

Committee: **Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee**
 Date of meeting: **6th November**
 Report Subject: **Youth Service Performance Report 2018 – 2019 (Financial Year)**
 Portfolio Holder: **Cllr J Collins, Executive Member for Education**
 Report Written by: **Joanne Sims, Youth Services Manager**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
✓	15.10.19	28.10.19			06.11.19	18.12.19		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide an update on the performance of the Youth Service and for Members to scrutinise the impact of the service. The ‘Youth Work in Wales Statistical Release 2018-19’ is not published at time of writing the report but should be available early November to use as a comparison.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The report will update Scrutiny on the continued progress of the Youth Service, including its Open Access provision and Targeted Provision. The report will outline the most recent data linked to the Reach, Accreditation outcomes and reduction of number of young people becoming NEET. Key legislation and guidance underpinning Youth Work in Wales includes the new National Youth Work Strategy for Wales, Youth Work in Wales: Principles and Purposes, the Welsh Government’s Youth Engagement and Progression Framework, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) Act 2015.
- 2.3 Blaenau Gwent Youth Service provides information, support and learning opportunities for young people aged 11-25 and also supports young people through earlier transitions from 9 years old, based on a voluntary relationship between the young person and youth worker. In addition, the Youth Service co-ordinates the 11-18 Counselling Service and the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF), which aims to reduce the numbers of young people who become NEET (not in Education, Employment or Training) up to the age of 25. The Youth Service provides both open access and targeted programmes of work.
- 2.4 The Youth Service is a community based provision, housed in the Ebbw Vale Cultural Centre and Abertillery Youth Centre, with support offered to young people across all mainstream secondary schools and the River Centre 3-16. Youth Clubs are provided in Abertillery, Cwm and Ebbw Vale, being developed in Tredegar and Brynmawr and a small street based Detached Youth Team working across hot spot areas in Blaenau Gwent.

- 2.5 Open Access youth provision includes D of E (Duke of Edinburgh), Detached and Outreach, Youth Information Service, Young Reps Volunteering programme, Youth Ambassadors (YAMs), Health and Well-being workshops and training, Youth Clubs, Open for Youth Nights, school holiday programmes and the 11-18 Counselling Service.
- 2.6 Targeted Youth Provision includes Inspire to Achieve 11-16, Inspire to Work 16-24 and the Positive Futures anti-social behaviour programme.
- 2.7 Since 2013, the Youth Service has played a leading role in implementing the Welsh Government's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF - NEETs). This has included maintaining and developing the Raising Aspirations Group, the strategic multi-agency forum to oversee the YEPF, implementing the Early Identification Tool to ensure that young people at risk of becoming NEET are known and supported, overseeing the lead worker role, and monitoring progress to ensure that the numbers of young people becoming NEET are reduced.
- 2.8 The Youth Service line manages the local delivery of two ESF youth programmes, Inspire 2 Achieve and Inspire 2 Work. This funding has secured sustainability for the Youth Service's work linked to the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF). The funding is in place until 2022, with an extension expected until 2023, which ensures continued support for young people both at risk of becoming and currently NEET.
- 2.9 The Youth Service has recently appointed additional youth workers in the Inspire projects to support young people who need additional support with their emotional and mental health. Further posts are soon to be appointed to work alongside this team focussing on issues of youth homelessness and mental health.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 **Option 1**

Members are asked to scrutinise the information detailed within the report, thereby contributing to the continuous self-evaluation of the service prior to making appropriate recommendations to the Executive Committee.

Option 2

Accept the report as provided.

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

- 4.1 The Youth Service contributes to all 5 areas of the Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan through supporting young people to overcome barriers in their life enabling them to become positive members of their community. The service also contributes to key objectives within the Corporate Plan, in particular those within Education and also Regeneration. The programmes provide support to some of the most vulnerable young people in Blaenau Gwent, supporting them to overcome significant barriers to their learning, training and/or employment.

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

5. Implications Against Each Option

5.1 Impact on Budget:

In 2018/19 the Youth Service was funded partly through a core budget of £349,541, and external grants of £1,061,047 (from ESF - European Social Fund, Positive Futures and Welsh Government Youth Support Grant). Therefore, the total income for the Youth Service in 2018/19 was £1,410,588. All grants have been secured for the next financial year, with the ESF funding secured up until 2022 and additional funding sourced from Welsh Government to enhance the youth work offer to young people around youth homelessness and mental health.

5.2 Risk Including Mitigating Actions:

The reliance on external funding is identified as a risk. Securing ESF monies until 2022 provides some stability for targeted services. However, the majority of grants are funded on an annual basis, with annual action plans, which does not allow long term financial planning. This has been flagged up as a concern and needs to be considered in future planning.

5.3 Legal:

There are no legal implications for this report.

5.4 Human Resources:

There are no direct staffing implications associated with this report.

6. Supporting Evidence

6.1 **Performance Information and Data:**

The comparative data for the Youth Service across Wales is not available yet but year on year comparison demonstrates the service is good, taking account of its statutory duties and meeting them effectively, providing a wide range of universal and targeted opportunities for young people aged 11-25.

6.1.1 **Youth Service Impact:**

In 2018/19, 17% (2010 individual young people) of 11-25 year olds were registered (Reach) and supported by the Youth Service, with an additional 7298 contacts made with anonymous young people (1000 more than the previous year). The 'Reach' has stayed the same as last year with a slight increase of 11 young people. We do not yet have the all Wales comparison, which will be available in November.

Out of the 2010 individuals, 15% (301 young people) gained 456 nationally recognised accreditations. The number of young people gaining a qualification stayed the same as last year, which was not expected as this is not the focus of the work. The outcomes for each programme are now measured on improved well-being as well as improvement in either attendance and behaviour, rather than accreditations.

Numbers of individual young people gaining nationally recognised accreditations

	Level achieved at 31 August							Total 2017-18
	Entry Level	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Duke of Edinburgh Award	Any other National Accreditation	Total 2018-19	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Gender								
Male	6	129	2	6	1	0	144	142
Female	8	135	8	4	2	0	157	164
Total	14	264	10	10	3	0	301	306

Numbers of nationally recognised accreditations gained by young people

	Level achieved at 31 August							Total 2017-18
	Entry Level	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Duke of Edinburgh Award	Any other National Accreditation	Total 2018-19	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Gender								
Male	6	219	2	6	1	0	234	205
Female	8	200	8	4	2	0	222	243
Total	14	419	10	10	3	0	456	448

Out of the 301 young people gaining accreditations, 144 males gained 234 accreditations and 157 females gained 222 accreditations. This is similar compared to last year. Except for a spike in figures two years ago, the service has seen a year on year increase in young people gaining accredited outcomes, levelling out for the last two years.

Of those supported by the Youth Service, 69% (1533 young people) were aged 11-16 and 31% (477 young people) were aged 17-25 years old. This reflects the funding focus on school age young people and transition support for year 11 young people. These figures are recorded through the work with young people in the following projects: Inspire 2 Achieve, Inspire 2 Work, Health and Wellbeing, Duke of Edinburgh, Positive Futures, Young Ambassadors, the BYG Editorial Group, Youth Clubs and Young Reps Volunteering programme.

In addition, in 2018/19 the Youth Service recorded supporting young people *anonymously* (not registered) through the 11-18 Counselling Service, C Card, detached youth work, outreach and out of school activities and events. The Youth Service had 7298 anonymous contacts with young people (one contact is between 1-3

hours).

6.1.2 Effective use of core funding and grants:

The Youth Service's core Council budget is effectively used to employ a small core team to access and administer external grants to meet identified need. These grants include European Social Funding, Welsh Government Youth Support Grant, Positive Futures and Children in Need. The grants enable the service to provide support to the most vulnerable young people in the community through providing individual tailored support as needed.

Over the last year, both core and external funding has been secured to continue a variety of projects to meet identified needs which include Inspire 2 Achieve, Inspire 2 Work, Health and Wellbeing, Duke of Edinburgh, Detached and Outreach Youth Workers, Positive Futures (ASB programmes), Open for Youth Nights, Youth Clubs, Youth Information Service (including the 'BYG' Editorial group), Young Ambassadors (YAMs), the 11-18 Counselling Service, the Young Reps Volunteering Programme and the school holiday programme. Additional funding has been awarded to recruit in the following financial year youth workers focussing on youth homelessness and mental health.

6.1.3 Youth Engagement and Progression Framework:

The Youth Service co-ordinates the Welsh Government's 'Youth Engagement and Progression Framework' through a strategic multi-agency partnership the Raising Aspirations Group (RAG). The partnership is mature and effective and continues to address all 6 key areas of the Framework. This includes using the Early Identification Tool (6th year), updating the provision map (6th year), updating the online directory of support (6th year), further developing the 'lead worker' role and further refining the tracking and support of young people. All areas of the Blaenau Gwent action plan are developing well and either met or are on track.

The Youth Service also facilitates two practitioner forums: the NEET Practitioner Forum and the Vulnerable Learners Transition subgroup, which are operational multi-agency partnerships, sub groups of the RAG, which co-ordinates the Early Identification process, allocation of lead worker role, and robust tracking and monitoring of transition from year 11 to post 16 provision.

As a result of this co-ordinated approach with partners, there has been a steady reduction of numbers of young people becoming NEET, reaching 1.9% (11 young people) in 2018. This was an increase of 3 young people from the previous year, but is the second lowest figures ever achieved. We are unable to compare this information nationally, as the process used to collate the information by Careers Wales that year was different to those in previous years.

6.2 Expected outcome for the public

If the project targets are achieved, young people will be supported at the times when they most need it and are more likely to achieve better outcomes in school, training and employment. Additionally, as the additional posts are based upon identified gaps in provision in areas such as health and wellbeing, mental health and key transition phases in young people's lives, young people will be better supported to overcome barriers to reach their potential.

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

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

Involving young people is a core principle of youth work. A bi-annual consultation takes place with young people across the borough to understand what they need. In addition, the Youth Service's Advisory Group (YAMS) help decide on how priorities are set and what gaps need meeting. Each project works with young people, both in groups or as individuals to ensure they influence the delivery and design of their particular project. Additionally, young people have been directly involved in the recruitment of all key staff for the past 6 years.

The Youth Service also works collaboratively with a range of partners, both external and internal to the Council. This partnership approach is essential to ensure that young people are well supported and to meet the needs of both external funders and Council priorities.

6.4 **Thinking for the long term**

Funding for ESF programmes until 2022 gives some stability to the provision and support available for young people. However, the support provided is expected to better prepare young people for their future and beyond the lifetime of the programmes.

6.5 **Preventative Focus**

All the work of the Youth Service is preventative in nature. At a very basic level, the support and opportunities can help young people to meet with each other and with trusted adults, feel part of their community which can prevent low levels of mental health, prevent incidents of anti-social behaviour and help young people become active citizens. Both Inspire programmes are preventative in their approach. Inspire 2 Achieve exist to help 'prevent' young people from becoming NEET by focusing on their wellbeing, attendance, behaviour and attainment. Inspire 2 Work exists to 'prevent' young people from developing ingrained negative behaviours and lifestyles into their future.

6.6 **Collaboration/Partnership Working**

The Youth Service facilitates a number of partnership forums including the Raising Aspirations Group (multi-agency partnership). Working in partnership is fundamental to providing a co-ordinated, effective service. The service is continually looking at how it can better develop this area as partners evolve and change.

6.7 **Integration**

This service impacts upon key objectives for both Education and Environment and for 11-25 year olds.

6.8 **EqIA**

N/A

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

- 7.1 The Youth Service reports to a number of external funders and provides an annual audit return to Welsh Government. The Raising Aspirations Group monitors the progress of the local delivery of the two Inspire programmes. A performance monitoring report is presented annually to Education Scrutiny to scrutinise the Youth Service performance. Annual reports and evaluation reports are also provided to Education DMT. Feedback is provided to young people on a regular basis.

Background Documents / Electronic Links

National reports are due to be published in November 2019 which can be used as a comparative.

List of Acronyms

RAG:	Raising Aspirations Group (strategic, multi-agency partnership)
NEET:	Young people not in education, employment or training
YEPF:	Youth Engagement and Progression Framework; a Welsh Government initiative across Wales which outlines the processes and support that needs to be in place to support young people aged 11-25 to prevent them from becoming NEET
UNCRC:	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
D of E:	Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme
The BYG:	A young people's editorial group called 'the Byg' meaning Blaenau Youth Gwent
ASB:	Anti-Social Behaviour
EIT:	Early Identification Tool which is run twice a year to identify which young people are at risk of becoming NEET

