

Action Sheet - Community Services Scrutiny Committee – 15th November 2021

Information required on Catch 22

Catch-22 is a social business and not for profit organization with a social mission to design and deliver services that build resilience and aspiration in people of all ages and within communities across the UK. The organization is seeking accommodation within Blaenau Gwent for up to 18 pupils with the intention to provide an alternative setting for children who are not in mainstream or pupil referral unit schools

The organisation has consulted with colleagues in Education who have confirmed the following: -

The council are able to do shorter and longer term provision via the River Centre. However, whilst we have specialist provision of our own we do also have pupils in other specialist SEBD provisions. As are all our neighbouring Local Authorities (LA), that there is a scarcity of specialist SEBD provision. We are aware Catch 22 are currently making provision for a number of pupils from Newport and Torfaen in their setting in Newport. LAs like Newport/Torfaen will have pupil referral units (shorter term provision generally) and then look for out of county options when they need to. For the likes of Newport, Catch-22 is a huge benefit in terms of transport savings and keeping learners in the community.

Catch-22 would fit into our continuum of provision as it would provide a further option for us at the most complex end. We would only place SEBD learners in the Independent sector as a last resort and only when our current school provision is at capacity. The provision could be seen to complement the education we can offer for SEBD learners in BG and would also support the increase in numbers of out of county CLA pupils being placed within the LA. This type of provision would complement the education we can offer in BG and support the increase in number of OOC CLA pupils being placed within the LA.

Education have also confirmed that they would not be looking to financially support Catch 22 and would pay placement costs if the need to make a placement was required. They would also be reluctant to co-locate such a function within existing school sites.

In terms of location and accommodation, Catch 22 are seeking a classroom sized room with additional ancillary space. The council have been exploring opportunities with them including a potential opportunity with a building that we expected to be returned to the Council. In this respect we ran a selection process to identify new tenants. However legal issues with Trustees and transfer or part they own/ surrender of the lease means this hasn't as yet moved forward.

We have been speaking to the Head of the local Catch 22 to keep them updated and they have confirmed that they are exploring other opportunities within the area and if that is in a Council owned building subject to a lease to another 3rd sector organisation this will need to be reported back to the Council for consideration.

