the suspension of inspections of schools and most other education providers between March 2020 and February 2022. It is also due to the lack of data about outcomes that can be compared over time as the pandemic caused changes to the way that qualifications were awarded and affected most other data that we consider when making evaluations, such as school attendance, school exclusions and post-16 learner destinations. Any evaluations that follow provide a context by reporting on outcomes before the pandemic or relate to more recent outcomes where the evidence base is valid and reliable.

Between September 2017 and March 2020, we inspected eight primary schools, one all-age school and one secondary school. Overall, inspection outcomes during this period were in line with the national average. We judged that standards were good in all but one of the primary schools. However, standards in the all-age school and the secondary school were judged to be adequate and unsatisfactory respectively, and both schools were placed in a statutory follow-up category. Although one of these schools has been removed from its category, both of these schools were slow to improve standards following their inspection. Since inspections resumed in February 2022, we have inspected two primary schools and a special school. We asked both primary schools to provide case studies of good practice, but the special school requires special measures.

In the three years before the start of the pandemic, the proportion of pupils who achieved five or more GCSEs at grade C or above including English or Welsh and mathematics varied considerably across the authority's schools. One school performed consistently well, one school performed consistently satisfactorily, one school had a worsening trend and one school performed consistently poorly.

In the school inspections between September 2017 and March 2020, pupils' well-being and attitudes to learning were judged to be good in many schools. For the three years from 2017 to 2019, overall school attendance was consistently lower than the national average. However, the attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals was higher than that of their peers nationally and rates of persistent absenteeism and unauthorised absence were broadly in line with national averages, which are positive given the socio-economic context of the authority. The rate of fixed-term school exclusions of five days or less was well above the national average, although the rate of fixed-term exclusions of more than five days was broadly in line with the national average.

After Year 11, almost all young people progress to further education, employment or training. This is a particular strength given the historically high levels of young people who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) and given the challenging socio-economic context of the authority. Young people continue to benefit from support from dedicated officers beyond their initial destination after Year 11 that helps them to move to an alternative education, employment or training destination if their initial destination does not work out.

Children and young people currently benefit from a wide range of services to support their well-being. Children and young people aged 10 to 25 are well supported by the authority's counselling service in schools and communities which, on average, leads to considerable reductions in emotional distress. Young carers have identity cards that help to reduce barriers that can prevent them from participating fully in and benefiting from activities that their peers enjoy. Vulnerable children and young people benefit from free after school and holiday activities that develop their literacy and numeracy skills and support their personal and social development, physical health and well-being.

When given the opportunity, children and young people in the authority influence decisions that affect them. A young person is elected from the Youth Forum to be a member of the scrutiny committee that considers education matters. The voice of secondary age pupils has supported the development of helpful LGBTQ+ support groups in all their schools.

Education services

How well does the local authority challenge and support non-maintained settings and schools to improve?

Officers in Blaenau Gwent generally know their schools well and have developed a good understanding of the contexts of different schools. Following a review of the education service structure, the local authority created a dedicated senior leadership role for school improvement and inclusion. This has increased the capacity of the local authority to work more closely with schools and to link more effectively with the regional school improvement service, the Educational Achievement Service (EAS).

Officers have strengthened and improved their relationships with senior leaders in most schools. Most headteachers feel that officers listen to their views and take account of their opinions. For example, headteachers identified that pupils' reading skills are weaker following the pandemic and the local authority has commissioned the EAS to support schools to improve these skills.

The local authority and the EAS work well together to support schools. School improvement partners have a well-structured plan of work with school leaders across the academic year, starting with sessions that focus on school self-evaluation and professional discussions with key staff from the school, the local authority and the EAS. These sessions help to identify the level and nature of the support that schools will benefit from to enable them to address their improvement priorities successfully. A single plan for each school outlines the support that the school will receive, details of grant spending, school improvement priorities and termly evaluations of the progress against these. Officers implement a tiered approach to providing support to schools. When schools need additional support, officers implement the Team around the School approach to ensure a holistic approach that meets the bespoke needs of the school.

There are currently no primary schools or non-maintained settings requiring follow-up activity after inspection. Over the past two years officers have identified a few primary schools that require improvement. The local authority and the EAS have provided good support for these schools to help them to improve. This support includes

strengthening the governing body and commissioning curriculum support through the 'local network of schools' process. Where the local authority uses its statutory powers to appoint governors, it takes care to match governors' skills and expertise closely to the needs of the school.

The local authority early years team and the advisory teacher from the EAS provide the three non-maintained settings with effective advice and guidance. This includes support for evaluation and improvement planning as well as guidance on how to create a stimulating environment for young children. This support is helping the settings to deliver good quality provision for their children.

Two schools in the local authority require special measures currently, one secondary school and one special school, and one all-age school was removed from the category of needing significant improvement in February 2022. In two of these three schools, officers did not recognise important shortcomings or the need for school leaders to make significant improvements prior to these being identified by inspectors. The pace of improvement in these two schools has been too slow. Reviews of progress in these schools show that issues identified at the time of the inspections, particularly around the quality of teaching, are not being addressed quickly enough and impact on learners' progress for too long a period of time. Officers do not monitor progress closely enough or ensure that school improvement partners set sufficiently precise and focused success criteria against which progress can be measured. In a few instances where improvement partners lacked the relevant specialist knowledge and skills to be able to support and challenge schools, the local authority challenged the EAS and ensured that suitable improvement partners were put in place.

The EAS and the local authority provide a range of appropriate professional learning opportunities for staff at all levels in schools. These include national leadership programmes and training to support teaching and learning. In addition, the local authority delivers its own useful complementary programmes for aspiring and new headteachers, which helps to mitigate the challenge of recruiting experienced senior leaders to schools in the county. Recent changes to the programme to support governors means that they now access training matched better to their needs.

How well does the local authority tackle inequalities in education experiences and outcomes for children living in poverty?

The local authority has a clear commitment to reducing the impact of poverty on education outcomes. Officers know their communities well and use information they gather locally, national surveys and reports to identify needs and prioritise resources. Heads of service across the local authority have established an anti-poverty council and elected members have recently set up a cost-of-living crisis group. Elected members are committed to addressing this issue, and a new member 'poverty champion' brings knowledge and expertise to help support this aspect of their work. Members look beyond their authority to see what they can learn from others to help improve Blaenau Gwent for its citizens.

Officers collaborate well across directorates on issues relating to poverty to enable resources to be targeted towards those most in need. This is helping vulnerable families to access services where they can get suitable advice, support and practical

help. Officers work well with local charitable groups to provide support for families who are struggling financially, as well as ensuring that period poverty does not lead to educational disadvantage.

The local authority uses a wide range of approaches to help mitigate the effects of poverty in pre-school and children's early years in education. This begins before birth with support for mothers-to-be by, for example, encouraging healthy eating and developing budgeting skills. There are groups for new mothers to help with parenting, for example the 'Lap not App' programme that promotes the development of bonds and relationships. Flying Start hubs are largely within local communities to make them as accessible as possible. Within these hubs, there is holistic support for parents, including opportunities for education and training to access employment.

Officers ensure that schools spend their pupil development grants appropriately, supporting them to make well-considered decisions and challenging them on the impact of their spending. Headteachers value the support the authority provided during the pandemic. School holiday enrichment programmes provide structured childcare for children to have access to sport, craft and environmental activities. Children taking part in these programmes have a daily meal provided for them, learn to cook simple, healthy recipes and have opportunities to prepare meals for their families to dine together.

From September 2022, the local authority increased catering capacity to provide universal free school meals for all pupils up to Year 2, going beyond the Welsh Government's minimum requirements for the roll-out of free school meals at this stage. The authority works with a specialist dietician to ensure that meals are healthy and nutritious, and that they cater appropriately for an increasing number of pupils with special dietary requirements. Additionally, healthy schools co-ordinators work with schools and settings to promote healthy lifestyles, for example by promoting healthy snacks in the early years.

The authority identifies vulnerable children and young people of all ages using a range of suitable risk measures. The needs of the more vulnerable are considered by multi-agency panels. Professionals track, monitor and support vulnerable children and young people through a named support worker. These children and young people have support during important milestones, such as transition from primary to secondary schools and on to post-16 education, training or employment.

Families First funds four social workers to work with schools across clusters. This enables schools to access appropriate support quickly for pupils and families to reduce the risk of disengagement from school and learning. Recently, the authority has restarted its family engagement work following the pandemic, for example supporting pupils returning to school and those with examination anxiety.

The authority acknowledges the work of young carers in the authority and the challenges they can face. Local authority and health professionals proactively identify young carers so that can offer them suitable support. Over the past three years, young carers have been provided with a National Young Carers ID card, which gives access to a range of helpful benefits and incentives to help them and their families, such as free access to leisure facilities and permission to collect prescriptions for

those they care for. Elected members recognise and celebrate the contribution of young carers at an annual awards ceremony.

How well does the local authority support schools to promote respectful relationships and address negative behaviour effectively?

Through the education psychology service and an 'inclusive practice service', all schools have access to a range of suitable support to promote positive, respectful relationships and address negative behaviour effectively. These two services work closely together.

Officers in the education psychology service provide helpful training for school staff, including Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) training for teaching assistants. They provide valuable guidance for additional learning needs co-ordinators (ALNCos) that helps them to consider how to best meet pupils' additional learning needs.

The local authority commissions one of its special schools to provide the 'inclusive practice service' for other schools. This service provides beneficial support for staff to understand behaviours in schools and respond appropriately. It has recently modified its approach from directly supporting individual pupils to providing professional learning to school staff so that they can support pupils themselves.

The local authority has recently developed new 'positive relationships and behaviour' guidance and a 'relationships (anti-bullying)' policy, although there was limited involvement of schools and learners in developing these. The anti-bullying policy sets out the expectation that schools will record all alleged incidents of bullying, outlining the specific types of bullying, including bullying involving pupils with protected characteristics. Previously the local authority had not been collecting information about incidents from schools in a way that would enable it to identify potential issues and act upon them. The local authority has improved its work in this area by purchasing a safeguarding information management system for every school that is being used to record and report incidents and related pupil demographics at school level and collate this information centrally. It is too early to evaluate how well the local authority and its schools are using this system.

The local authority has developed an effective early identification tool, which identifies children and young people aged 7 to 25 years who may be at risk of exclusion or disengaging with education, employment or training, or becoming homeless. Through Families First and a multi-agency approach, the local authority provides helpful early support for these children and young people. Blaenau Gwent's youth service provides strong support for young people aged 11-25 who are at risk of being excluded or being not in education, employment or training (NEET). Working closely with other support services, youth workers support young people on a one-to-one basis and in groups, both in schools and in their communities. This co-ordinated approach has helped young people to remain engaged in their education and has supported a reduction in school exclusions. The proportion of young people who are NEET has reduced considerably over the last decade and young people are supported positively beyond their initial destination after Year 11.

The youth service co-ordinates a counselling service for children and young people from age 10 to age 25 that is provided in schools and community locations. This service provides helpful support for children's and young people's emotional well-being and mental health. A community psychologist provides young people with more specialist support, if necessary, where they are unable to access this through traditional routes. More recently, the local authority has established play therapy for children in Year 2 to Year 6. These services help children and young people to better understand behaviours and manage their relationships with others as well as reducing their emotional distress.

A dedicated detached youth team is used effectively to address anti-social behaviour in local communities. For example, following concerns about the behaviour of some young people in a car park outside of school hours, detached youth workers used their skills to divert young people to more suitable activities. Incidents of anti-social behaviour have reduced wherever this team has worked, and this work supports the work of schools in promoting good relationships.

The authority has very recently established a vulnerable learners panel, which involves senior leaders from secondary and all-age schools. It was established in collaboration with schools to improve the well-being of vulnerable pupils and help decrease exclusions. Early signs suggest that this panel is adding value to the existing range of services.

The range of useful support services to promote positive relationships in schools and communities means that exclusions are low in many schools, although a few schools still have high exclusion rates.

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?

Over the past ten years, or so, the local authority has been successful in both reducing surplus places in schools and improving the conditions of its school estate. The local authority has been prepared to make difficult decisions in relation to closing schools and replacing them with mergers and new builds. Where appropriate the local authority has modernised school buildings, for example through refurbishments and extensions.

The local authority has kept its school organisation policy under review and recently amended it to reflect recent developments, including the impact of the pandemic. The policy appropriately considers and incorporates national and local priorities such as its Welsh in Education strategic plan and information and communication technology (ICT) in schools. However, the engagement of headteachers in this strategy was variable and the strategy is generally not well understood. In addition, despite many appropriate actions to improve connectivity and developments in relation to ICT, there is no clear ICT strategy.

The south-east Wales regional sustainable communities for learning group was established by the local authority around five years ago and has recently been extended and includes local authorities from outside the region. The group's work currently focuses on sharing information on processes regarding the planning of

school places, standardising costs, and issues regarding sustainability and carbon neutral designs.

The key focus of the local authority's Welsh in education strategic plan (WESP) is to ensure that Welsh-medium provision is available and accessible in all three of the county's valleys. This is a sensible and pragmatic approach and is supported well by plans to increase access to pre-school and nursery Welsh-medium provision. The Welsh in education forum (WEF) comprises a broad range of partners and provides an effective steer for this work. Officers are aware of the risks in not being able to deliver the WESP's priorities and are considering appropriate steps to mitigate against these risks. The WESP's focus on improving Welsh skills of pupils in English-medium schools and expanding Welsh-medium provision in post-16 is underdeveloped. The local authority is considering working with Merthyr Tydfil and Powys local authorities to scope out the possibility of establishing a Welsh-medium secondary school to cater for the expected rise in demand during the next 10 years.

The local authority has a well-established Welsh-medium primary school in Blaina. An immersion provision is being developed at the school, which will provide additional opportunities for pupils to access Welsh-medium education. There are well-developed plans to open a seedling Welsh-medium primary school in Tredegar in September 2023. This school will also offer childcare provision and a resource base for pupils with autism.

Despite recent closer working between colleagues in education regarding the planning of provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN), data is not always used effectively enough to inform long-term planning. This is illustrated by the recent decision to increase capacity at a special school by nearly 40%. The needs of children with complex special education and medical needs, including those with profound and multiple learning difficulties, are generally known from a very young age, so the demand for additional capacity should have been foreseen and planned for in a more timely way.

The local authority has established useful resource bases in several mainstream schools for pupils with additional learning needs. In some cases, these resource bases helped to address surplus places in the mainstream schools, but as the number of pupils in mainstream classes in these schools has increased, a few schools are now struggling for space. In 2017, the local authority undertook a very useful review of resource base provisions. This identified strengths and areas for improvement across the provisions. However, the ongoing monitoring of these provisions is inconsistent. There are very few references to these provisions in notes of visit from school improvement partners. Where they are referenced, comments made are too limited to be of any value to the local authority and rarely evaluate the impact of provision on pupils' progress.

Senior leaders have a suitable vision for inclusion and pupils with ALN. However, this is not yet supported by a clear strategy. A range of very useful policy and guidance materials have recently been shared with schools.

The local authority makes provision for pupils in out-of-county settings. Half of the pupils currently placed in out-of-county provision have additional learning needs related to their social, emotional and behavioural needs. The local authority does not

analyse its use of out-of-county settings well enough in order to understand the implications for its capacity to meet the needs of pupils locally.

Leadership and management

Leaders in Blaenau Gwent place a high priority on improving outcomes for children and young people across the local authority. The local authority has high aspirations for regeneration and education to enable all children and young people in the local area to thrive and succeed. Lead elected members and senior officers are committed to improving conditions for their community so that deprivation is not a barrier to long term success. Elected members and officers demonstrate a strong commitment to 'maximise learning and skills for all learners to create a prosperous, thriving, resilient Blaenau Gwent', one of the four priorities set out in the corporate plan 2022-2027. Corporate leaders and the education directorate are beginning to refine their approaches to ensure that this commitment is translated into specific and measurable actions.

Senior leaders in the education directorate have worked with elected members and other senior officers across the council to establish a suitable vision for education. This aims to create a 'school-led, self-improving system that develops 'better schools, better citizens and better communities'. However, this vision is not communicated clearly or consistently enough by the corporate leadership team. As a result, the strategic direction for education is not sufficiently understood by all elected members, officers, or staff in schools.

Corporate leaders have not ensured that the corporate priority and directorate vision for education are coherently reflected in education plans. The corporate plan sets out how the local authority will know how well it is doing in relation to its priority for education, but the range of broad indicators in the corporate plan are not developed sufficiently into specific success criteria against relevant actions in education plans. This disconnect between corporate and education plans tempers senior leaders' ability to hold officers to account for their work and ensure an appropriate pace of improvement in identified areas. Nevertheless, the executive board, which includes senior elected members and senior officers from across the local authority, is used appropriately to hold education officers to account for progress against planned actions. In the board meetings, members challenge officers suitably.

Despite the weakness in corporate leadership, the education senior management team has developed strong working relationships with officers across the directorate and places a high level of trust in staff at all levels to deliver high quality services. Senior education managers have good oversight of most education services covered by our local inspection questions. These services have strengthened over time to better meet the needs of children and young people, and are having a positive impact on their outcomes.

The education senior management team meetings provide suitable opportunities for education leaders to monitor progress against planned activity. However, the quality of improvement planning and evaluation within the education directorate is too variable. Plans do not always include suitable success criteria, and evaluations therefore focus too often on whether actions have been completed rather than the impact they have had on improving provision and outcomes for learners. In

mitigation, senior managers have a better understanding of strengths and weaknesses in their services areas than is reflected in planning and self-evaluation documentation.

Performance management processes in the local authority are suitably established and used to support officers and hold them to account. Officers have access to monthly support sessions and regularly review progress against targets set. Despite this, performance management targets are not consistently precise enough and do not always identify the specific aspects of practice that officers need to improve. As a result, performance management processes are not aligned consistently with evaluation and improvement work, and accountability does not always focus on the most important aspects of officers' work.

There are suitable examples of officers accessing useful professional learning to improve aspects of their work, such as managing staff and supporting their well-being. However, the local authority does not have a strategic enough approach to planning or evaluating the impact of professional learning across the directorate.

The local authority has strengthened working relationships with its regional school improvement service (EAS). As a result, officers in inclusion services are working more closely with school improvement partners to provide a holistic approach to supporting schools. The local authority has recently improved the way it holds EAS to account for operational aspects of their work, for example when considering the usefulness of notes from school visits by school improvement partners.

Leaders make appropriate decisions when they are concerned about the progress of schools. For example, the authority has issued warning notices to a few schools that were causing concern and used its powers to appoint additional governors. In a few cases, the progress that schools causing concern make is too slow and the local authority is not sufficiently challenging school leaders, the work of EAS or holding its own officers to account for the impact of actions in these schools.

Elected members, through scrutiny, carry out their duties diligently. They regularly challenge and scrutinise decisions and officers respond promptly to their requests. They have a good working knowledge of the local authority and the members briefings have provided them with suitable professional learning, which has improved the way in which they hold the local authority to account for its work. However, due to the weaknesses in evaluation across the directorate, members are not always provided with a clear enough picture of the strengths and areas for improvement across the directorate. This limits their ability to hold the local authority and the EAS to account for all aspects of their work.

Officers and elected members are committed to safeguarding young people in their local authority. There is an appropriate safeguarding culture within the local authority. All officers and elected members receive suitable safeguarding training. The way in which education and children's services work together has contributed well to improving multi-agency working and the support schools receive to manage the needs of pupils and their families more effectively. The advice and guidance provided to schools by officers is valued by school leaders and helps them to respond to safeguarding concerns appropriately. Elected members are beginning to develop

their understanding of safeguarding in education and challenge appropriately the content of reports they receive.

The authority's prioritisation of education is reflected in its allocation funding for education further above its Indicator Based Assessment than most local authorities in Wales. It also increased funding to schools this year by a higher percentage than the Welsh average. The authority also budgeted for the highest spend per pupil of all authorities in Wales this year. The authority delegates a higher percentage of its education budget to schools than many other Welsh local authorities. To support the improvement of school buildings, the authority has also allocated nearly £7million of its capital funding over 2019-2025 for Band B of its 21st Century Schools programme.

The authority has a track record of spending within its education budget in recent years, with relatively small underspends for the past three years against the overall education budget. The authority is projecting a small overspend this year and understands its key current and future budget pressures for education that include energy costs and home-to-school transport.

Overall, schools' balances increased in the three years prior to the pandemic. None of the authority's schools were in deficit at the end of last year. In common with other local authorities, total schools' balances have increased significantly during the pandemic due to additional grant funding but the authority anticipates that schools' balances will reduce by the end of this year, and in future years. The authority has applied its scheme for schools' financing where schools were in deficit prior to the pandemic. In previous years, deficit reduction plans were in place for a very few schools, although some actions were appropriately not taken during the pandemic.

The authority provides a comprehensive range of service level agreements (SLAs) for a range of services it provides for schools, such as catering and cleaning. Feedback from headteachers on some SLAs was mixed when the authority surveyed schools as part of a review of SLAs last year. SLAs were revised to take account of feedback and there is subsequently a high level of take-up for 2022-2025.

The School Budget Forum is generally well attended by headteachers and engaged in helpful activity such as reviewing the schools' funding formula and SLAs. The authority makes use of comparative data to inform reviews of its school funding formula, for example the re-allocation of some funding from primary to secondary schools. The funding formula was reviewed for each of the last two years.

Many headteachers agree that the authority provides good support for schools with their financial planning and nearly all agree that the authority provides schools with good human resources support.

The authority monitors appropriately the delivery of commissioned services, and key commissioned services, including the EAS and Aneurin Leisure Trust, have been discussed at scrutiny committee.

Evidence base of the report

Before the inspection, inspectors:

- consult the local authority on the local inspection questions to be used during the inspection, based on the authority's self-evaluation, strategic plans and relevant data held by Estyn
- analyse the outcomes from open questionnaires, including the views of learners, parents, school staff and governors, local authority staff, regional consortium staff, elected members and general public
- carry out a preliminary visit to the local authority to meet with a range of relevant partners to education services, such as learner representatives, headteachers and governors, and leaders from statutory and third sector agencies working with children and young people

During the inspection, inspectors normally:

- meet with the leader of the council, elected members responsible for education services, elected members responsible for the scrutiny of education services, the chief executive, the director of education, other leaders and managers in education services, other relevant staff in the local authority, the managing director of the regional consortium for school improvement and other relevant staff from the regional consortium
- look closely at the local authority's self-evaluation processes
- consider the local authority's strategic and operational plans for improvement
- scrutinise a variety of documents, including information on learner outcomes, information on the performance of schools and other education settings, including information from the regional consortium for school improvement, minutes from a range of meetings, reports presented to council or scrutiny, information relating to the safeguarding of learners and any other information relevant to the local authority's education services held by Estyn

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
- provide a draft copy of the report for the local authority to note any concerns with factual accuracy, and made amendments where necessary

Copies of the report

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

The report was produced in accordance with Section 38 of the Education Act 1997, the Children Act 2004 and the Learning and Skills Act 2000.

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

Publications Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

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Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol
Blaenau Gwent
County Borough Council

Education Directorate Self-Evaluation Report

End of year review	October 2023
Mid-term review	April 2024

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Context

Blaenau Gwent School and Local Authority – Context

Executive Summary

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Recommendation 1 - Improve the corporate leadership of education services			
Recommendation 2 - Improve the quality of self-evaluation, strategic planning and performance management			
Recommendation 3 - Accelerate improvements in provision for secondary age pupils in schools causing concern			

Priority 1: Improving educational standards and wellbeing for pupils, particularly at KS4

Why this is a priority within the education business plan

Overview of progress

Impact

Next steps - new actions included in business plan

Priority 2: Securing quality ALN/Inclusion provision, particularly to support vulnerable groups of learners and those who are eFSM

Why this is a priority within the education business plan

Overview of progress

Impact

Next steps - new actions included in business plan

Priority 3: Transforming education in line with responsive school support services and a school estate that is fit for the 21st Century

Why this is a priority within the education business plan

Overview of progress

Impact

Next steps - new actions included in business plan

Priority 4: Delivering effective young people and partnership provision, with a focus on lifelong learning and leisure/recreation provision to meet community need

Why this is a priority within the education business plan
Overview of progress
Impact
Next steps - new actions included in business plan

Priority 5: Enhancing the performance culture for Education and Leisure that delivers better educational outcomes and improved value for money

Why this is a priority within the education business plan
Overview of progress
Impact
Next steps - new actions included in business plan



Recommendations following the Estyn Inspection November 2022

R1 Improve the corporate leadership of education services			
Estyn Comments	Theme	Actions	Success Criteria
1.1 Whilst there have been some positive developments in provision for pupils with additional learning needs, the quality of planning for future provision is variable.	Inclusion and ALN	LMM - Visioning sessions LMM - Inclusion working group set up LMM/JS/LJ - and Vision revisited LMM/JS/LJ -Inclusion strategy created, based on the vision LMM/JS/JW - Planning for additional resource bases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear vision for inclusion which drives all planning • Key stakeholders drive inclusion planning • Inclusion strategy in place – short/mid- and long-term goals • Additional resource bases ensure no capacity issues in resource bases
1.2 Despite strengths in education services, corporate leaders have not ensured that their vision and strategic aims for education are fully understood by other officers, elected members, school staff and external partners.	Education vision	DMT/key LA officers - Revisit vision DMT/key LA officers - Visioning sessions DMT - Ensure vision underpins self-evaluation and improvement planning DMT - Increase visibility of vision e.g. email signatures, letter heads DMT - Ensure vision is shared with and understood by all key stakeholders e.g. Joint HT meetings, members briefing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear vision for education underpinned but clear purposes • Vision understood by all key stakeholders • Vision drives all improvement planning
1.3 Despite recent closer working between colleagues in education regarding the planning of provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN), data is not always used effectively enough to inform long-term planning. This is illustrated by the recent decision to increase capacity at a special school by nearly 40%.	ALN	LMM/JW/JS - Closer working between Inclusion and Transformation LMM/JS/JSi/CS - Closer working with Youth service, early years, ALN officer for EY, Health and Service Manager for Inclusion to inform future planning to inform decision making JS – Training on ALN Act for Health LMM/JS/LJ - Strategy for Inclusion developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement planning for inclusion is based on sharing of key data across service areas and wider stakeholders • Health colleagues have a clearer understanding of ALN Act to support their work with schools

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy for inclusion in place
1.4 Senior leaders have a suitable vision for inclusion and pupils with ALN. However, this is not yet supported by a clear strategy.	Inclusion and ALN	See 1.3	See 1.3
1.5 However, this vision is not communicated clearly or consistently enough by the corporate leadership team. As a result, the strategic direction for education is not sufficiently understood by all elected members, officers, or staff in schools.	Education vision	See 1.2	See 1.2

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R2 Improve the quality of self-evaluation, strategic planning and performance management			
Estyn Comments	Theme	Actions	Success Criteria
2.1 The corporate plan is not supported by coherent delivery plans for education that include related actions and measurable success criteria.	Business Planning	DMT - Revisit Business Plans, ensure actions relate to the vision, have clear timelines and measurable success criteria	The corporate plan is supported by Coherent business plans for education that include clear timelines, related actions and measurable success criteria
2.2 Overall, the quality of self-evaluation, planning for improvement, and performance management is not strong enough.	Self-Evaluation Business Planning	DMT - Self-evaluation joint working group half-termly DMT - Performance management – clear focus on accountability to Business Plan, and professional development opportunities JS – Training for Inclusion team on Fades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of self-evaluation is improved and uses relevant data effectively to enable informed improvement planning • Performance management is based on a performance coaching model, strong focus on accountability to business plan priorities and relevant professional development opportunities
2.3 The corporate priority and directorate vision for education are not coherently reflected in education plans.	Business Planning	See 2.1	See 2.1
2.4 The range of broad indicators in the corporate plan are not developed sufficiently into specific success criteria against relevant actions in education plans.	Performance Indicators	See 2.1	See 2.1
2.5 Disconnect between corporate and education plans tempers senior leaders' ability to hold officers to account for their work and	Business Planning	See 2.1 and 2.2	See 2.1 and 2.2

ensure an appropriate pace of improvement in identified areas.			
2.6 Plans do not always include suitable success criteria, and evaluations therefore focus too often on whether actions have been completed rather than the impact they have had on improving provision and outcomes for learners.	Self-Evaluation Reporting Impact	See 2.1	See 2.1
2.7 Senior managers have a better understanding of strengths and weaknesses in their services areas than is reflected in planning and self-evaluation documentation.	Business planning Self-Evaluation	See 2.1	See 2.1
2.8 Performance management targets are not consistently precise enough and do not always identify the specific aspects of practice that officers need to improve. As a result, performance management processes are not aligned consistently with evaluation and improvement work, and accountability does not always focus on the most important aspects of officers' work.	Performance Indicators Targets	See 2.2	See 2.2
2.9 Due to the weaknesses in evaluation across the directorate, members are not always provided with a clear enough picture of the strengths and areas for improvement across the directorate. This limits their ability to hold the local authority and the EAS to account for all aspects of their work.	Self-Evaluation	LP - Ensure developments in self-evaluation and business plans are clearly delivered to members through relevant reports/member briefings. LMM/MJ – Develop clearer processes for holding EAS to account for all aspects of their work. Information from these processes to be shared with members.	Members are provided with clear information on strengths and areas for improvement across the directorate. Members use the information to challenge and hold the education directorate and the EAS to account.

R3 Accelerate improvements in provision for secondary age pupils in schools causing concern			
Estyn Comments	Theme	Actions	Success Criteria
3.1 This work has greater impact for children in non-maintained and primary age settings than for young people in secondary age settings. Provision for young people was too slow to improve in two schools placed in statutory categories.	Schools Causing Concern – pace of change	LP - Re-issue of SWN to BFS, clear targets with measurable outcomes and time specific i.e. 2 terms	BFS are removed from a category
3.2 However, standards in the all-age school and the secondary school were judged to be adequate and unsatisfactory respectively, and both schools were placed in a statutory follow-up category. Although one of these schools has been removed from its category, both of these schools were slow to improve standards following their inspection.	Schools Causing Concern – pace of change	See 3.1	See 3.1
3.3 Two schools in the local authority require special measures currently, one secondary school and one special school, and one all-age school was removed from the category of needing significant improvement in February 2022. In two of these three schools, officers did not recognise important shortcomings or the need for school leaders to make significant improvements prior to these being identified by inspectors. The pace of improvement in these two schools has been too slow.	Schools Causing Concern – early identification	LP/LMM/MJ - Early identification through Professional Discussions, CSSR, Supported Self-evaluation, Wider group meetings, Partnership meetings, weekly directorate meetings with EAS Implementation of Team Around the School approach when issues identified	Important shortcomings in SCC schools are recognised early and appropriate support and challenge is put in place quickly. Clear monitoring systems of progress are put in place.

<p>3.4 Progress in these schools show that issues identified at the time of the inspections, particularly around the quality of teaching, are not being addressed quickly enough and impact on learners' progress for too long a period of time.</p>	<p>Schools Causing Concern – early identification</p>	<p>See 3.3</p>	<p>See 3.3</p>
<p>3.5 Officers do not monitor progress closely enough or ensure that school improvement partners set sufficiently precise and focused success criteria against which progress can be measured.</p>	<p>Schools Causing Concern – early identification</p>	<p>LMM/MJ – Develop clearer processes for holding EAS to account for all aspects of their work. LMM/MJ – Work with EAS to review and remodel SIP working</p>	<p>Important shortcomings in schools are recognised early and appropriate support and challenge is put in place quickly. Clear monitoring systems of progress are put in place.</p>
<p>3.6 In a few cases, the progress that schools causing concern make is too slow and the local authority is not sufficiently challenging school leaders, the work of EAS or holding its own officers to account for the impact of actions in these schools.</p>	<p>Schools Causing Concern – pace of change</p>	<p>LP/LMM – Overview of Performance Management of HTs LMM/MJ – Develop clearer processes for holding EAS to account for all aspects of their work. DMT - Performance management of LA officers</p>	<p>Pace of change in all schools is timely.</p>

Other			
Estyn Comments	Theme	Actions	Success Criteria
For the three years from 2017 to 2019, overall school attendance was consistently lower than the national average.	Attendance	DMT - Scrutiny of attendance data at DMT – identification of key themes, areas of good practice DMT - Performance management of relevant officers LA - Reinstate fines and CALICO, consistent approach JS/LA - Joint working with SEWC – sharing of good practice, implement strategies in schools JSi/LA - Joint termly meetings with secondary schools to discuss strategies to improve attendance etc.	School attendance is in line with or above national average. BG is in the second quartile or higher for attendance.
The rate of fixed-term school exclusions of five days or less was well above the national average, although the rate of fixed-term exclusions of more than five days was broadly in line with the national average.	Exclusions	DMT - Scrutiny of exclusions data at DMT – identification of key themes, areas of good practice LMM/JS – Introduction of additional nurture provision in schools with high levels of exclusions DMT - Performance management of relevant officers LA - Joint working with SEWC – sharing of good practice, implement strategies in schools JS – Vulnerable learner Panel to support reduction of pupils at risk of permanent exclusion. Review of managed move protocol. JSi/LA - Joint termly meetings with secondary schools to discuss strategies to improve attendance etc.	The rate of fixed term exclusions is in line with or better than the national average. Fixed term exclusions continue to improve in line with the national average or better.
When given the opportunity, children and young people in the authority influence decisions that affect them.	Pupil voice	LMM/LF/ES - Continue to develop the work of Pupil Voice forums which impact on decision making e.g. Youth Forum. Ensure feedback from Pupil Voice Forums informs self-evaluation and improvement planning	Children and young people are provided with increased opportunities to influence decisions that affect them.
The local authority has recently developed new 'positive relationships and behaviour' guidance and a 'relationships (anti-bullying)' policy, although there was limited involvement of schools and learners in developing these.	Inclusion	LMM/JS/MJ - Inclusion Working Group to review all Inclusion Policies Inclusion Policies to be reshared with schools/governing bodies	Key stakeholders shape revised inclusion policies.

<p>The local authority has improved its work in this area by purchasing a safeguarding information management system for every school that is being used to record and report incidents and related pupil demographics at school level and collate this information centrally. It is too early to evaluate how well the local authority and its schools are using this system.</p>	<p>Safeguarding</p>	<p>MJ - DMT progress report. Monthly officer meeting to progress My Concern matters. My Concern School / officer working group established. Project plan revised for next stages of implementation</p>	<p>My Concern is used by all schools to effectively record and report incidents, including safeguarding, bullying and RPIs. The LA uses My Concern reports to effectively monitor data, and to inform improvement planning.</p>
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<p>The range of useful support services to promote positive relationships in schools and communities means that exclusions are low in many schools, although a few schools still have high exclusion rates.</p>	<p>Safeguarding</p>	<p>JS - Evaluate the impact of additional funding for schools with high exclusion rates to provide additional Nurture provision MJ/SD - Safeguarding Performance report to comment upon the impact that additional funding has upon school exclusion rates</p>	<p>The rate of fixed term exclusions is line with or better than the national average. Fixed term exclusions continue to improve in line with the national average or better.</p>
<p>Information and communication technology (ICT) in schools. However, the engagement of headteachers in this strategy was variable and the strategy is generally not well understood. In addition, despite many appropriate actions to improve connectivity and developments in relation to ICT, there is no clear ICT strategy.</p>	<p>ICT</p>	<p>JW - Bring together range of ICT initiatives into one clear strategy Ensure HT representation in relevant ICT meetings Feedback to HTs in Joint Headteacher meeting on ICT strategy MJ - The implementation of My Concern</p>	<p>Clear ICT strategy in place which is co-constructed with key stakeholders, including headteachers. ICT strategy is understood by all key stakeholders.</p>
<p>The local authority has established useful resource bases in several mainstream schools for pupils with additional learning needs. In some cases, these resource bases helped to address surplus places in the mainstream schools, but as the number of pupils in mainstream classes in these schools has increased, a few schools are now struggling for space.</p>	<p>Transformation</p>	<p>LMM./JW/JS - Review of resource bases JW - Review of school capacity</p>	<p>The LA has appropriate Resource Bases in place that meet the needs of BG learners, including in Welsh medium. School capacity issues are resolved.</p>
<p>However, the ongoing monitoring of these Resource Base provisions is inconsistent. There are very few references to these provisions in notes of visit from school improvement partners. Where they are referenced, comments made are too limited to be of any value to the local authority and rarely evaluate the impact of provision on pupils' progress.</p>	<p>Inclusion and school improvement</p>	<p>JS/MJ - EAS to undertake review of Resource Base provision through SIP work Autumn 2022. Supported Self-evaluation activities undertaken by the EAS in schools with resource bases to be undertaken by Inclusion LA officer and SIP JS – review entry and exit criteria for Resource Bases</p>	<p>Review of resource bases completed and used to effectively inform improvement planning. Revised entrance and exit criteria for Resource Bases in school.</p>

<p>The local authority does not analyse its use of out-of-county settings well enough to understand the implications for its capacity to meet the needs of pupils locally.</p>	<p>Inclusion and ALN</p>	<p>JS - Analysis of out of county settings undertaken, spreadsheet created where all relevant data can be analysed.</p>	<p>Analysis of out of county placements enables clear planning for placements, and reduces potential risks linked to finance.</p>
<p>However, the local authority does not have a strategic enough approach to planning or evaluating the impact of professional learning across the directorate.</p>	<p>Professional Learning</p>	<p>DMT - Professional Learning a core part of Professional Coaching meetings. Professional Learning opportunities link to Business planning and or LA officer's portfolio</p>	<p>The LA plans and evaluates the impact of professional learning across the directorate effectively.</p>

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Agenda Item 6

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 25.04.23

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 25.04.23

Committee: **Cabinet**

Date of meeting: **3rd May 2023**

Report Subject: **Corporate Director of Education Services Annual Performance Report 2022/23**

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

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

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)
13/3/23	16/3/23	21.04.23			28.04.23	03.05.23		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to present the Corporate Director of Education's Annual Performance Report covering the 2022/23 period 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 The report will be considered by the People Scrutiny Committee on 28th April 2023 and any comments will be provided verbally to Cabinet.

3.3 Option 1

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

Option 2

To consider and accept the report as presented.

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 this annual report has been 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 March 2023.

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 In a previous People Scrutiny Committee meeting, Members requested that the performance report and associated data was shared in a more user-friendly manner. Consequently, the Education Directorate has worked with the Corporate Performance team to produce a revised report format with a greater emphasis on infographics to highlight performance across the board. This approach is still under-development and Members views would be welcomed to inform the next iteration of the report. The attached performance report covers the following aspects of performance:

- Foreword
- The Shape of Our Place
- Director's Overview & Reflections on 2022/23
- Local, Political Leadership, Governance & Accountability
- Inspection of Blaenau Gwent Local Government Education Services
- The Education Improvement Plan updates against the 5 priorities
- Effective Service Delivery
- How People are Shaping our Services
- Our Future Direction

6.3 The Education Directorate's 5 priorities outlined in the Education Improvement Plan (EIP) are outlined overleaf. 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:

- **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**.

6.5 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).

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 which 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 & Leisure Services

Annual Performance Report



April 2022-March 2023

'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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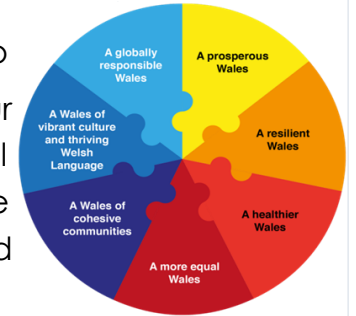
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Foreword

Why this is important - Improving the quality and provision of teaching and learning is vitally important to ensure we are achieving ambitious outcomes for all children and young people. We will continue to invest in our education services and present service activity which highlights how we are contributing to the Council's overall aim of delivering all seven national well-being goals. These goals are set out within The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 which is legislation aiming to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The vision of this legislation is expressed in the seven National well-being goals.



The Act also puts a duty on public bodies to apply the **sustainable development principles** which states they 'must meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. The sustainable development principle is made up of the following five ways of working, pictured below:



Integration



Collaboration



Involvement



Long Term



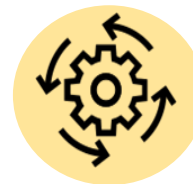
Prevention

Throughout this report some areas of performance that meet these ways of working are demonstrated by the above images.

The Purpose of this report - To present service activity for the period, detailing achievements and challenges aligned to the priority areas identified in the Corporate Plan 2022/27, which are to :



Maximise learning and skills for all to create a prosperous, thriving, resilient Blaenau Gwent



An ambitious and innovative council delivering quality services at the right time and in the right place



Respond to the nature and climate crisis and enable connected communities

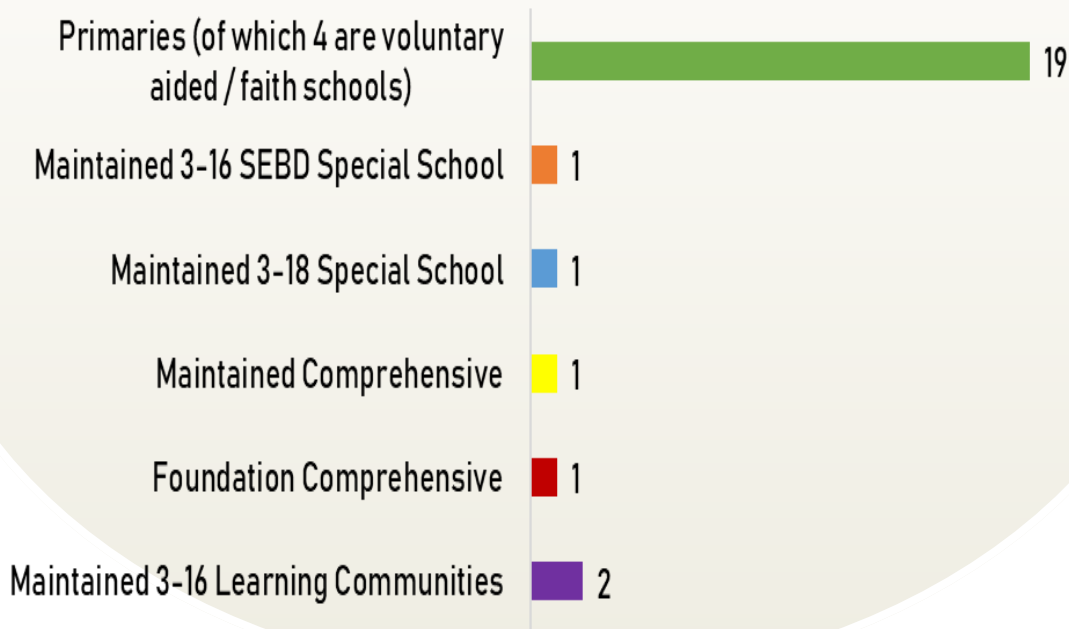


Empowering and supporting communities to be safe, independent and resilient

The Shape of Our Place -

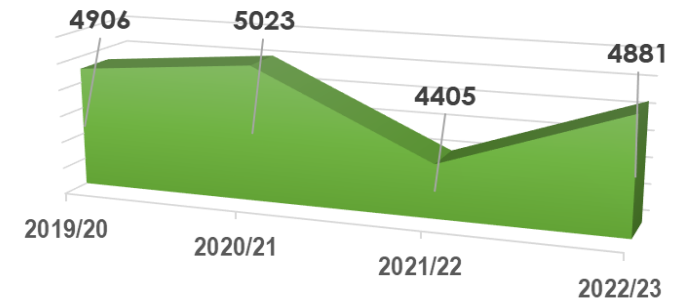
Blaenau Gwent is a place of heritage and dramatic change, with a sense of its past but its eyes firmly on the future. The area is relatively small geographically, being at most 15 miles north to south, and 8 miles east to west. Blaenau Gwent is defined physically by high hillsides dividing the three 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, it is a largely rural area. Wherever you are, beautiful countryside is never far away.

Blaenau Gwent has 25 schools across 31 school sites and There are currently circa 9,000+ pupils on roll across all Blaenau Gwent schools.

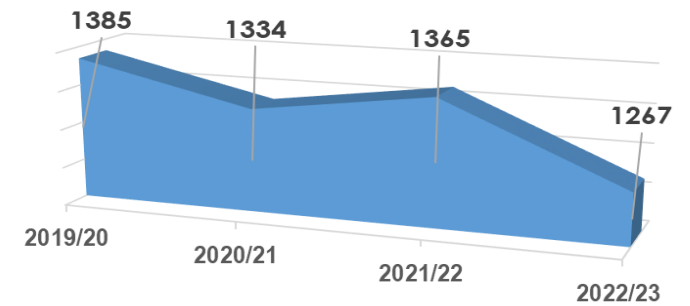


Number of pupils on roll in each categorisation of school. Note: 2022/23 figures are as at 27th January 2023

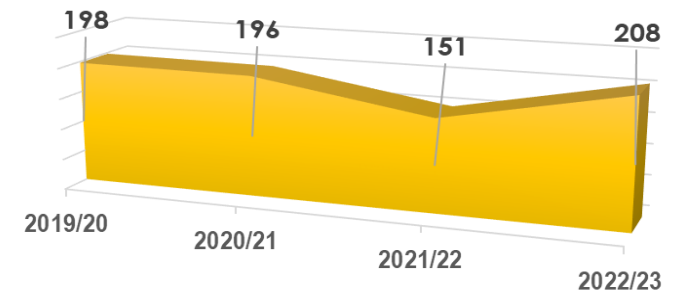
Number of Pupils on roll in Primary Schools



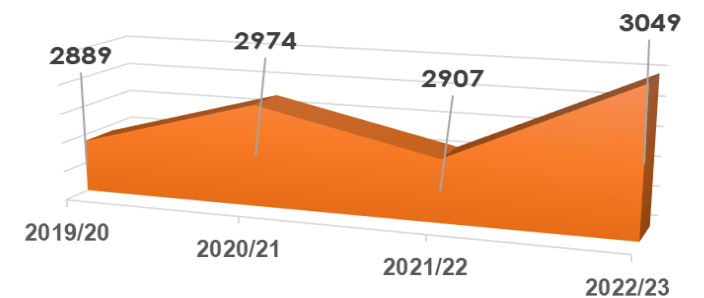
Number of Pupils on roll in Secondary



Number of Pupils on roll in Special Schools



Number of Pupils on roll in Middle School



The Shape of Our Place (continued)-

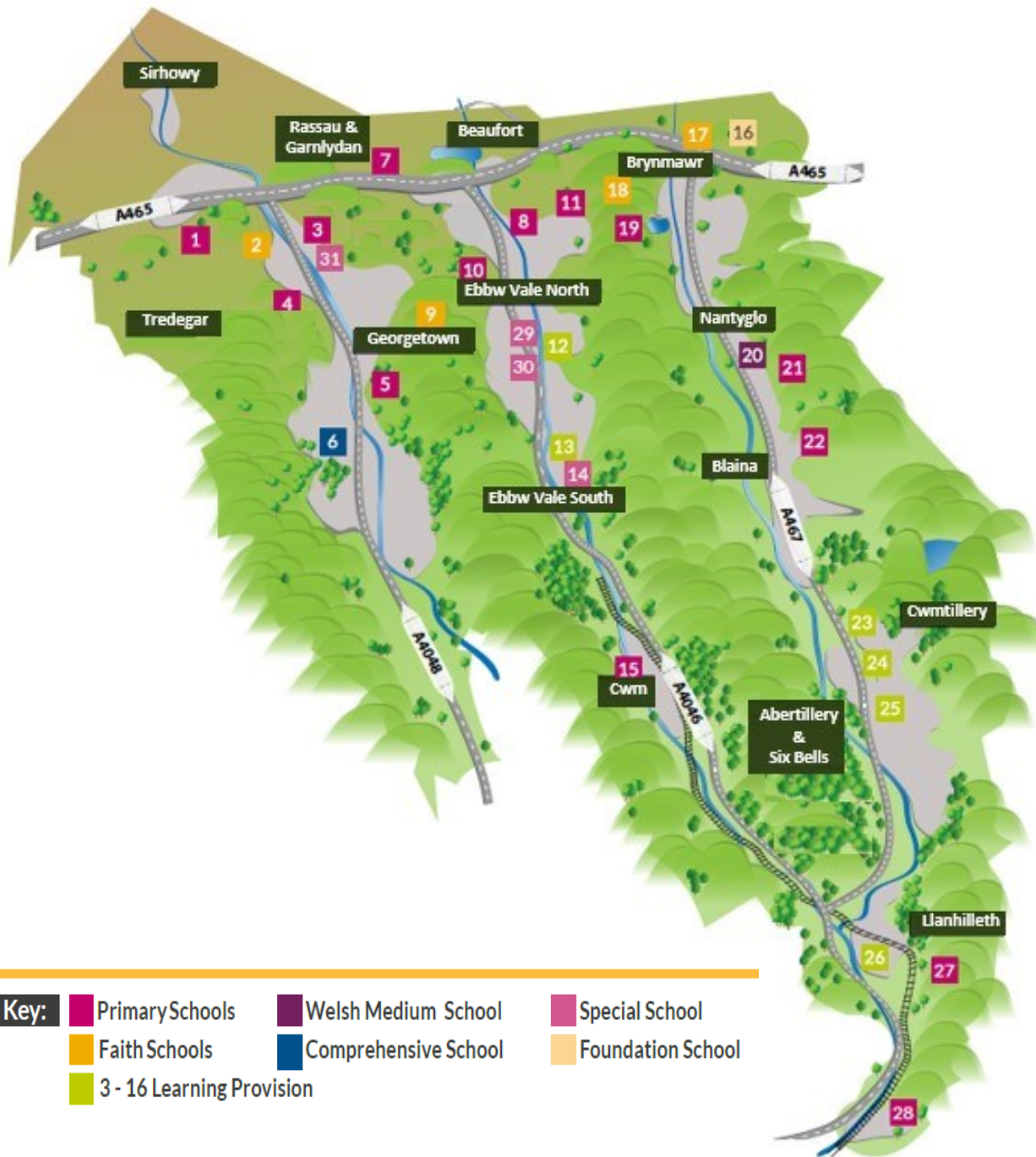
The Education Directorate provides services to support children and young people's educational learning opportunities whilst working collaboratively with our schools and the Aneurin Leisure and Awen Trust in a Council client function role. The Education Directorate has developed a new purpose statement, which is to deliver '**Better Schools, Better Citizens and Better Communities**'. The Education Workforce Plan 2021-26 contributes to the purpose by prioritising key strategic and operational activity to support our workforce at all levels.

The plan covers the Directorate's three main aspects of core service delivery, namely:

- School Improvement and Inclusion;
- Education Transformation and Business Change; and,
- Young People and Partnerships.

And includes a workforce Profile for the Directorate.

Location of Schools



- 1 Brynbach Primary School
- 2 St Joseph's RC School
- 3 Glanhowy Primary School
- 4 Deighton Primary School
- 5 Georgetown Primary School
- 6 Tredegar Comprehensive School
- 7 Rhos y Fedwen Primary School
- 8 Glyncoed Primary School
- 9 All Saint's RC School
- 10 Willowtown Primary School
- 11 Beaufort Hill Primary School
- 12 Ebbw Fawr Learning Community Secondary Phase
- 13 Ebbw Fawr Learning Community Primary Phase
- 14 Pen Y Cwm Special School
- 15 Cwm Primary School
- 16 Brynmawr Foundation School
- 17 St Mary's Church in Wales School
- 18 St Mary's Roman Catholic School
- 19 Blaenycwm Primary School
- 20 Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg
- 21 Coed y Garn Primary School
- 22 Ystruth Primary School
- 23 Abertillery Learning Community - Roseheyworth Road Campus
- 24 Abertillery Learning Community - Secondary Campus
- 25 Abertillery Learning Community - Tillery Street Campus
- 26 Abertillery Learning Community - Six Bells Campus
- 27 St Illtyds Primary School
- 28 Sofrydd Primary School
- 29 River Centre 3-16 Learning Community - Secondary Campus
- 30 River Centre 3-16 Learning Community - Primary Campus
- 31 River Centre 3-16 Learning Community - House

Director's overview and reflections on 2022/23.

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 (Strategic Aims) - under review

- 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 (Business Plan) – 5 Priorities, supporting delivery of the Corporate priority areas identified in the Corporate Plan 2022/27 (detailed on page 3)

- **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**.

Reflections on 2022/23

This report demonstrates how the Education Directorate contributes to the team (the council as a whole) aim of delivering our corporate priorities.

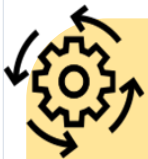
Director's overview & reflections on 2022/23 (continued)

Throughout the body of the report you will find examples of performance, both positive achievements and areas that we continue to focus on improving. We recognise that even the achievements are not yet completed but remain areas for progress to be maintained and improved upon where possible.

You will find some examples of these performance outcomes below and how they are supporting delivery of our corporate objectives



As a council we are looking to '**Maximise learning and skills for all to create a prosperous, thriving, resilient Blaenau Gwent**'. To support this, the Education Directorate aim to ensure that all children and young people are given the best start in life, enabling them to grow into fruitful adults living a healthy, fulfilling life whilst contributing to society and forming a valuable part of their community. We deliver this by ensuring higher levels of language acquisition and reading across the board, and overall enabling positive outcomes and attainment. We support children and young people to be in a good position to find skills and employment at the appropriate times and our NEET figures demonstrate our achievements in this area. The monitoring of school attendance and exclusion numbers is key to understand potential barriers to learning. This is one area that needs further work and something that we will be analysing in much greater depth. The number of eFSM are also increasing, again an area for further analysis and action. Our long term aim is to decrease the percentage of adults aged 16-24 with no qualifications and we are progressing well with achieving this reduction. We ensure that effective digital communication methods and systems are in place for both staff and pupils. Digital development will provide children and young people with opportunities to learn in these fast advancing digital times that we live in. As shown in the body of the report internal systems are being updated to move towards more online communication and ICT methods for both new school and existing school settings delivered through our Sustainable Communities for learning .



As a council we are looking to be '**an ambitious and innovative council delivering quality services at the right time and in the right place**'. To support this, the Education Directorate aim to deliver effective and efficient services within financial constraints. The Local Authority has a track record of spending within its education budget in recent years, with relatively small underspends for the past three years against the overall education budget. The financial outlook, however, for the public sector will be challenging over the period of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and close financial management will be essential to achieve value for money. The Education Directorate wants to drive forward the right leadership approaches, right staffing capacity, people with the right skills/capabilities and the right forward planning to prepare for the future needs of the service. DBS compliance sits at 100% for the Directorate which is extremely positive. The Directorate sickness absence levels have been reported as 7.10 days per Full Time Equivalent (FTE) which has come well under the Local Authority Corporate target of 10 days per FTE. It is recognised that one of the main strategic risks identified for the directorate is dependency on external funding to support key services and the workforce, such as Welsh Government Additional Learning Needs Reform funding, European Social Funding legacy work and the 21st Century Schools Programme.

Director's overview and reflections on 2022/23 (continued)



As a council we are looking to '**empower and support communities to be safe, independent and resilient**'. To deliver this, the Education Directorate support children and young people's educational learning opportunities whilst working collaboratively with the Aneurin Leisure and Awen Trust in a Council client function role, with an aim to ensure that all children and young peoples well-being and educational needs are catered for. The 2023 Estyn report of the Local Authority confirms that "Officers and elected members are committed to safeguarding young people in their local authority and there is an appropriate safeguarding culture within the local authority where all officers and elected members receive suitable safeguarding training. The way in which education and children's services work together has contributed well to improving multi-agency working and the support schools receive to manage the needs of pupils and their families more effectively." In school counselling services and youth support services are in place and working well. Our dedicated staff and the implementation of integrated systems and processes assist in preparing our children and young people for the world as safe, independent and resilient members of society.



As a council we are looking to '**Respond to the nature and climate crisis and enable connected communities**'. To support this, the Education Directorate aim to ensure that decarbonisation measures are at the forefront of our future planning and teaching. The environment and biodiversity considerations form the basis of all new school buildings and existing school upgrades and we encourage nature friendly management on school grounds. Effective partnership working enables us to provide advice and guidance to support our children and young people around biodiversity, decarbonisation, equalities, diversity and inclusion. These partnerships with schools and the Children's Grand Council are very effective and not only inform but support our children and young people to have a voice. We are and will continue to deliver effective sustainable communities for learning which are environmentally friendly and support the delivery of our educated young people who will in the future form our connected communities.



Lynn Phillips
Director of
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 Internal Planning framework to the right demonstrates how reporting and monitoring works throughout the Council to create this 'golden thread'.

Progress against actions

This report is broken down into the Directorate priority areas previously detailed in the 'Director's Overview' on page 7.

The following overview pages and case studies detail our performance for the period along with some associated achievements and challenges aligned to supporting delivery of the corporate priority areas identified in the Corporate Plan 2022/27,

Planning Framework

Corporate	<p>Well-being Plan Partnership plan for Blaenau Gwent reported to Partnership Scrutiny Committee</p>
Corporate	<p>The Council's Corporate Plan These are the priorities of the Council and form its business plan – reported to Corporate Overview and Performance Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet</p>
Corporate	<p>Finance and Performance Report Councils performance monitoring report (supported by the information in this report) reported to Corporate Overview and Performance Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet</p>
Directorate	<p>Education Six Monthly and Annual Performance Report Report of the Director of Education reported to People Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet and Council</p>
Director, Head of Service & Team Manager	<p>Business Planning and Self- Evaluation Updated quarterly includes – priorities, actions, risk, projects, PI's and FEP monitoring</p>
Individuals	<p>Performance Coaching Individuals have monthly and annual coaching using the business plans</p>

Inspection of Blaenau Gwent Local Government Education Service

At the end of 2022, Blaenau Gwent Council was subject to an Estyn inspection with the three inspection areas being :-

- 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

Inspection of Blaenau Gwent Local Government Education Service

Following the full inspection week, the Council received initial feedback and findings from the Inspection team (2nd December 2022). This was followed up by a draft and receipt of the final report, which included the inspectorate findings and that identified 3 recommendations for improvement. The full report also details the inspectorate's findings against the 4 local questions. The main findings, included:-

- The local authority has made good progress with its education services since it was last inspected around ten years ago as important areas for improvement have largely been addressed. Senior officers and elected members have a strong commitment to education, and this is reflected in the funding given to schools and education services.
- The local authority generally plans well to make sure that it has suitable education provision to meet the needs of every child and young person. Over the past decade, the local authority has successfully reduced surplus places in schools and improved the conditions of its school buildings. The local authority is suitably developing its Welsh-medium education provision. However, whilst there have been some positive developments in provision for pupils with additional learning needs, the quality of planning for future provision is variable.
- There are many strengths in the local authority's work to reduce the impact of deprivation on educational outcomes and its support for families in low-income households. There are also many strengths in the services to support children and young people's well-being and promote positive relationships.
- The authority has worked with its regional school improvement service to strengthen the challenge and support it provides to schools. This work has greater impact for children in non-maintained and primary age settings than for young people in secondary age settings. Provision for young people was too slow to improve in two schools placed in statutory categories.
- Despite strengths in education services, corporate leaders have not ensured that their vision and strategic aims for education are fully understood by other officers, elected members, school staff and external partners. Also, corporate leaders have not ensured that the corporate plan is supported by coherent delivery plans for education that include related actions and measurable success criteria. Overall, the quality of self-evaluation, planning for improvement, and performance management is not strong enough.

The inspectorate has identified 3 recommendations for improvement that the local authority will use to drive forward progress. These areas for development take account of shortcomings identified through the inspection process. The local authority's plans are being updated and the Education Improvement Plan (EIP) and Self-Evaluation Report (SER) being revised. Importantly, developmental work has already begun on addressing the recommendations that are outlined below:

- R1. Improve the corporate leadership of education services;
- R2. Improve the quality of self-evaluation, strategic planning and performance management; and,
- R3. Accelerate improvements in provision for secondary age pupils in schools causing concern.

Inspection of Blaenau Gwent Local Government Education Service

Blaenau Gwent Council has welcomed an Estyn report into its education services which shows that the authority has made good progress since its last inspection and that important areas for improvement have been addressed.

Estyn carried out their inspection over several days in late November/early December, and engaged with schools, children and young people, parents and other key stakeholders.

The final report recognised a strong commitment to education by senior officers and councillors; good planning to ensure the educational needs of all learners are met; the growth of Welsh medium education and, pleasingly, the council's work to support vulnerable learners and families in the community through its anti-poverty agenda and school support services.

There are areas that the inspectorate identified for improvement, including 3 recommendations. The Council is proactively responding to the report's findings, including ensuring the vision and aims for education are shared more widely across the authority; improving self-evaluation, improvement planning and performance management; and accelerating improvements in any schools causing concern.

Councillor Sue Edmunds, Blaenau Gwent Council's Cabinet Member for People & Education says:

"We welcome Estyn's report into our Education services, which recognises the overall progress made and our continued commitment to providing the very best educational opportunities and well-being tools to enhance the life chances of our children and young people.

"We are working hard to continue improving the quality of our service and we are determined to move forward with our vision for "Better Schools; Better Citizens; and Better Communities.

"We acknowledge the recommendations made by the inspectorate on how we can further improve and look forward to building on the good work already started in these areas."



You can read the Estyn report in full [here](#).



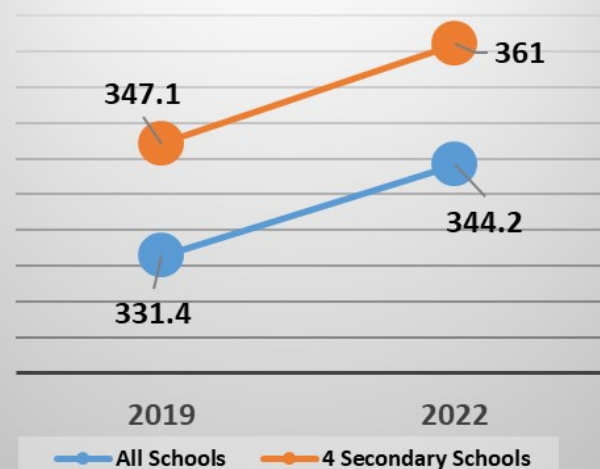


Improve outcomes and well-being for pupils, particularly at KS4

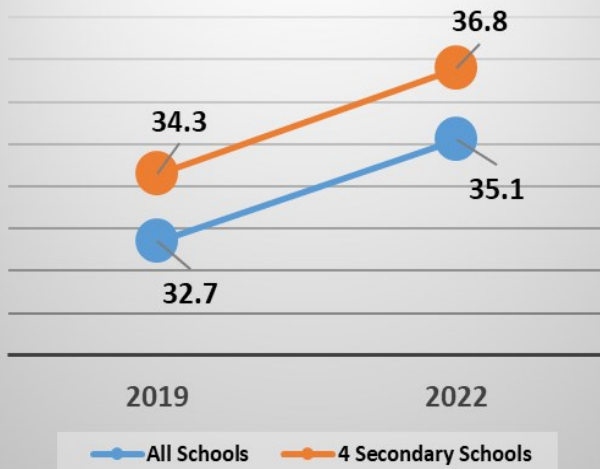


The **2022 KS4 results were positive** and in line with the School Development Plan targets set by the 4 secondary settings. There were improvements in 29 out of 32 key measures. Some examples are shown below :-
(Note: only 2019 and 2022 comparison data shown due to routine data collection suspended / 2022 data included for self-evaluation purposes only)

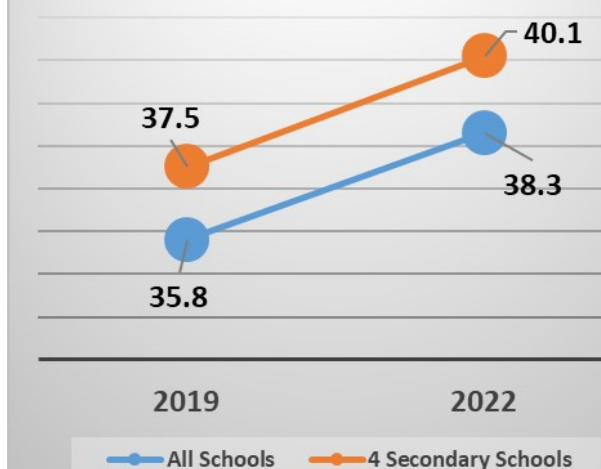
Capped 9



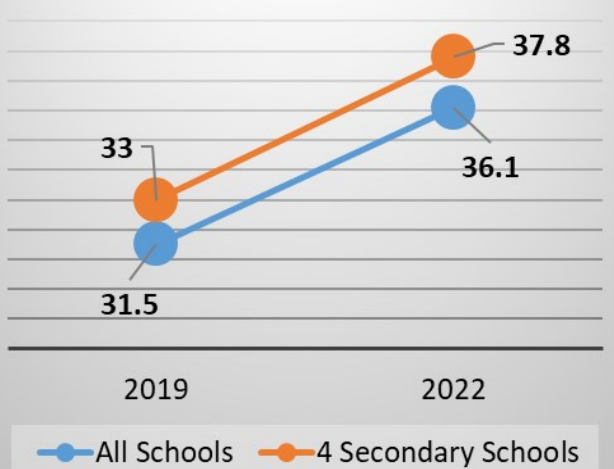
Numeracy Measure



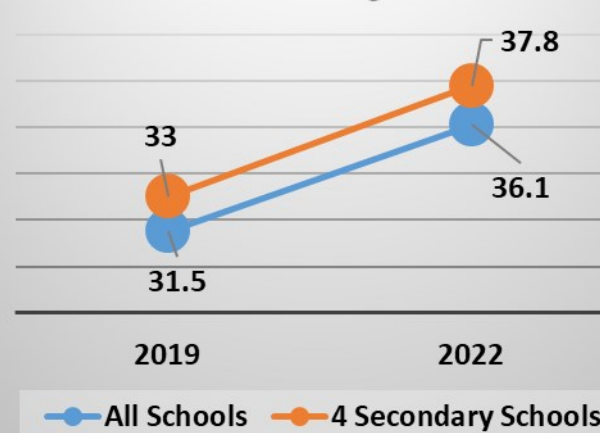
Literacy Measure



Science Measure



Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge

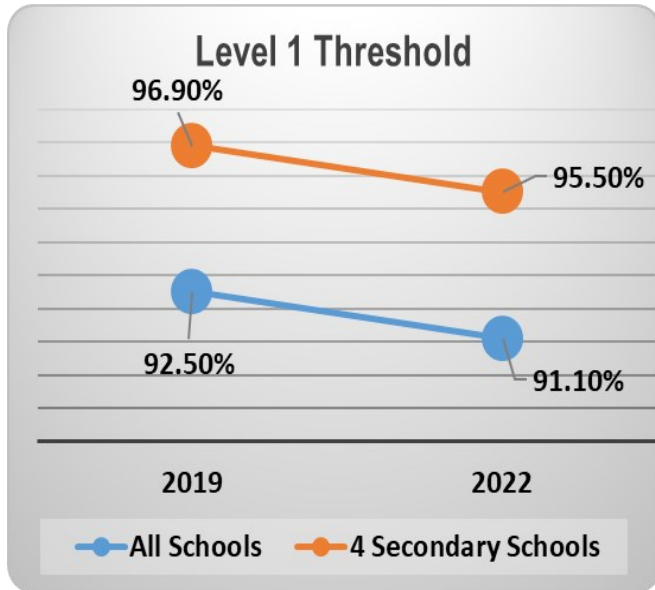


IMPROVED PERFORMANCE IN ALL 4 SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THESE KEY AREAS





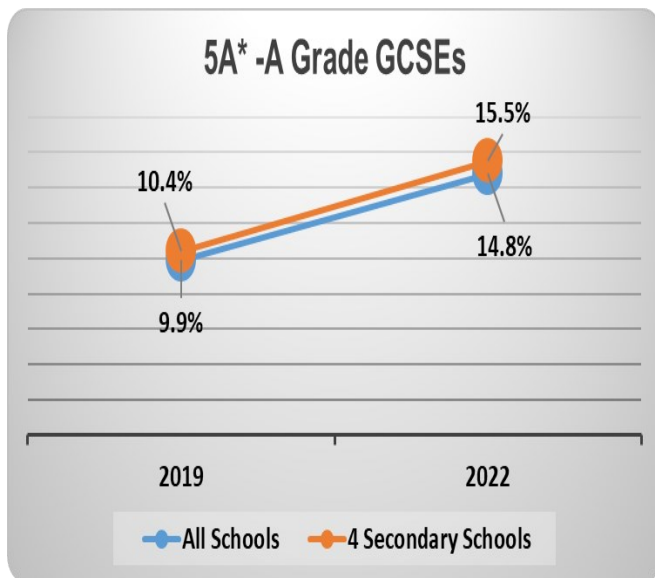
Improve outcomes and well-being for pupils, particularly at KS4



Blaenau Gwent continue to deliver a number of services that offer support for young people aged 11-25 who at risk of becoming or are currently not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). 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.

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Level 2 inclusive is Blaenau Gwent's best performance.



Going forward we will monitor and ensure the pace of change in school's causing concern is improved.

We have seen a **reduction** in **Schools Causing Concern** from **6 schools in 2019** to only **2 schools in 2022.**



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 Blaenau Gwent learners at Coleg Gwent settings.



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The Youth Service is established as an **accreditation centre** with Youth Workers also providing support for parents of Elected Home Education (EHE) young people wanting to deliver units.

Currently has contact with **18 EHE young people**, to provide a link with the service.

An **Induction Programme** for new headteachers and aspiring deputy headteachers has been delivered over 5 days with a range of areas covered including safeguarding, equalities and Inclusion.

Very positive feedback from participants.

A number of Blaenau Gwent senior leaders have applied for the 'aspiring headteacher' programme.



Schools continue to work with the Education Directorate to provide ideas and challenge on school improvement and inclusion, including on value for money.

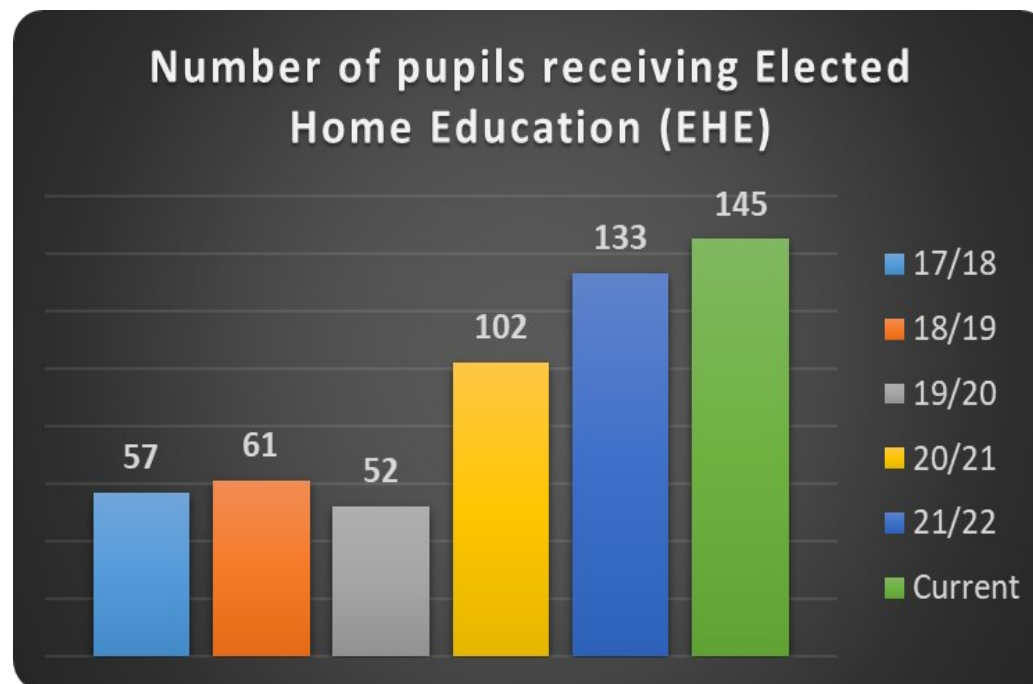


Elected Home Education within Blaenau Gwent

As demonstrated in the chart there has been an increase in the number of home educated children within Blaenau Gwent over the past few years. Elected Home Education (EHE) pupils continue to be supported by the Education Welfare Service, however this needs to be monitored closely going forward to ensure that the number of visits increase in line with the above.

There are currently 145 pupils on the EHE database (16/02/23) compared to 137 for the same period last year. This is an increase of 5.8%.

Twenty-nine of these pupils are from the Gypsy Roma Traveller Community (GRT).



Between 1st September 2022 and 16th February 2023, 38 children became EHE. Thirty of these were secondary aged; seven were primary age and one a reception age child whose mum intends to keep her home schooled.

Seven children were from schools outside of the Local Authority, seven children were from Ebbw Fawr Learning Community, 6 from Tredegar and 6 from Brynmawr.

Of the above, 22 learners decided to return to school and 6 were issued with attendance orders due to adequate home education requirements not being fulfilled and also returned to school within the stated time.



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



In addition to Welsh Government funding allocated directly to schools to support with the implementation of **ALN reforms**, the Council has also been allocated **additional funding of £215,000**. This is to provide high quality education and to improve pupil outcomes for all learners with an Additional Learning Need. The funding will focus on **improving additional learning provision, increased provision for complex needs and mental health and wellbeing support**.



Pen-y-Cwm and River Centre secondary site remodelling is now **underway**. Further work to increase capacity forms part of mid-term and long-term plans.



Current Work at Pen-y-Cwm is subject to investment circa £150,000.



This will reinstate specialist areas and includes the development of de-escalation spaces in 12 classrooms, renewing sensory equipment and developing the outdoor provision to include a hobbit house

Model photos showing examples of de-escalation space and hobbit house





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



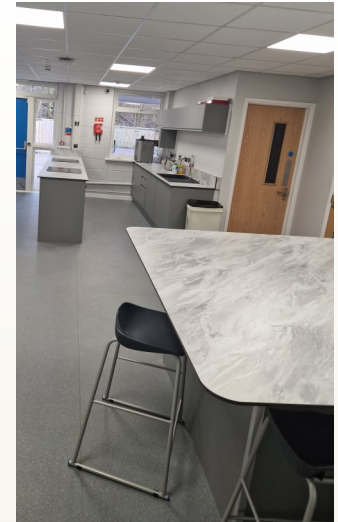
Better links have been developed **with early years and health**, and a more comprehensive **tracking tool is being created** in order to improve the tracking of pupils with Additional Learning Needs **to ensure better planning of provision.**



Current remodelling of The River Centre Secondary Campus is subject to **investment circa £450,000.**



The campus will undertake a complete refurb — which includes 3 extra classrooms including sensory provision, new furniture, home economics and independent living area, outdoor muga and gym.

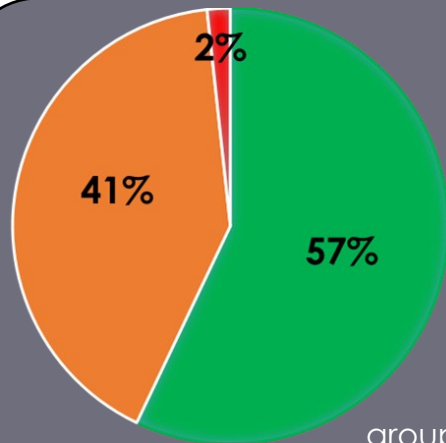


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Securing quality ALN/Inclusion provision, particularly to support Vulnerable groups of learners and those who are eFSM



Additional Learning Needs implementation Review - A questionnaire was sent to all schools in Blaenau Gwent in order for them to identify where they feel more support is needed in terms of processes under the new Additional Learning Needs legislation. 16 questions were asked and the schools scored each area based on a Green, Amber, Red categorisation.

25 questionnaires were sent and 17 returned

numerous areas for development within schools.

The chart details the response breakdown.

We (the LA) support this identified development via ALN cluster groups and offering support to ALNCoS via the ALN/ Inclusive Practice Service

The identified 'Red' areas relate to the opportunity for delivery of review meetings in the medium of Welsh



Inclusion policies, strategies and processes in the current form have been distributed to governing bodies for all schools. Policies translated to be in the **Welsh language** also to provide equity in our schools



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.

This represents the highest level of all Local Authorities In Wales as has been the case for the past 10 years

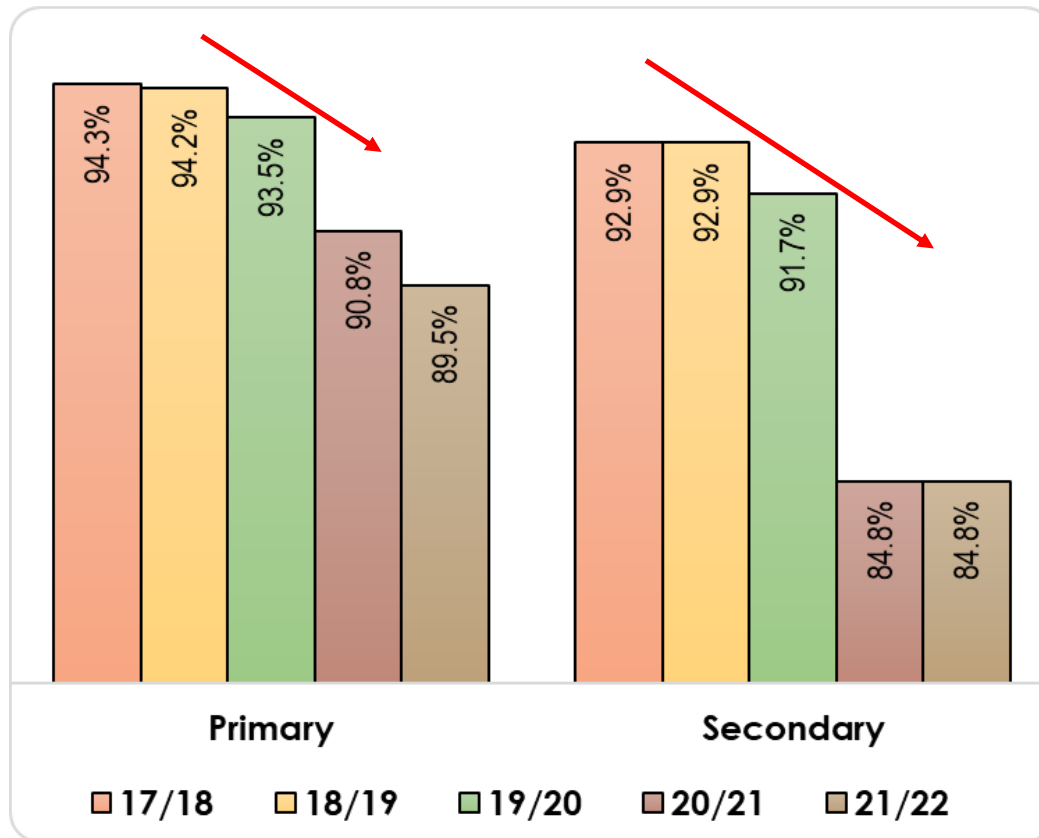




Securing quality ALN/Inclusion provision, particularly to support Vulnerable groups of learners and those who are eFSM



Joint meetings between Head teachers, senior Education Welfare Officer and Youth Service Manager have taken place with secondary schools to support improving attendance and reducing exclusions. Further analysis will take place in order to identify the reason for decline and put mitigating actions in place.



Three of our primary schools have been supported to set up a **nurture provision** to support pupils with wellbeing issues, often as a result of returning to school after significant periods of blended learning as a result of Covid. There are increasing numbers of pupils with attachment concerns, which are exhibiting themselves in behaviours such as outbursts of frustration or school avoidance. Since the implementation of the Nurture (**Cwch**) model, exclusions in these schools has reduced. We aim to share the experience in the spring term with all other schools as a model of good practice.



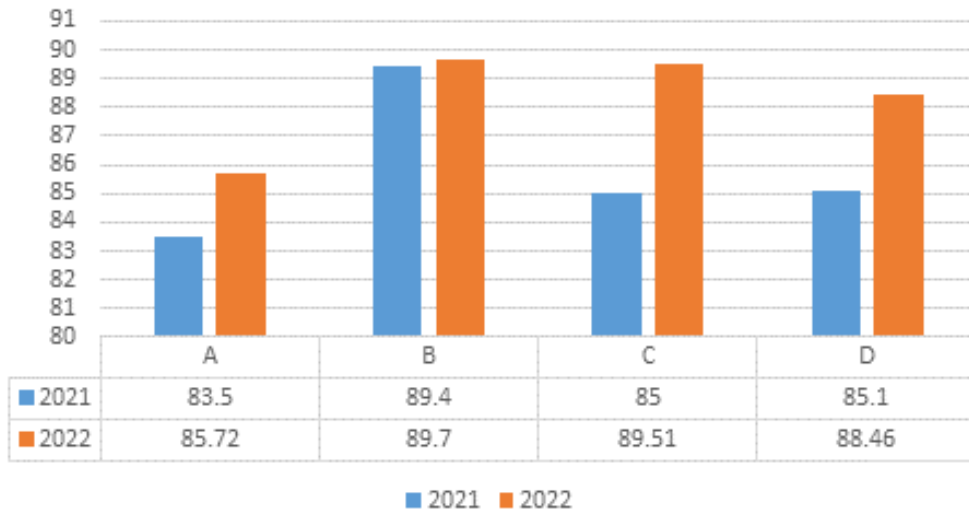
Attendance/exclusions are mirroring the national upward/downward trends.



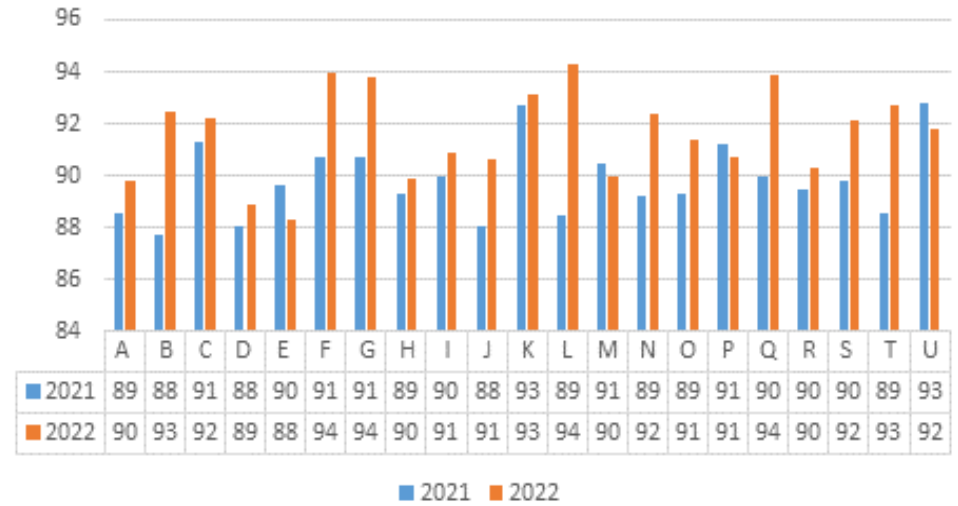
Securing quality ALN/Inclusion provision, particularly to support Vulnerable groups of learners and those who are eFSM



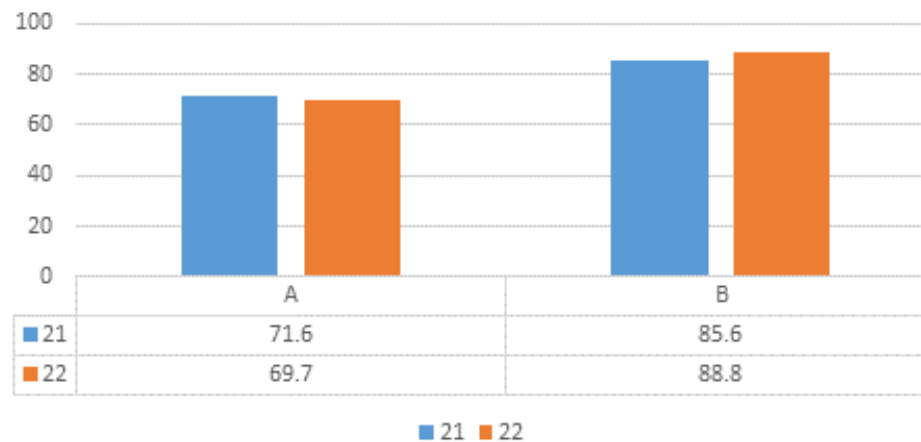
Secondary Attendance Data w/e 25th November



Primary Attendance Data w/e 25th November



Special School Attendance Data w/e 25th November





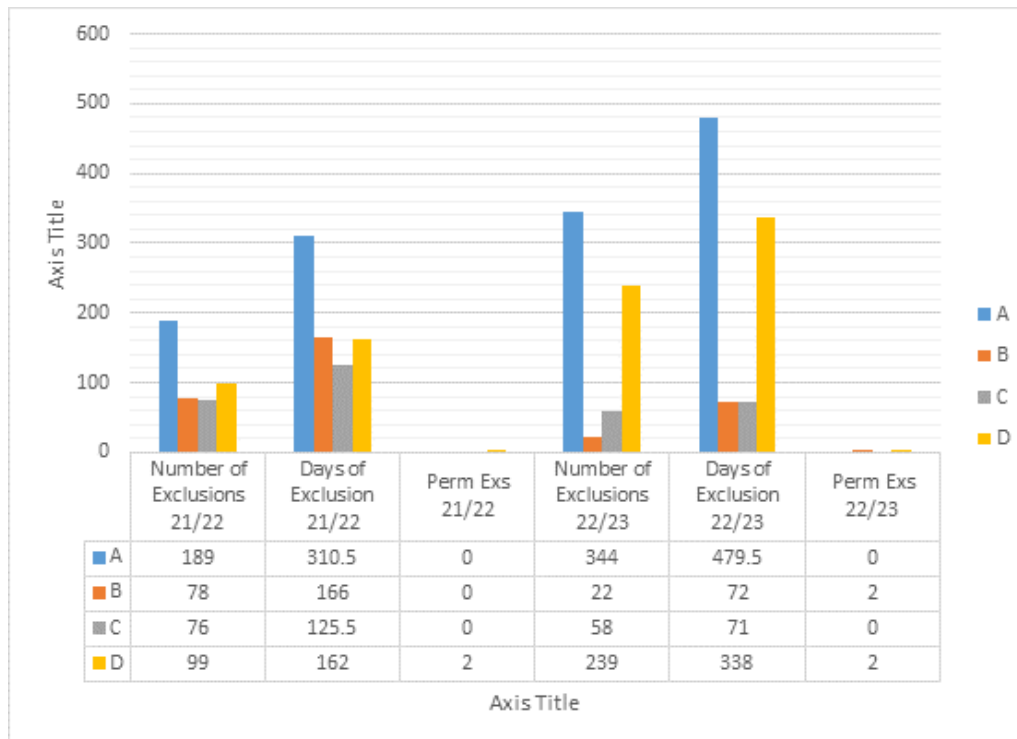
Securing quality ALN/Inclusion provision, particularly to support Vulnerable groups of learners and those who are eFSM



The exclusion data below is showing the increase for the period 2nd September 2022 to the 10th March 2023 when compared to the same period last year. However, similar patterns of increases are being experienced by LAs across Wales post COVID.

Data analysis	Number of Exclusions (Increase)	Days of Exclusion (Increase)	Perm Exclusion (Increase)
Secondary	221	196.5	4
Primary	8	36	0
Special Schools	2	20.5	0
Increase/Decrease	231	253	4

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Secondary Exclusions (Period above 2nd Sept – 10th March)

School A and School D have both increased the number of their exclusions and the days lost to exclusions, whilst schools B and C have seen a reduction. The Education Welfare Service are working closely with the schools experiencing an increase in order to address the reasons behind exclusion.

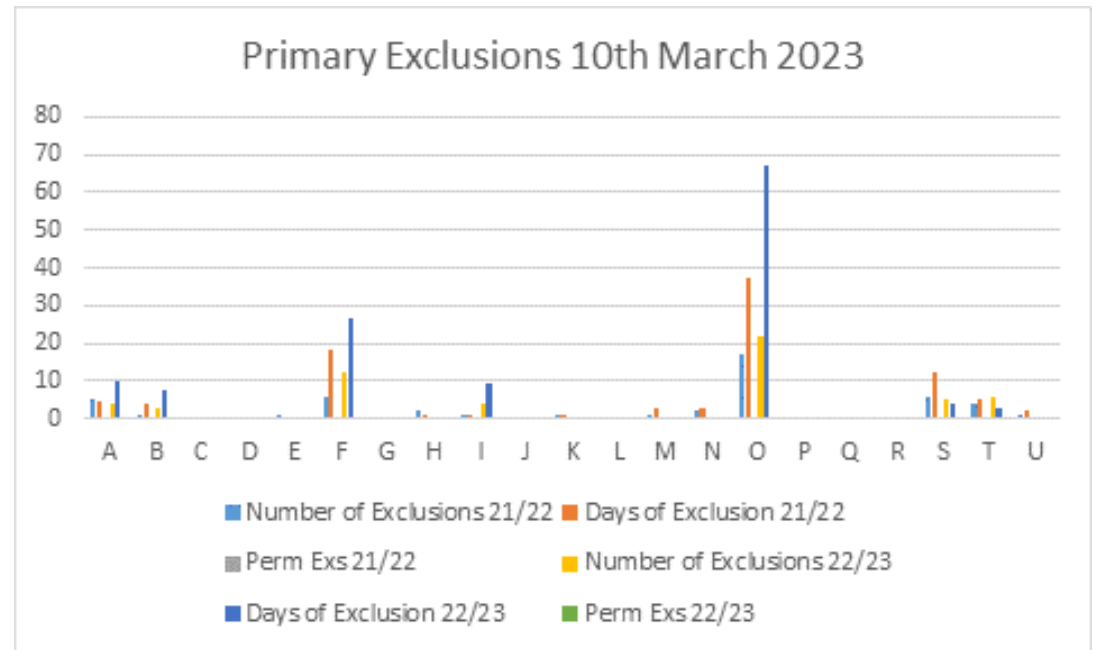


Securing quality ALN/Inclusion provision, particularly to support Vulnerable groups of learners and those who are eFSM



Primary Exclusions (Period above 2nd Sept – 10th March)

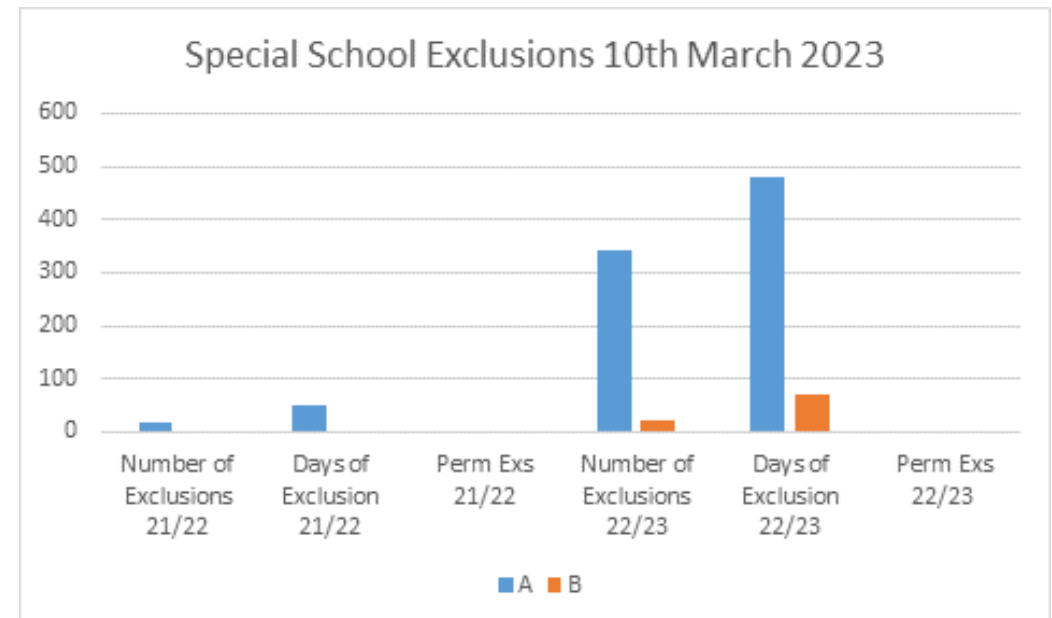
Positively, only 7 of BG's primary schools have issued any exclusions this year to date compared to 13 schools for the same period last year. However, the number of exclusions and the days lost are higher in 5 out of the 7 schools that are issuing exclusions. Education Welfare Service are working closely with those schools in order to support early intervention to further reduce exclusions. One of the schools has developed a nurture base which has had a positive impact on the amount of exclusions.



Special School Exclusions (Period above 2nd Sept – 10th March)

This period has only seen exclusions from one of our special schools. There has been an increase in the number of exclusions in this school and days lost. The Education Welfare Service are working in partnership with the school to look at support that can be provided to address reasons behind exclusions.

The 3 main reasons for exclusions across all settings are persistent disruptive behaviour (279), verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against an adult (198) and physical assault against a pupil (98). When analysing exclusion data, it would be important to take into account that it may involve a small number of learners who are excluded more than once.





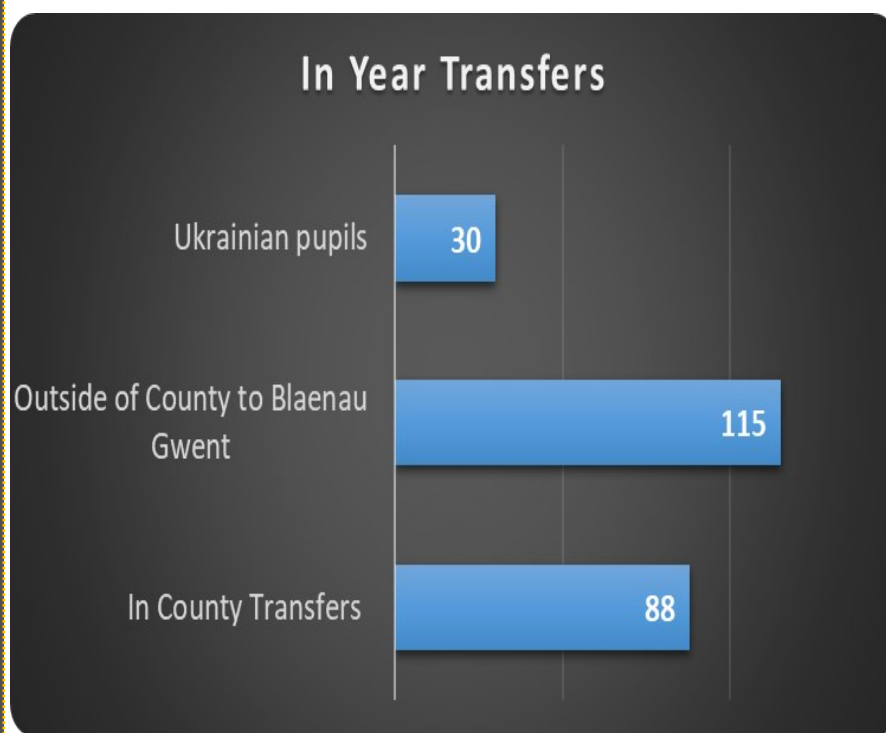
Transforming education in line with responsive school support services and a school estate that is fit for the 21st Century



All **admission rounds** were completed for 2022/23 academic year with **100% of first preferences being met**. This is attributable to the effective monitoring and management of school capacities and pupil places along with the continued achievement of surplus place reduction.

There have been **233 In Year Transfers**

between April and December 2022, the majority of applicants moving into Blaenau Gwent 100% of these transfers were **processed within 15 days**



The 2023/24 **Home to School Transport Policy** has been published

The transport appeals procedure has been implemented and is working effectively with **1 appeal being upheld** within the period

School admissions is now a fully online process

Options for further **engagement and promotion** is being explored to **increase the number of in-time applications** for reception and secondary school



INTEGRATION / COLLABORATION - Strategic links with key partners such as the EAS, Coleg Gwent, Schools, WBL providers continue to be effective, ensuring that Blaenau Gwent is well placed to continue with the transformation of the Education service and supporting our children and young people.





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



INTEGRATION - An effective internal partnership between the Education Directorate and the Build Environment, Environment and Regeneration continues, leading to the delivery of an efficient home to school / college transport provision.

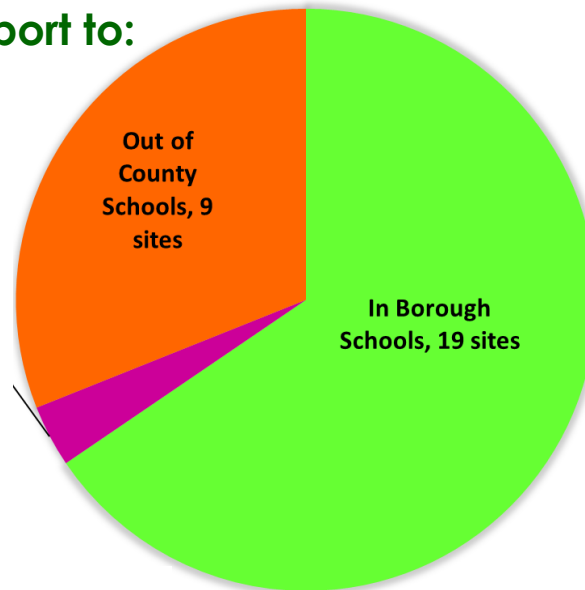


Home to School Transport budget is indicating an **overspend of £1m**, which can be attributed to an increase in pupil numbers utilising mainstream and ALN transport to settings in both primary and secondary schools within Blaenau Gwent and pupils attending out of county placements.

We procure and monitor 30 operators providing transport for over 80 contracts. This includes mainstream, Welsh-medium, faith education and specialist provision for ALN.

We transport to:

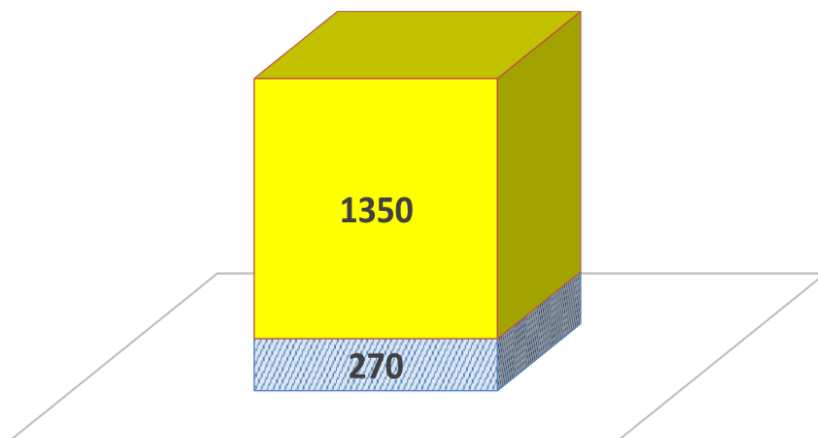
Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone and Post 16 Provision, 1 site



£600,000 of this will be funded from the cost of living reserve to support a temporary **20% uplift** provided to contractors to facilitate a temporary increase **for fuel costs**. Following

Over 1600 school pupils use Home to School transport:

■ ALN Pupils ■ Mainstream pupils



We provide support for over 550 Post 16 students living in Blaenau Gwent, they are provided with a discounted bus ticket or travel grant

a monthly review process which monitored cost pressures, the uplift is due to finish 31st March 2023.

In recognition of the **cost of living crisis**, the Council has agreed to apply an inflationary price increase of 10% effective 1st April 2023.



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



Cymunedau **Dysgu** Cynaliadwy 
Sustainable Communities for Learning

The delivery of the Sustainable Communities for Learning **Band B programme** is well underway with an **investment of circa £26m** into the school estate.

The suitability and condition of the school estate is improving with circa 61% categorised as A/B

The Band B Programme seeks to deliver the following key projects:

- **Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg Refurbishment**
- **Ebbw Fawr Primary Redevelopment**
 - Glyncoed Primary New Build
 - Rhos y Fedwen Primary Refurbishment
- **Continued Secondary School Re-modelling**

Progress on Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg refurbishment and Glyncoed Primary new build can be found on Page 35

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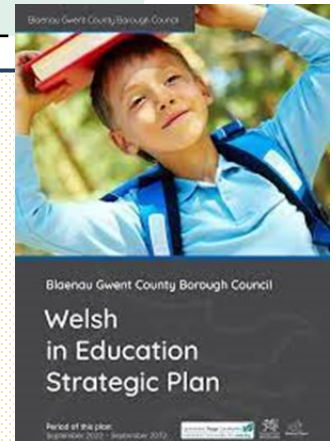
LONG TERM - Estyn / WG ICT & Digitalisation Thematic Review took place in January 2023. Education colleagues, Schools, SRS & EAS were interviewed by WG & Estyn, initial feedback on our progress was positive.



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



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**). Momentum for the delivery of the project now needs to be maintained as the delivery of the WESP targets will be largely delivered through this provision and immersion proposals.





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



The ICT Infrastructure and Connectivity Project - The Local Authority has again made strong progress in line with its strategy for improving standards in ICT. This has involved continued progression of the Infrastructure and Connectivity Project, implementation of Waves 1-4 of the Welsh Government HWB EdTech Programme and work towards the development of a strategy and associated sustainability plan for both infrastructure and devices in Blaenau Gwent.

ICT & Digitalisation Blaenau Gwent Context

In 2016 Blaenau Gwent invested approx.

£650K in ICT infrastructure as part of the Infrastructure and Connectivity Project

- In 2019/2020 Welsh Government launched the **Hwb Ed Tech Programme** this allowed the Authority to continue on our digital journey to further improve our network infrastructure and to replace all end of life devices within Schools
 - Device sustainability- Schools are now using a 20% plan to refresh devices over 5-year period in order to maintain the standard of devices achieved through the Hwb Ed Tech Programme. Individual sustainability plans have been discussed and agreed with schools
- In collaboration with the Shared Resource Service (SRS) Education have worked alongside all schools within the Service Level Agreement (SLA) to standardise all infrastructure to ensure adherence to the Education Digital Standards. This includes broadband connectivity, data network cabinet standards, routers and switches, cabling standards, wireless network standards, device management standards and web filtering standards.

The **Educational Digital Standards** are designed to assist schools to understand, manage and implement their digital environment. The Standards also provide guidance on how schools should future-proof their digital environment to meet the needs of a more digitally focused school curriculum. The standards suggest all infrastructure work undertaken to meet the standards should be carefully considered, planned and procured in compliance with national procurement regulations and installed by professional organisations.



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



A draft **ICT strategy** will be issued to schools for consultation during the Spring term 2023, the Vision for ICT within Education is as follows:

'To secure continued development ensuring that all learners regardless of age or demographic have continued safe access to a blend of digital resources, hardware and cloud-based learning throughout the course of their education'.



Infrastructure and Connectivity

Digital Inclusion

Device Sustainability

Migration to and use of Hwb

Digital tools and resources

Training and Development

Online Safety

Support for Schools

Education Management and support systems

Blaenau Gwent corporate approach and overview



There are 9 priority areas identified within the strategy. These areas have been focused on heavily over the past 2 years, we will continue to progress these in line with the Digital competency framework.



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



The Education Portfolio is now in the third year of a five year agreement with **the Aneurin Leisure Trust (ALT)**. The relationship between the Council and the Leisure Trust during this time has been transformed and positive outcomes continue to be achieved.



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The visual dashboard here highlights progress against the Key Performance Indicators:

Area	Target	Outcome	Key Drivers
Governance, Leadership & Advocacy	Green >90%		Waiting on date for the Strategic Board meeting. Once completed this KPI will revert back to green. All else on track
	Amber <90% >80%		
	Red <80%		
Financial Sustainability	Green 1% of Target		Catering is currently not seeing the impact of the cost of living crisis with sales continuing to show good YOY growth. Reforecast due in November to set a realistic outcome on year end.
	Amber <1% of Target		
	Red >5% of Target		
Use of the Services	Green Target met		Marked as Amber due to footfall counter issues. Estimates have been taken using a calculation of income as a % of sites that we know are accurate
	Amber 10% of target		
	Red >10% of Target		
Operational Performance	Green 80%-100%		All performing well. Receiving great feedback from function bookings in BHAP where the centre (bar 1 day) is now fully booked for the remainder of the calendar year
	Amber 70%-79%		
	Red 0%-79%		
Customer & Staff Satisfaction	Green >55%		Ahead of benchmark for Sports Centres. should be in a position to launch NPS into all sites during Q2
	Amber <55% >45%		
	Red <45%		
Library Services Standards	Green >80%		No Full audit to date. Scaled down audit 21/22 resulted in all 12 core measures being met. The report has gone to BGCBC
	Amber 70% - 79%		
	Red <79%		
Environmental Sustainability	Green Within 5% of Target		To date (September) utilities are better than Target which is set at 6% lower than base year.
	Amber Within 10% of Target		
	Red >10% of Target		
Asset Management	Green >90%		To date (Q2) 10 activities planned 6 completed.
	Amber <90% >80%		
	Red <80%		

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



Through a partnership approach the Youth Service now includes a focus on Youth Homelessness and Wellbeing.

The Youth Service provides a number of high quality projects providing young people with personal support, advice, guidance, advocacy and counselling services in school and community settings this is supported by a well-developed 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.**

The Youth and Community Team continue to support young people to prevent youth **homelessness and to support mental health and wellbeing.**

The team has continued to support individuals on a one to one basis, along with groups and community projects. These young people are often in precarious housing situations, and support is based around navigating appropriate information, advice and guidance from other services to help provide some stability and to enable them to improve their housing situation. This has continued to develop, with ongoing relationships with partners growing and becoming more efficient and effective.

During the last academic year, 34 young people were supported on a one to one basis.



We will continue to further establish Youth Homelessness and wellbeing programmes, funded by the Youth Support Grant.



The service area continues to meet regularly with Youth Support Services and partners through the Raising Aspirations Group, to maintain and further develop a co-ordinated, partnership approach.

Meetings also continue with Secondary School head teachers and /or link staff, to ensure they are fully involved where appropriate.



Safeguarding is an important aspect of the Youth Service.

Between September 2021 and August 2022, **44 referrals (DTRs)** were made to Social Services. . More detail relating to these are included in the Joint Safeguarding Report <https://democracy.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/ielistDocuments.aspx?Clid=1248&MId=2555&Ver=4&LLL=0>



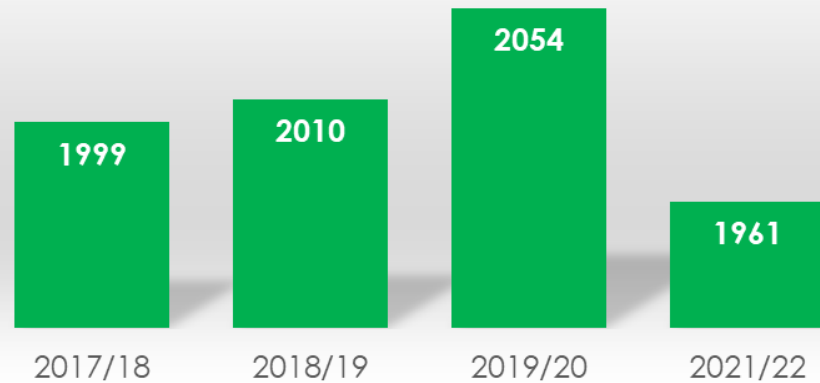
Delivering effective young people and partnership provision, with a focus on lifelong learning and leisure/recreation provision to meet community need



The number of 11-25 year olds supported by the Youth Service

during 2021/22 is 1961 (Reach of 17%). This is lower than the 2019/20 pre Covid data, but shows that the reach has almost returned to pre-pandemic levels, despite still working within restrictions at the beginning of the year.

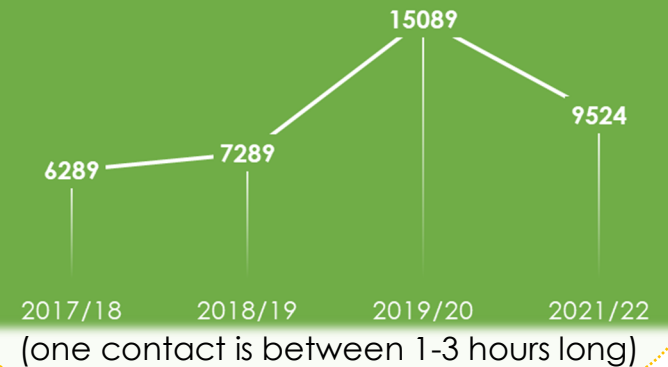
Number of 11-25 year olds supported by the Youth Service



The number of additional contacts made with anonymous young people (not registered with the service)

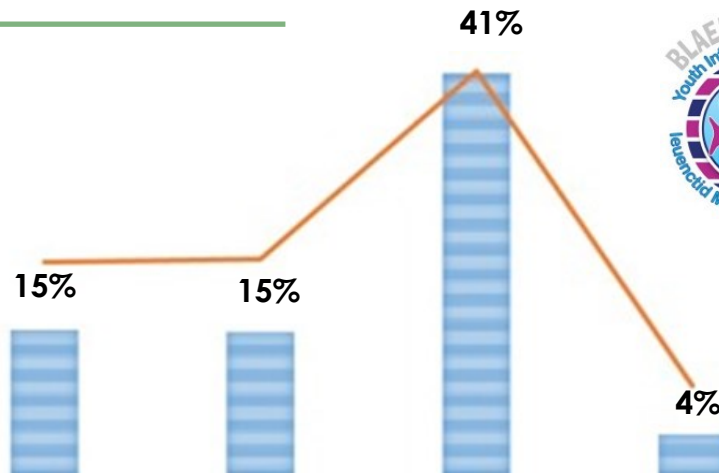
through the 11-25 Counselling Service, detached youth work, outreach and out of school activities and events with some online activities offered

ADDITIONAL CONTACTS MADE WITH ANONYMOUS PEOPLE



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Out of the number of 11-25 year olds supported by the Youth Service above, the % that have gained nationally recognised qualifications has decreased



	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2021/22
Number of young people supported (11-25) that gained accredited qualifications	306	301	847	86
Number of qualifications achieved	448	456	851	188



Long Term - Reliance on external funding is a risk.

However, securing European Social Funding until 2023 has provided some stability with the most vulnerable young people in the community having support for the past five years. SPF applications have been submitted which includes funding to continue the support for young people through the Inspire programmes. Welsh Government Youth Support Grant funding has now been given as a 3 year indicative allocation. This has allowed better planning for the future, both internally and with external partners.



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

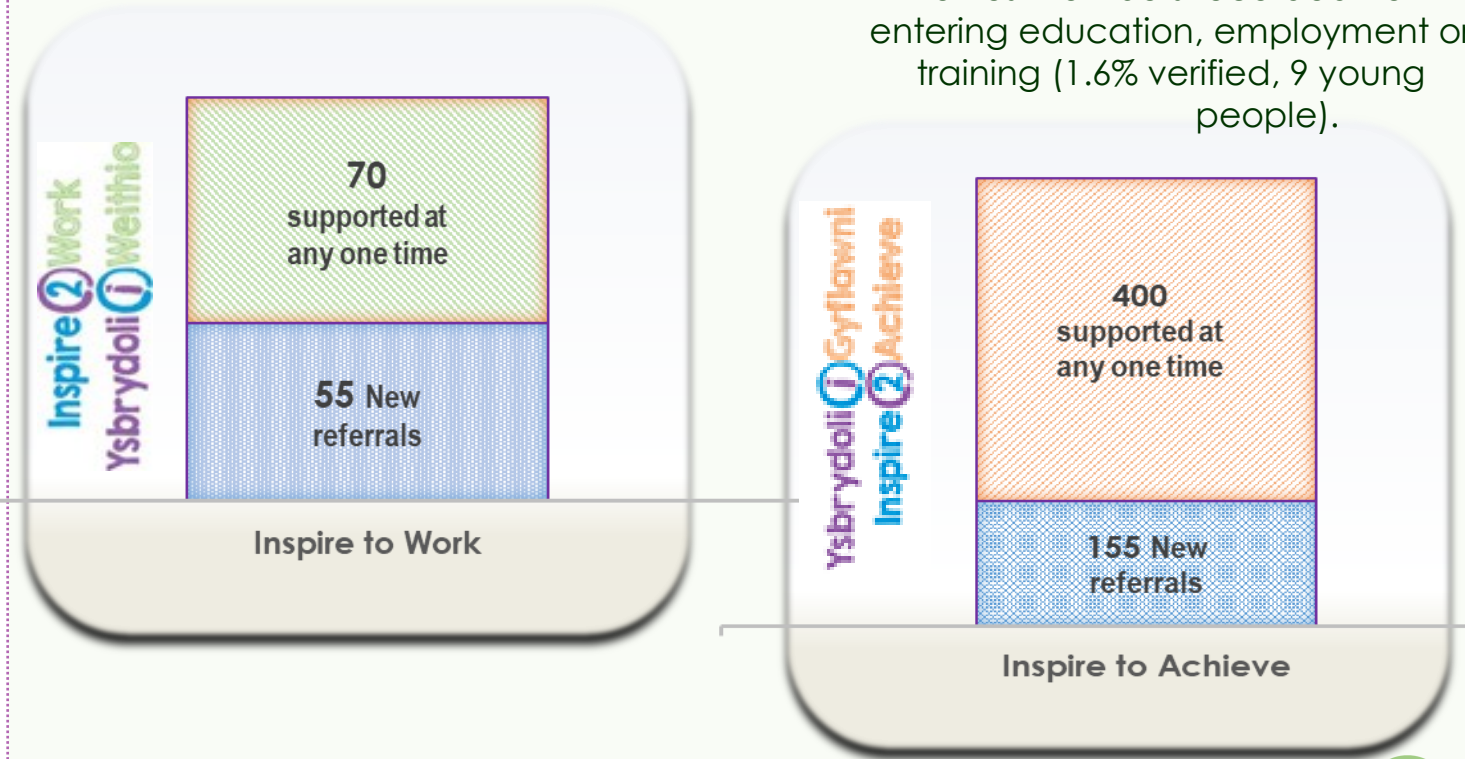


Both core and external funding has been secured to **continue a variety of projects to meet identified needs** and include:-

- Inspire 2 Achieve;
- Inspire 2 Work;
- Youth Homelessness;
- Mental Health and Wellbeing;
- Duke of Edinburgh;
- Detached and Outreach Youth Workers;
- Positive Futures (ASB programmes);
- Open for Youth Nights;
- Youth Clubs;
- Youth Information Service;
- Young Ambassadors (YAMs);
- 11-25 Counselling Service;
- Young Reps Volunteering Programme; and
- school holiday programme.



The **Inspire to Achieve** and **Inspire to Work** programmes are highly effective in supporting young people to overcome barriers to either remain in or enter education, training or employment. The projects directly impact on young people improving their attendance, attainment or behaviour, as well as overcoming personal barriers. Through Inspire, transitional support is provided to identified young people moving from year 6 to year 7, in-between school terms and post 16. Data from Careers suggests that this additional, bespoke support has enhanced the transition of young people throughout the lifetime of the programmes and again this year, maintaining the lowest numbers recorded not entering education, employment or training (1.6% verified, 9 young people).



Plans are now ongoing to Implement the closure of the Inspire 2 Achieve project and Inspire 2 Work programmes, and prepare for the new Shared Prosperity Fund People and Skills programmes.





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

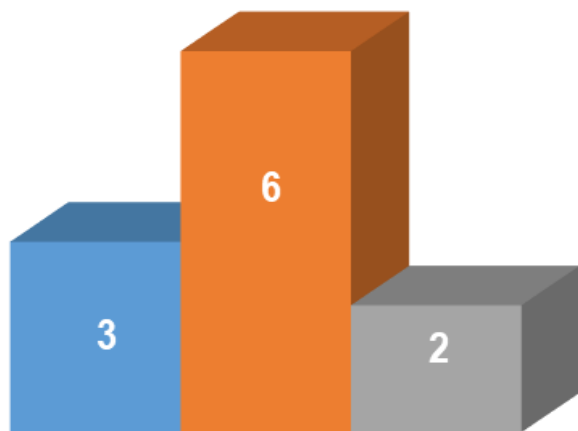


The Council's Corporate Risk Register includes one corporate risk with a specific link to the Education Directorate and this is relating to schools in an Estyn category.

The Education Directorate Risk Register has 11 risks, with 3 having a high residual status.....

EDUCATION DIRECTORATE RISKS

■ High risk ■ Medium risk ■ Low risk



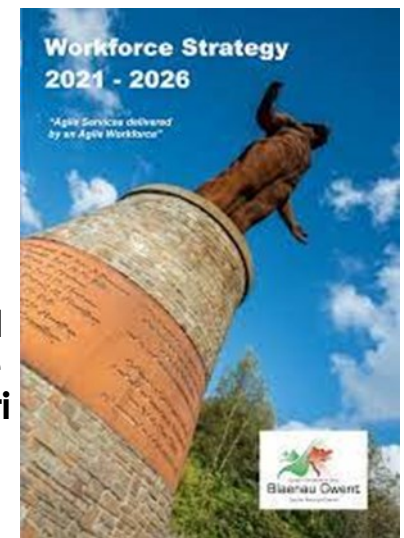
- Failure to minimise the risks associated with pupil regression linked to COVID-19 learning disruption and to maximise learner progression.
- Dependency on funding around ESF Inspire projects in youth service.
- Failure of schools to improve following the issue of a pre-warning and statutory warning notice.

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).

Schools were provided with a **8.4% uplift in budgets via the Individual School Budget** in 2022-23

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

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



This Workforce Strategy aims to build on existing good practice and continuing to promote the Council as a good place to work – **developing a workforce that feels connected to and can meet the current and future needs of our community.**



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



The financial position is anticipated to be very difficult, as schools are still facing significant cost pressures in terms of **increasing utility costs, high inflation and pay awards.**



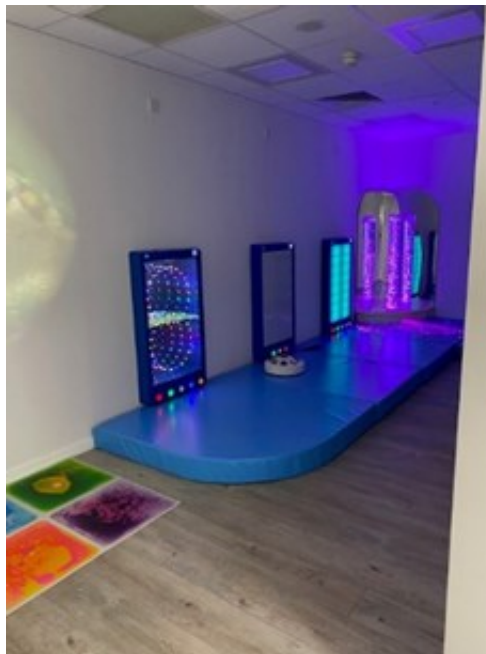
The 2023-24 revenue budget included an overall increase for Education of which:

- Individual School Budget received an uplift of 4.2% (£2,02m) and awarded cost pressures totalling £0.115m
- Local Education Authority Budget received cost pressures totalling £0.923m mainly in relation to Home to School transport and ALN Reform

Case Study - Sustainable communities for learning

The Blaenau Gwent Sustainable Communities for Learning (formerly 21st Century Schools) Band B Programme commenced in April 2019 and is set to conclude in 2025. The Programme will realise an investment of £19.6million throughout the Blaenau Gwent school estate. The Welsh Government intervention rate for Band B is a 65%/35% split, in favour of Local Authorities.

The remodelling works in relation to Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg commenced in the Summer term 2021 and were **completed during the Autumn term 2022**, there will be an official Ministerial opening of the provision in May 2023. The works involved the establishment of a sensory room and nurture provision, a STEM facility and radio rooms and the development of the outdoor provision including a sensory garden and outdoor play. This involved an **investment of £1m** in the school building.



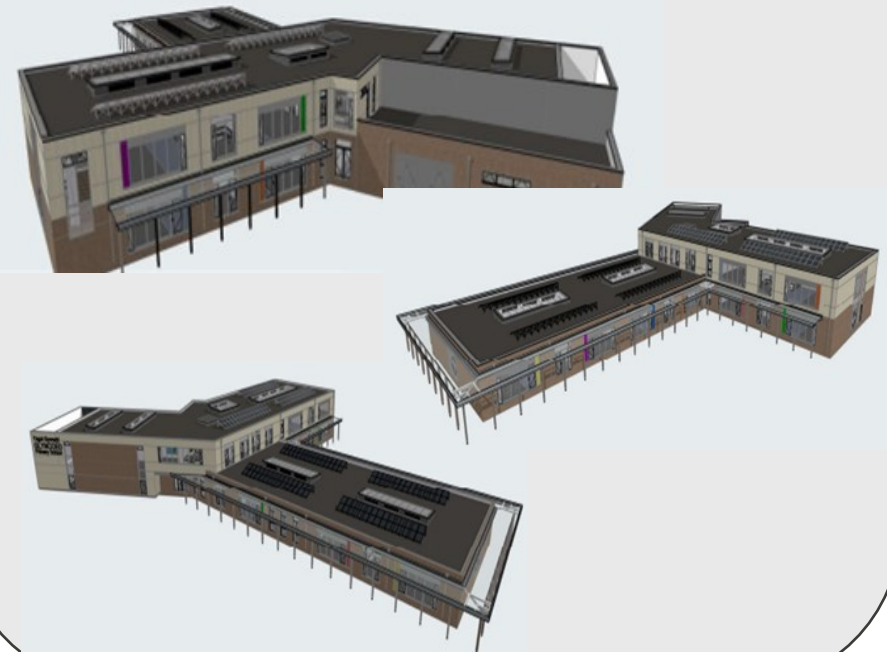
Sensory Room



Nurture Room

Glyncoed Primary New build

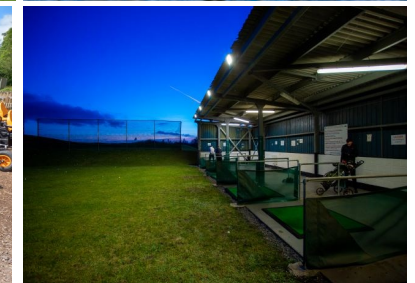
This project involves the replacement of the current Glyncoed Primary School with 360 place primary school including a separate childcare facility on a site adjacent to the current location. The contractor Morgan Syndall was appointed to deliver the project in October 2022 and work has commenced on site and is progressing well, the scheme will be completed for **occupation Spring 2024**



Case Study - Aneurin Leisure Trust

All areas of the business have seen year on year growth which has been in part attributed to the investments that have been made across Aneurin Leisure Trust over the last 2 years such as:

- Fully refurbished Sports Centres
- Improved golf products (mini golf & upgraded driving range)
- Additional activities at Parc Bryn Bach including: paddle boarding memberships, Go-karts, outside food kiosk, newly created sensory gardens (Parc Bryn Bach & Bedwellty House) and a newly created raised patio by lake side.



Alongside these investments ALT have been working in partnership with several Council departments to support various funded projects:

- Summer of Fun (supported by Sports Development, Libraries & park teams). Over 400 young people took part in the Youth Service's Summer of Fun programme and over 250 young people took part in the Winter of Wellbeing programme.
- Welsh Government reward and recognition funding for Social Services staff (supported through a voucher scheme, team building days and meeting space).
- Supporting the Ukrainian refugee crisis with a relaxation hub, English speaking courses and employment support in the Adult Education buildings and a voucher scheme set up to allow access to leisure to help integrate into the community.
- Assisted submission to the Rhaglen grant to support the Trinity Chapel project in Abertillery.
- Contributing to developments of the Shared Prosperity Fund - People and Skills plans, which will replace current ESF Adult Employability support.

Case Study - Schools in Blaenau Gwent are learning about 5G connectivity



The Education Directorate continue to work with partners, both internal and external in order to support our pupils development.



To enhance our school ICT delivery plans, schools in Blaenau Gwent are learning how 5G connectivity could transform the way we live and work with a new interactive Augmented Reality experience that is being delivered as part of the 5G Wales Unlocked programme, an innovation project co-funded by Welsh Government and various project partners.

Education and Regeneration teams worked with Welsh Government, Jam Creative Studios and Technocamps to create a way of educating the next generation about the benefits of 5G. The decision was to create an enrichment programme based around an Augmented Reality (AR) game – bringing to life the benefits that advanced connectivity can bring to towns like Ebbw Vale.

The content of the programme linked with the key aspects of the local industry whilst contributing to the relevant Areas of Learning, which firmly embeds it with what teachers are delivering already and enriches the learner's experience. We are also exploring the possibility of developing the format further by linking it with the 5G Immersive Environment; this gives a fully rounded experience to the next generation".

The AR game, developed by Jam Creative Studios and delivered in schools by Technocamps allows learners to work in teams to unlock 5G connectivity around a virtual 3D town by carrying out fun STEM activities.



Played by small groups on iPads, the activities span some of the many different sectors that 5G connectivity will transform; Healthcare, agriculture, manufacturing, recycling and transport and enables learners to see a clear change in infrastructure as they walk around and explore in detail the large 3D virtual town environment.

Aimed at learners in years 6 and 7, the experience will also help with their transition from primary to secondary education, as year 7 digital lead learners will be involved in working with the year 6 as they carry out their tasks.



Case Study - Councillors welcome changes for Additional Learning Needs

Councillors in Blaenau Gwent have supported two key strategies and associated policies aimed at improving the experiences and educational outcomes of children and young people with Additional Learning Needs (ALN).

The People Scrutiny Committee heard how the way pupils with Additional Learning Needs are supported has been reviewed in line with the Welsh Government's ALN Reform programme. All children and young people with ALN will be provided with tailored Individual Development Plans, which will set out the approach to support their needs and the additional learning provision required.

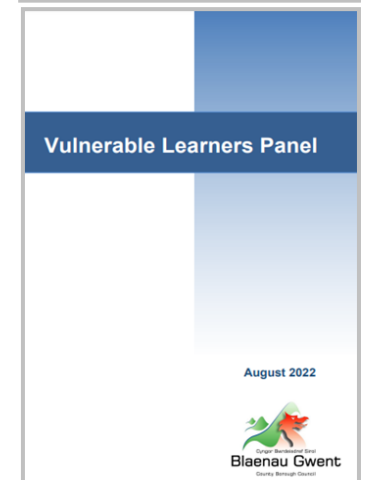
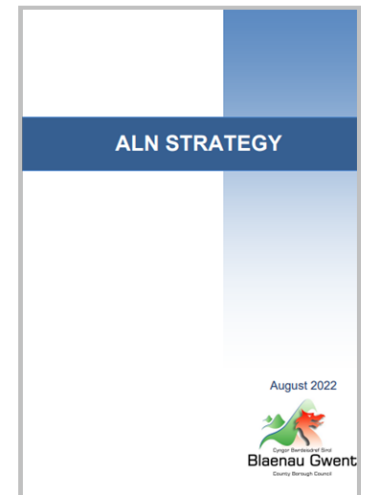
An ALN Reform working group, made up of Local Authority Education officers and Headteachers, have been meeting to work on the plans and to inform the new approaches – particularly the high-level ALN Strategy and the Inclusion Strategy.

The Council's Cabinet Member for People & Education, Cllr Sue Edmunds says:

“Supporting children and young people with Additional Learning Needs is fundamental to our vision for Better Schools, Better Citizens and Better Communities. It is vital that everyone is working together to ensure that these learners are well supported in both their education and wellbeing needs and are achieving their full potential and desired outcomes.

“I'm pleased that Scrutiny have today supported these changes to ALN provision which, in our view, can only be seen as an extremely positive step forward in the education and learning experiences of some of our most vulnerable learners in Blaenau Gwent.”

You can read the report to Scrutiny and view some of the new policies/strategies here - <http://democracy.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1248&MId=2540&LLL=0>



Case Study - Welsh In Education Strategic Plan & Welsh Medium Seedling Provision



The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2022-2032 is a 10-year plan, Blaenau Gwent has an ambitious target of increasing the Year 1 cohort (750 pupils) taught via the medium of Welsh to 75 pupils -10% by 2032 (baseline as per plasc 2021 data 29 pupils - 4%).

As part of this plan the Blaenau Gwent will open a **210 place Welsh Medium Seedling Primary School** on the Chartist Way Site, in the Tredegar/Sirhowy Valley. The school will be developed via a seedling growth model from **September 2023**. The Council are currently in the process of letting the contract for the new build and it is anticipated that the contractor will be appointed Spring 2023. It is anticipated, the new school building will be completed for occupation by September 2024. The school will open initially in its temporary location of Bedwellty House, Tredegar for nursery and reception pupils, with a new year group being added each year. Initial governance arrangements will be under Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg with a view to reviewing this after an initial 2/3 year period. Education Transformation are currently working with the Welsh in Education Forum (WEF) and Rhag in order to promote the new provision.

In order to support the seedling provision and develop increased capacity across childcare and early years' settings, a further 2 Welsh medium childcare settings are being established – at the Glyncoed Primary new build site, and in the new Tredegar seedling school provision. Currently there are 2 well established childcare provisions located in Brynithel and at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg.

Case Study - Equality in our education and learning

Equality is something that is at the heart of everything that we do as a local authority. Effective partnership working enables us to provide advice and guidance to support schools around equalities and provide information through school bulletins (equality, diversity & inclusion). We also work with schools and the Children's Grand Council in order to support children & young people to have a voice.

The first Children's Grand Council session of this academic year was the **first in person session for two years. 51 pupils attended** the session with nearly all primary schools participating, the outstanding two schools were delivered an online session at a later date to allow all pupils to take part. The session covered the following areas.....

Positive Body Image & Healthy Food Relationships

What do food adverts and images tell you about food?

Vitamins, minerals and iron?

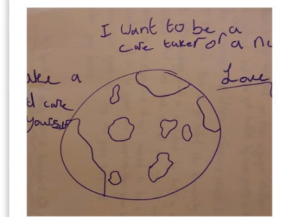


Well-being and Resilience

What does a good and safe community look like?

GOOD ☺
 Life is good!
 nobody will not understand
 Life is good!
 The first time you stood
 life is great!
 hopefully you relate
 Life is great!
 it's like a Saint.
 -Chloe 11

The children were asked to get creative, about what a good future would look like for them...



Children & Young Peoples own words...

What impact do you think these images could have on young people

That COVID changed the way people eat.

Adults tell you to eat healthy

lose trust in companies for lying ads

too much of this will make you overweight

make food loom yummy

That unhealthy foods are healthy

It could give them a balanced diet, because you have to eat mainly the good foods but a bit of bad is ok too.

They could eat more vegetables

Children might not understand the message

healthy food makes an impact on your body and fitness

encourage you to eat vegetables

That's your traffic light system

These images can change perspective of a young mind like stopping them eating at all.

Make it look good so more people go there

brings you happiness but you get diabetes

it's your traffic light system

Children may not want to eat food because of what it looks like

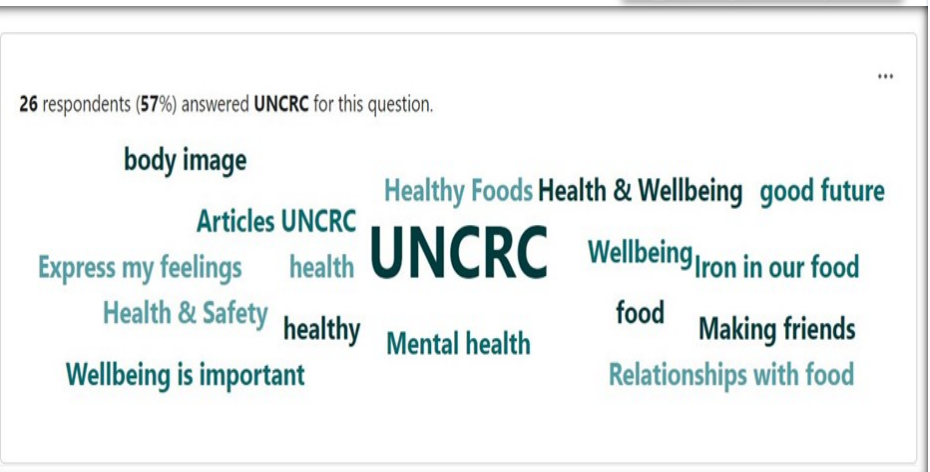
not everything means happiness

It makes young people want to buy unhealthy food

eating healthy could help you a lot

trick you

One thing they learnt today ...



Member Engagement -

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




People, Partnerships and Engagement

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 Children & Young People understand about wellbeing and mental health.
- Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.
- 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 Children & Young People 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 Children & Young People to have input into programme or policy development.
- Young people from Blaenau Gwent Youth Forum contribute to the scrutiny committee arrangements.
- Children & Young People 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 Blaenau Gwent 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=EMSIkalECMiOmarE6JChQQ Regional Mental Health Campaign Development.
- Youth Question time event 22-Gwent Youth Question Time 2022 | Blaenau Gwent CBC (blaenau-gwent.gov.uk).

Our Future Direction and areas that we feel we need to focus upon going forward

As stated at the beginning of this report our overall aim is to support delivery of our corporate objectives. Listed below are some of the areas we recognise that we need to continue to focus on improving, these areas include the actions identified from the recent Estyn Inspection. We recognise that even the achievements are not yet completed but remain areas for progress to be maintained and improved upon where possible.



As a council we are looking to '**Maximise learning and skills for all to create a prosperous, thriving, resilient Blaenau Gwent**'. Alongside the many achievements detailed throughout this report that have been delivered by the Education Directorate over this past year to support delivery of this corporate objective, we recognise that the following are areas that need further improvement:-

- Improve attendance rates in both Primary and Secondary sectors;
- Reduce school exclusions and support parents/carers who opt to Elective Home Educate (EHE). There are 3 schools with identified higher-levels of exclusions that will require targeted interventions;
- Continue to monitor and improve on attainment levels;
- Higher levels of language acquisition and reading across the board, but particularly in our very young children in early years; and
- Focus on improving the pace of change for Schools Causing Concern (SCC) improvement journeys.



As a council we are looking to '**Respond to the nature and climate crisis and enable connected communities**'. Alongside the many achievements detailed throughout this report we recognise that the following are areas that need further improvement:-

- Continue to effectively deliver sustainable communities for learning which are environmentally friendly;
- Further encourage nature friendly management on school grounds;
- Develop a schools Biodiversity policy and support with the integration; and
- Continue to engage all young people with the environment.



As a council we are looking to be '**An ambitious and innovative council delivering quality services at the right time and in the right place**'. Alongside the many achievements detailed throughout this report we recognise that the following are areas that need further improvement:-

- Further engagement and promotion to increase the 'on time' admission applications;
- Increase capacity at Pen-Y-Cwm and River Centre and reduce out of county placements, in turn reducing annual financial loss;
- ALN implementation review—act upon issues raised in questionnaire;
- Monitor Home to school transport funding issues;
- Secure external funding for European Social Fund (ESF) programmes e.g. Inspire;
- Ensure that our vision and strategic aims for education are fully understood by other officers, elected members, school staff and external partners;
- Develop a suitable vision and strategy for the future provision of ALN; and
- Improve the quality of self-evaluation, strategic planning and performance management.



As a council we are looking to '**Empower and support communities to be safe, independent and resilient**'. Alongside the many achievements detailed throughout this report that have been delivered by the Education Directorate over this past year to support delivery of this corporate objective, we recognise that the following are areas that need further improvement:-

- Monitor closely school place and sufficiency of all schools, use data more effectively to inform long term planning; and
- Continue to improve the reach of 11-25 year olds supported by Youth and increase the number that have gained qualifications.

Agenda Item 7

Cabinet and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 25.04.23

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 25.04.23

Committee: **Cabinet**

Date of meeting: **3rd May 2023**

Report Subject: **Enforcement Arrangements for the Energy Performance Of Buildings (England and Wales) Regulations 2012 (as amended).**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Helen Cunningham, Deputy Leader/Cabinet Member - Place & Environment**

Report Submitted by: **Team Manager – Trading Standards & Licensing**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	General Licensing Committee
18.4.23	20.4.23	21.04.23				3.5.23		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet approval of reciprocal arrangements for the enforcement of the Energy Performance of Buildings (England and Wales) Regulations 2012(as amended), in relation to Local Authority owned buildings within Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen Council areas.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 As part of the climate Change agenda, initial energy performance legislation introduced in 2008, gave Local Weights and Measures Authorities (Trading Standards) the duty to enforce the requirements of the Regulations within their areas, with the exception of new builds which were then the responsibility of Building Control.
- 2.2 Legislation has been amended and extended over time with a significant amendment to the above Regulations in October 2015. The latter require that Local Weights and Measures Authorities transfer enforcement duties for local authority owned or controlled buildings to another Local Weights and Measures Authority. The Authority is also required to inform the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities of these arrangements (DLUHC) in an annual return.
- 2.3 The principle underlying the above Regulations is to make the energy efficiency of buildings transparent, inform occupiers and users about their building's or systems current energy performance and make recommendations on how to improve energy efficiency. In particular, they require that:
 - Energy Performance Certificates (EPC's) and a report providing recommendations as to how the energy efficiency of the building can be

improved is made available to a prospective buyer on the sale or rent of a building (domestic and commercial).

- The same must also be provided for new builds on completion of construction.
 - Such reports have been commissioned before marketing a property and are available within 7 days of first marketing the property.
 - All buildings occupied by a public authority where the total useful floor area is greater than 250m² and frequently visited by the public must obtain and display a Display Energy certificate (DEC).
 - Other inspectional requirements for air conditioning units.
- 2.4 Liaison has been undertaken with relevant Officers within the Regeneration and Community Services Directorate in respect of the Authority's compliance with the legislative requirements as a Corporate Landlord and at this stage, no concerns have been highlighted. The Head of Community Services will report on these matters separately at the appropriate time.

Enforcement

- 2.5 Trading Standards (Local Weights and Measures Authority) have a duty to enforce the Regulations including breaches of the requirements outlined in 2.3 above.
- 2.6 The amendment to the Regulations made in October 2015 set out the responsibility of Local weights and Measures Authorities to transfer enforcement responsibility to another enforcement authority for public buildings over 250m² that they occupy and any other buildings that they sell or rent.
- 2.7 It is the decision of the enforcement authority or its authorised officer to determine what action is appropriate in response to breaches of the regulations. It anticipated that providing advice and information may be sufficient to ensure compliance, if not and the non-compliance continues civil penalties such as penalty charge notices can be issued with a right of appeal to the County Court.
- 2.8 Every local weights and measures authority is required to report on enforcement activity undertaken on an annual basis which will be collated and published by DLUHC and to provide information on their transfer agreements. Enforcement bodies also have responsibility to collect sufficient information on relevant buildings to plan and implement effective enforcement action.
- 2.9 Following discussions with all Gwent Trading Standards Managers, it is proposed that a reciprocal agreement is made between Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen Local Weights and Measures Authorities for enforcement responsibilities within their own local authority areas. Both areas share

similarities in size in order to effectively and equitably meet this obligation. Other Gwent Authorities are seeking to establish similar partnerships.

3. Options for Recommendation

3.1 Option 1 (Preferred Option)

To agree the proposal to provide reciprocal enforcement arrangements with Torfaen County Borough Council, as described in the report.

3.2 Option 2

To reject the proposal.

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

- 4.1 The statutory requirements of the Energy Performance legislation broadly contribute to the Well-being Goals as set out in Well Being Plan 2018-2023 [Well-beingPlan\(Layout\)-D8.pdf \(blaenau-gwent.gov.uk\)](#) and Corporate Plan 2022/27 [final-corporate-plan-2022.pdf \(blaenau-gwent.gov.uk\)](#) to Respond to the nature and climate crisis and enable connected communities. The legislation seeks to enable potential purchasers and tenants to establish the energy costs of buildings they wish to buy or rent and encourages energy efficiency generally in all buildings including public buildings and new builds. Energy efficiency measures protect the environment, reduce energy costs long term and reduce the depletion of limited resources. Reciprocal arrangements for enforcement in local authority owned buildings increases transparency and standardisation of approach and the independence and objectivity of enforcement decisions.

5. Implications Against Each Option

- 5.1 Budgetary implications – These are considered to be minimal in respect of the preferred option outlined above. Energy performance requirements have been in place for many years and so local authorities should already be aware of their duties and be compliant with the legislation. It is not intended that authorities subject to the agreement would carry out inspections of each other's premises but they would investigate any complaints or intelligence received about non-compliance in that authority area if the matter was not resolved by the Authority concerned.
- 5.2 Reputational risk – The Regulations stipulate requirements for businesses and the Local Authority while placing duties on the Local Weights and Measures Authority to enforce. Risks to reputation could feasibly arise if the Authority is failing in respect of any of these issues or failing to meet Corporate Performance Indicators.

5.3 Legal implications – The Authority risks failing to meet its statutory obligations if the Regulations are unenforced. Enforcement activity, including whether reciprocal arrangements are in place, are a matter of annual Statutory Return as outlined in 2.2 above.

5.4 Resources – Enforcement activity in respect of these Regulations will need to be resourced within the departmental budget and based on an intelligence led operating model.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

There is no supporting evidence with this report.

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

The preferred Option will provide an assurance that compliance with the Regulations in respect of Local Authority Buildings is independently enforced by a separate Local Authority enforcement team.

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

Consultation has been unnecessary on this legal requirement.

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

The preferred Option will provide an independent enforcement regime for Local Authority owned buildings as required by the Regulations.

6.5 **Preventative Focus**

The preferred Option seeks to improve compliance of Local Authority owned buildings with the relevant regulations.

6.6 **Collaboration / Partnership Working**

The Draft Agreement proposed has been overseen by the Council's Legal Officers and creates a reciprocal partnership arrangement with Torfaen County Borough Council.

6.7 **Integration (across service areas)**

Liaison with Officers across the Regeneration and Community Services Directorate has been carried out and this will continue in order that obligations of the Authority as Corporate Landlord are in compliance with the relevant regulations covered in this report.

6.8 **Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions**

Energy efficiency measures protect the environment, reduce energy costs long term and reduce the depletion of limited resources. Reciprocal arrangements for enforcement in local authority owned buildings increases transparency and standardisation of approach and the independence and objectivity of enforcement decisions.

6.9 ***Integrated Impact Assessment (IAA)***

An Integrated Impact Assessment (IAA) is provided with this report.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 Monitoring of enforcement activity under these Regulation will be undertaken as part of the normal departmental management of the Service and reported annually as mentioned in 2.2 to the Secretary of State for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

7.2 Additionally, a compliance status report will be provided by the Head of Community Services annually to Trading Standards, to assist in monitoring compliance levels of Blaenau Gwent Council Buildings.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 - Draft agreement proposed with Torfaen County Borough Council.

Appendix 2 – Integrated Impact Assessment

[DCLG Guidance – Improving the energy efficiency of our buildings March 2016.](#)

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AGREEMENT

The 1st of TBC 2023

Between

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

AND

Torfaen County Borough Council



AGREEMENT

Energy Performance of Buildings (England and Wales) Regulations 2012

Enforcement and Local Authority Buildings

In accordance with the provisions of Regulation 34A(2) of the above mentioned Regulations, this agreement is made between Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, as the Local Weights and Measures Authority for the administrative Blaenau Gwent County Borough and Torfaen County Borough Council, as the Local Weights and Measures Authority for the administrative Torfaen County Borough.

The effect of this Agreement is that as from the date of the Agreement, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council will have the duty to enforce certain provisions of the above-mentioned Regulations in respect of Local Authority buildings in Torfaen County Borough and Torfaen County Borough Council will have the duty to enforce certain provisions of the above-mentioned Regulations in respect of Local Authority buildings in Blaenau Gwent County Borough, namely:

- Part 2 (“Duties Relating To Energy Performance Certificates”)
- Part 3 (“Display Energy Certificates”)
- Part 4 (“Inspection of Air-Conditioning Systems”)
- Part 7 (“Enforcement”)

Local Weights and Measures Authorities have a range of measures at their disposal including but not limited to advice, education and encouragement to the issuing of penalty charge notices. It is for the relevant authority to determine the course of action that is appropriate for the circumstances and it is expected that each Authority will seek compliance with the above-mentioned Regulations within their own respective areas in order to avoid a necessity for enforcement action by the other Authority.

Each Council will publicise the establishment of this agreement and inform the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUCH) as part of its Energy Performance annual return.

Signed

Designation.....

On behalf of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Signed

Designation.....

On behalf of Torfaen County Borough Council

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council - Integrated Impact Assessment

All decisions, policy reviews or policy implementation will now require a completed Integrated Impact Assessment.

- Section 1-Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011
- Section 2-Socio-economic Duty – Sections 1 to 3 of the Equality Act 2010
- Section 3-Corporate Plan
- Section 4-Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Section 5-Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011
- Section 6-Children’s Right “The Right Way”
- Section 7-Community Safety
- Section 8 Armed Forces
- Section 9-Data
- Section 10-Consultations Statutory Consultation Doctrine of Legitimate Expectation and Gunning Principles
- Section 11-Monitoring
- Section 12-Decision of proposal

Lead Officer	Head of Service	Service Area & Department	Date
Steve Osborne	David Thompson	Public Protection, Regeneration and Community Services Dept.	12.4.23

Briefly outline the proposal indicating what change or decision is to be made, also provide any documentation that may be used to support this.

What is the proposal that needs to be assessed?

Enforcement Arrangements for The Energy Performance Of Buildings (England and Wales) Regulations 2012 (as amended) with specific regard to agreeing a proposal to provide reciprocal enforcement arrangements with Torfaen County Borough Council in respect of Local Authority buildings.

Section 1

Outline how the proposal will impact on any people or groups of people with protected characteristics, please refer to the Equalities Act 2010 (Wales) for further information [Equality Act 2010: guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk) and the EHRC guidance [The Essential Guide to the Public Sector Equality Duty: EHRC](#)

Briefly outline below if there will be any positive or negative impacts as a result of the proposal being considered.

Protected characteristics	Will the proposal have any positive impacts on those with a protected characteristics?	Will the proposal have any negative impacts on those with a protected characteristics?	Outline how the proposal could maximise any positive impacts or minimise any negative impact. Please indicate any views evidence you have that supports this.
Age (<i>people of all ages</i>)	No	No	This proposal has no direct effect upon equalities issues.
Disability (<i>people with disabilities/ long term conditions</i>)	No	No	This proposal has no direct effect upon equalities issues.
Gender Reassignment (<i>anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex they were assigned at birth</i>)	No	No	This proposal has no direct effect upon equalities issues.

Marriage or Civil Partnership (<i>people who are married or in a civil partnership</i>)	No	No	This proposal has no direct effect upon equalities issues.
Pregnancy and Maternity (<i>women who are pregnant and/or on maternity leave</i>)	No	No	This proposal has no direct effect upon equalities issues.
Race (<i>people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and different racial backgrounds</i>)	No	No	This proposal has no direct effect upon equalities issues.
Religion or Belief (<i>people with different religions and beliefs including people with no beliefs</i>)	No	No	This proposal has no direct effect upon equalities issues.
Sex (<i>women and men, girls and boys and those who self-identify their gender</i>)	No	No	This proposal has no direct effect upon equalities issues.
Sexual Orientation (<i>lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual, other</i>)	No	No	This proposal has no direct effect upon equalities issues.



NOTE: Section 2 only needs to be completed if proposals are of a strategic nature or when reviewing previous strategic decisions. See page 6 of the Preparing for the Commencement of the Socio-economic Duty Welsh Government Guidance.




Section 2 Socio-economic Duty (Strategic Decisions Only) <i>The Welsh Governments Socio-economic Duty provides a framework in order to ensure tackling inequality is at the forefront of decision making.</i>			
.Please consider the below vulnerable groups and consider how the proposal could affect them:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Single parents and vulnerable families ➢ People with low literacy/numeracy ➢ Pensioners ➢ Looked after children ➢ Homeless people ➢ Carers ➢ Armed Forces Community ➢ Students ➢ Single adult households ➢ People misusing substances ➢ People who have experienced the asylum system ➢ People of all ages leaving a care setting ➢ People living in the most deprived areas in Wales (WIMD) ➢ People involved in the criminal justice system 			
Socio Economic disadvantage definitions.	Will the proposal have a positive, negative or neutral impacts on the below?	How could you mitigate the negative impacts outlined?	Please highlight any evidence that has been considered.
Low Income / Income Poverty <i>(cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing, transport etc.)</i>	No direct impact expected	No direct impact expected	
Low and/or No Wealth <i>(enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provisions for the future)</i>	No direct impact expected	No direct impact expected	

<p>Material Deprivation (<i>unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, hobbies etc.</i>)</p>	<p>No direct impact expected</p>	<p>No direct impact expected</p>	
<p>Area Deprivation (<i>where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of public transport) Impact on the environment?</i>)</p>	<p>No direct impact expected</p>	<p>No direct impact expected</p>	
<p>Socio-economic Background (<i>social class i.e. parents education, employment and income</i>)</p>	<p>No direct impact expected</p>	<p>No direct impact expected</p>	
<p>Socio-economic Disadvantage (<i>What cumulative impact will the proposal have on people or groups because of their protected characteristic(s) or vulnerability or because they are already disadvantaged</i>)</p>	<p>No direct impact expected</p>	<p>No direct impact expected</p>	

Section 3-Corporate Plan <i>Please outline any Corporate Plan linkages of the proposal -BG Corporate Plan 22-27</i>	
Priority 1 - Maximise learning and skills for all to create a prosperous, thriving, resilient Blaenau Gwent	
Priority 2 - Respond to the nature and climate crisis and enable connected communities	<p>The legislation seeks to enable potential purchasers and tenants to establish the energy costs of buildings they wish to buy or rent and encourages energy efficiency generally in all buildings including public buildings and new builds. Energy efficiency measures protect the environment, reduce energy costs long term and reduce the depletion of limited resources. Reciprocal arrangements for enforcement in local authority owned buildings increases transparency and standardisation of approach and the independence and objectivity of enforcement decisions.</p>
Priority 3 - An ambitious and innovative council delivering quality services at the right time and in the right place	
Priority 4 - Empowering and supporting communities to be safe, independent and resilient	

Section 4-Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 – The Five Ways of Working (ICLIP)
Sustainable development principles. The WCFG Act requires the Council to consider how any proposal improves the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales using the five ways of working as a baseline)

Five Ways of Working	How have you used the Sustainable Development Principles in forming the proposal?
<p>Long Tern</p> 	<p>Consider the long-term impact of the proposal on the ability of communities to secure their well-being.</p> <p>The preferred Option will provide an independent enforcement regime for Local Authority owned buildings as required by the Regulations.</p>
<p>Prevention</p> 	<p>Consider how the proposal is preventing problems from occurring or getting worse</p> <p>The preferred Option seeks to improve compliance of Local Authority owned buildings with the relevant regulations.</p>

<p>Integration</p> 	<p>Consider how your proposal will impact on other services provided in our communities (these might be Council services or services delivered by other organisations or groups)</p> <p>Liaison with Officers across the Regeneration and Community Services Directorate and been carried out and this will continue in order that obligations of the Authority as Corporate Landlord are in compliance with the relevant regulations covered in this report.</p>
<p>Collaboration</p> 	<p>Consider how you are working with Council services or services delivered by other organisations or groups in our communities.</p> <p>The Draft Agreement proposed has been overseen by the Council’s Legal Officers and creates a reciprocal partnership arrangement with Torfaen County Borough Council. The proposal is a result of discussions between Gwent Trading Standards Managers to provide appropriate reciprocal agreements, as required by the legislation.</p>
<p>Involvement</p> 	<p>Consider how you involve people who have an interest in this proposal and ensure that they represent the diversity of our communities.</p> <p>Consultation on the proposal has been undertaken with relevant Officers of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council and Torfaen County Borough Council.</p>

How does your proposal link to the Welsh Governments Priorities for Wales? Please indicate below.

1. **A PROSPEROUS WALES** ... an innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.

The legislation seeks to enable potential purchasers and tenants to establish the energy costs of buildings they wish to buy or rent and encourages energy efficiency generally in all buildings including public buildings and new builds. Energy efficiency measures protect the environment, reduce energy costs long term and reduce the depletion of limited resources. Reciprocal arrangements as proposed, for enforcement in local authority owned buildings increases transparency and standardisation of approach and the independence and objectivity of enforcement decisions.

2. **A RESILIENT WALES** ... a nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change). Think about how your activity will have regard to protecting and enhancing biodiversity.

This proposal does not have a direct impact upon these matters however the principle underlying the Regulations is to make the energy efficiency of buildings transparent, inform occupiers and users about their building's or systems current energy performance and make recommendations on how to improve energy efficiency.

3. **A HEALTHIER WALES ...** a society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.

This proposal does not have a direct impact upon these matters.

4. **A MORE EQUAL WALES ...** A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).

This proposal does not have a direct impact upon these matters.

5. **A WALES OF COHESIVE COMMUNITIES ...** attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.


This proposal does not have a direct impact upon these matters.

6. **A WALES OF VIBRANT CULTURE AND THRIVING ...** a society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.

This proposal does not have a direct impact upon these matters.

7. **A GLOBALLY RESPONSIBLE WALES ...** a nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being.

This proposal does not have a direct impact upon these matters however the principle underlying the Regulations is to make the energy efficiency of buildings transparent, inform occupiers and users about their building's or systems current energy performance and make recommendations on how to improve energy efficiency.

Section 5-Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and Welsh Language Standards			
<i>(The Welsh Language Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards require the Council to have 'due regard' for the positive or negative impact that any proposal may have on opportunities to use the Welsh language. Welsh Language Standards)</i>			
Requirement	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts in regards to the below?	What can be done to mitigate any negative impacts?	Please demonstrate any evidence used to form this opinion.
Compliance with the Welsh Language Standards. <i>Specifically Standards 88 - 93</i>	Neutral		
What opportunities are there to promote the Welsh Language? <i>e.g. status, use of</i>	Neutral		

<i>Welsh language services, use of Welsh in everyday life in work / community</i>			
What opportunities are there for a person or person to use the Welsh Language? e.g. staff, residents and visitors	Neutral		
Has the Welsh Language been considered in order to treat the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?	Neutral		

Section 6 – Children’s Rights Approach - [The Right Way](#)

The Children’s Rights Approach – The Right Way is a framework for working with children, grounded in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). It places the UNCRC at the core of planning and service delivery and integrates children’s rights into every aspect of decision-making, policy and practice. The Right Way focuses on three main them Participation, Provision and Protection.

Protected characteristics	Will the proposal have any positive impacts on the Children’s Rights Approach?	Will the proposal have any negative impacts on the Children’s Rights Approach?	Outline how the proposal could maximise any positive impacts or minimise any negative impact. Please indicate any views evidence you have that supports this.
Participation (child or young person as someone who actively	None expected	None expected	

contributes to society as a citizen)			
Provision (the basic rights of children and young people to survive and develop)	None expected	None expected	
Protection (children and young people are protected against exploitation, abuse or discrimination)	None expected	None expected	

Section 7– Community Safety

Duty to Consider Crime and Disorder Implications

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a duty on the local authority to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder, anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment, the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances, re-offending and serious violence.

Impacts	Will the proposal have any positive impacts on crime and disorder?	Will the proposal have any negative impacts on crime and disorder?	Outline how the proposal could maximise any positive impacts or minimise any negative impact. Please indicate any views evidence you have that supports this.
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Crime (consider impact on each: victims, offenders and neighbourhoods)	Positive	None	The proposal seeks to ensure a fair, independent approach to enforcement of the Regulations in relation to Local Authority owned buildings.
Anti-Social Behaviour and behaviour adversely affecting the local environment (consider impact on each: victims, offenders, neighbourhoods and green spaces)	The proposal does not have a direct impact upon these matters.	None	
Misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances (Think vulnerable children, adults, families and communities)	No direct impact upon these matters	None	
Re-offending (Think young people and adults, victims, families, communities)	No direct impact upon these matters	None	
Serious Violence (Think vulnerable young people, vulnerable adults, victims, families, communities)	No direct impact upon these matters	None	

Counter Terrorism (People and places that are vulnerable to terrorism or violent extremism)	No direct impact upon these matters	None	
Community Cohesion (Asylum seekers, Migrants, Victims or Hate Crime, Community tensions)	No direct impact upon these matters	None	

Section 8- Armed Forces Covenant Duty AFC Draft Statutory Guidance - Final.pdf			
Impacts	Will the proposal have any positive impacts on the armed forces community?	Will the proposal have any negative impacts on the armed forces community?	Outline how the proposal could maximise any positive impacts or minimise any negative impact. Please indicate any views evidence you have that supports this.
Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of services • Planning and funding • Co-operation between bodies and professionals 	No direct impact upon these matters	None	

<p>These healthcare functions are within scope of the Duty in the following settings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHS Primary Care services, including general practice, community pharmacies, NHS dental, NHS optometry services and public health screening services. • NHS Secondary Care services, including urgent and emergency care, hospital and community services, specialist care, mental health services, and additional needs services (as applicable). • Local authority-delivered healthcare services, including sexual health services and drug and alcohol misuse services 			
<p>Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions • Educational attainment and curriculum • Child wellbeing 	<p>No direct impact upon these matters</p>	<p>None</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport • Attendance • Additional needs support • Use of Service Pupil Premium funding (England only) <p>These education functions are within scope of the Duty in compulsory education settings, that is, primary, secondary, and, for England only, compulsory further education. The Duty does not cover nursery (early years education), higher education, or other voluntary adult education settings</p>			
<p>Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocations policy for social housing • Tenancy strategies (England only) • Homelessness • Disabled Facilities Grants 	<p>No direct impact upon these matters</p>	<p>None</p>	

Section 9-Data-Please outline any data or evidence that has been used to develop the proposal, this can be previous consultations, local/national data, pilot projects, reports, feedback from clients etc.

Data/evidence –What data/evidence was used? - provide any links.	What were the key findings?	How has the data/evidence informed this proposal?
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<p>The proposal has been formulated in order to comply with legislative requirements.</p>	<p>Regulation 34A of the Energy Performance of Buildings (England and Wales) Regulations 2012(as amended) stipulate a number of requirements that this proposal helps to satisfy.</p>	
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Are there any data or information gaps and if so what are they and how do you intend to address them?

<p>None known currently</p>

Section 10-Consultation. Please provide details of consultation undertaken to support the proposal. Please consider the Gunning Principles: -

Principle 1: Consultation must take place when the proposals are still at a formative stage. You must not have already made up your mind.

Principle 2: Sufficient reasons must be put forward to allow for intelligent consideration and response. Have people been given the information and opportunity to influence?

Principle 3: Adequate time must be given for consideration and response. Is the consultation long enough bearing in mind the circumstances?

Principle 4: The product of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account when finalising the decision

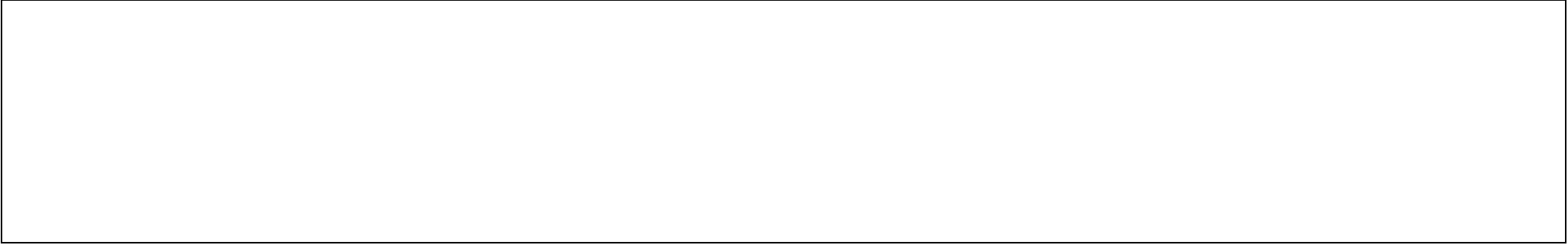
Briefly describe any planned consultations or consultations that have been carried out to date. Please consider the above principles.

Please consider the following questions; -

- 1. Who did you consult?** The proposal has not required any specific consultation to take place as matters concerned are legal requirements.
- 2. When did the consultation take place and was adequate time given for a response?** N/A
- 3. Was there enough information provided to respond effectively?** N/A
- 4. What were the findings?** N/A
- 5. Have the findings been considered in regards to the decision?** N/A



Blaenau Gwent
County Borough Council



Section 11-Monitoring and Review	
How will the implementation of the proposal be monitored, including the impacts or changes made?	Monitoring of enforcement activity under these Regulation will be undertaken as part of the normal departmental management of the Service and reported annually as mentioned in 2.2 to the Secretary of State for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.
What monitoring tools will be used?	Liaison with relevant Officers of the Council and appropriate information exchange will be maintained to monitor compliance with the regulations and effectiveness of the agreement established under this proposal.
How will the results be used for future development?	Areas for improvement arising for compliance monitoring work will be identified in order that appropriate action can be taken to ensure legislative compliance.
How and when will it be reviewed?	A compliance status report will be provided by the Head of Community Services annually to Trading Standards, to assist in monitoring compliance levels of Blaenau Gwent Council Buildings.
Who is responsible for ensuring this happens?	Overall responsibility rests with appropriate heads of service within the Regeneration and Community Services Directorate.

Section 12 - Decision

Using the information you have gathered from sections 1-9 please state in the table below whether you are able to proceed with the proposal.

Continue with the proposal in its current form Yes No

Continue with proposal but take into account reasonable steps to mitigate any negative impacts of the proposal	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
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Name of person completing the IIA	
Name:	Steve Osborne
Job Title:	Team Manager- Trading Standards and Licensing
Date:	12.4.23

Head of Service Approval			
Name:	David Thompson		
Job Title:	Service Manager – Public Protection		
Signature:	D Thompson	Date:	13.4.23

Please contact Policy & Partnerships should you require any further advice or guidance on completing your assessment via lissa.friel@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk or emma.scherptong@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk.

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