

Committee: **Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **15<sup>th</sup> January 2020**

Report Subject: **Pupil Exclusions**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Joanne Collins, Executive Member for Education**

Report Submitted by: **Lynette Jones, Corporate Director of Education**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
12/12/19	17/12/19	20.12.19			15/01/20	29/01/20		

**1. Purpose of the Report**

1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide opportunity for members to scrutinise exclusion data for Blaenau Gwent at Primary and Secondary school for the academic year 2018-19.

**2. Scope and Background**

2.1 The key Exclusion Guidance is the Welsh Government Guidance entitled: 'Exclusion from Schools and Pupil Referral Units' (April 2015).

2.2 By law (section 52(4) of the Education Act 2002), head teachers, governing bodies, LAs and independent appeal panels must have regard to this guidance when making decisions on exclusion and administering the exclusion procedures and appeals. There is a strong expectation that the guidance will be followed unless there is good reason to depart from it.

2.3 The guidance is very helpful and very prescriptive. For example, the guidance states that only the head teacher can exclude a learner and that unofficial exclusions – sending learners home unofficially – is unlawful. This approach means that the Education Directorate's guidance to schools, and the practice in place in schools, reflects the processes set out in the WG guidance.

2.4 The WG guidance includes template letters for informing parents following an exclusion, and at every stage of the exclusion disciplinary process.

2.5 The Council's Exclusion Guidance for schools, as well as including much of the WG guidance, provides additional local information such as process flowcharts, a standardised reporting format and a checklist for head teachers to ensure that the decision to exclude has been carefully considered and is being used as a last resort.

2.6 Section 6.1 of this report provides the performance information data relating to exclusions.

### 3. **Options for Recommendation**

The options for Scrutiny to consider are:

3.1 **Option 1:** Members are asked to scrutinise the information detailed within the report, thereby contributing to continuous self-evaluation prior to making appropriate recommendations to the Executive Committee.

3.2 **Option 2:** Accept the report as provided.

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

4.1 This work supports the Corporate Plan - Education priority one namely to improve pupil outcomes, progress and wellbeing. It also contributes to priority three regarding supporting school leaders to help our pupils achieve their ambitions.

4.2 This work supports our strategic responsibilities with regard to Objective 2: to progress our Vision for Education (school led, self-improving system based on effective school to school collaboration), as well Objective 4: the securing of effective, efficient and economical high quality provision for our vulnerable learners.

4.3 This work also contributes to the Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan, specifically to help support children and young people to have confidence and aspiration to develop their full potential and places a high value on education and development.

### 5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

The Council is required by the Education Act 1996 to ensure that pupils who have been permanently excluded are in receipt of an appropriate education after fifteen days. If an alternative mainstream school is not appropriate then it becomes necessary to arrange a placement in either an out of county special school or our SEBD (social, emotional and behaviour difficulties) school. There are of course significant cost implications with placing a pupil out of county. In terms of in county placement, which is always the preferred option, tuition costs may be incurred whilst placement is being facilitated.

5.1.1 There are no budgetary implications in terms of fixed term exclusions although we know schools make provision to meet pupil need from within their own budgets to avoid or reduce the likelihood of fixed term exclusions.

## 5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

5.2.1 There is an ongoing need to minimise exclusions so that pupils are attending school on a regular basis and are able to maximise their potential.

5.2.2 Failure to ensure that there is robust monitoring of exclusions in schools and of the quality of Council services to support school improvement carries with it a number of significant risks:

- Undetected and unaddressed decline in school performance and the quality of provision
- Students do not achieve to acceptable levels
- Lack of overall improvement in schools' performance
- Negative impact on the reputation of the Council

5.2.3 Similarly, ineffective monitoring of Council Services also poses a range of risks including:

- Reducing standards and quality of provision in schools
- Poor value for money
- Ineffective support for schools which hinders their improvement
- Negative impact on the reputation of the Council

## 5.3 ***Legal***

There are no legal implications for this report.

## 5.4 ***Human Resources***

There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

## 6. **Supporting Evidence**

### 6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

#### 6.1.1 **The National Picture**

Welsh Government no longer publish Council comparison exclusion data. However, the Welsh Government continues to publish aggregated data. The last data published, in October 2019, reported on national 2017/18 data.

This shows that between 2013/14 and 2017/18:

- fixed term exclusions of 5 days or less have increased by 38%
- fixed term exclusions of over 5 days have increased by 9%.
- permanent exclusions have increased by 95%.

6.1.2 All Wales data is set out in the table below.

	Exclusions 5 days or less	Exclusions 6 days or more	Permanent Exclusions
2013/14	12,375	738	89
2014/15	13,914	805	89
2015/16	14,424	654	109
2016/17	16,044	863	165
2017/18	17,146	806	174

At the last point that comparative Council data was available, Blaenau Gwent was 13/22 for rates of 5 day exclusions or less, 4/5 in our family of LAs and 2/5 in South East Wales Consortia (SEWC). For rate of 6 days or more we were joint 6/22, 2/5 in our family of LAs and 2/5 in SEWC.

In terms of national reasons for exclusion, the main reasons have remained largely unchanged over the last five years with the top three being:

- persistent disruptive behaviour
- verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against an adult
- physical assault on a pupil

### 6.1.3 The Local Picture

The table below sets out Blaenau Gwent exclusion data for the last five years.

#### 6.1.4 Number of Exclusions:

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
<b>KS3 &amp; KS4</b>	<b>408</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>443</b>	<b>564</b>	<b>474</b>
5 days or less	394	305	439	546	460
6 days or more	14	8	4	18	14
<b>FP &amp; KS2</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>133</b>
5 days or less	41	36	74	61	132
6 days or more	2	1	6	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>451</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>625</b>	<b>607</b>

#### 6.1.5 Number of Days:

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
<b>KS3 &amp; KS4</b>	<b>781.5</b>	<b>525</b>	<b>742.5</b>	<b>872</b>	<b>762</b>
5 days or less	669.5	457	705.5	766.5	628
6 days or more	112	68	37	105.5	134
<b>FP &amp; KS2</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>188.5</b>	<b>84.5</b>	<b>225</b>
5 days or less	78	61	139.5	84.5	211.5
6 days or more	19	7	49	0	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>878.5</b>	<b>593</b>	<b>931</b>	<b>956.5</b>	<b>987</b>

Overall we have seen a decrease in exclusions in 2018/19 compared to the previous year, particularly in KS3/4. However, there has been a small increase in the number of days lost to exclusion.

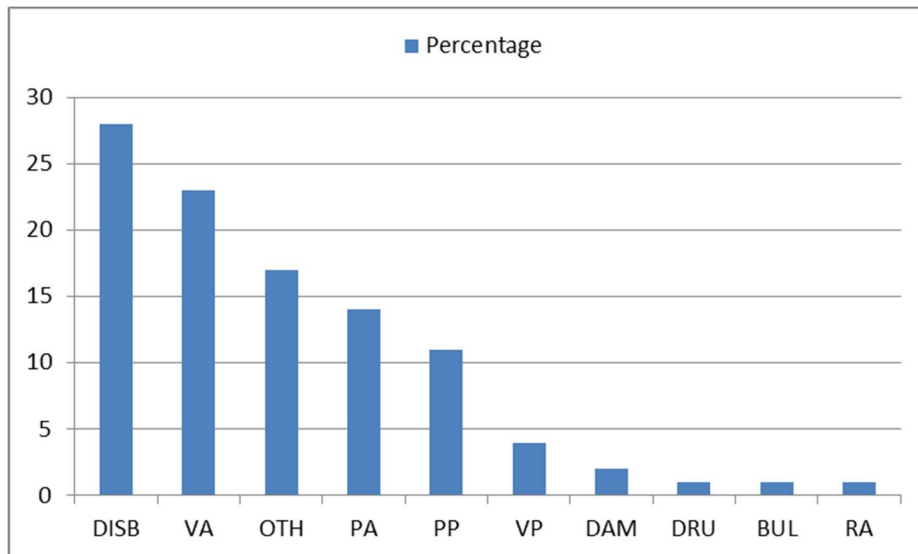
KS3/4 data shows a 19% reduction in the number of exclusions in 2018/19 compared to the previous year and a 12.6% reduction in the number of days lost.

Foundation Phase (FP)/KS2 data shows an increase in incidents of exclusion as well as a commensurate increase in the number of days lost.

Data at FP/KS2 shows that a small number of schools account for 66% of exclusions and in those schools a significant proportion of the total relate to a small number of pupils (11). Further analysis of this data cannot be represented due to the potential for individual pupil identification.

### 6.1.6 Percentage of All Incidents by Reason

Below are the Blaenau Gwent percentages for reasons given by schools for exclusion. Schools are able to use more than one reason but the data below represents the main reason given by schools.

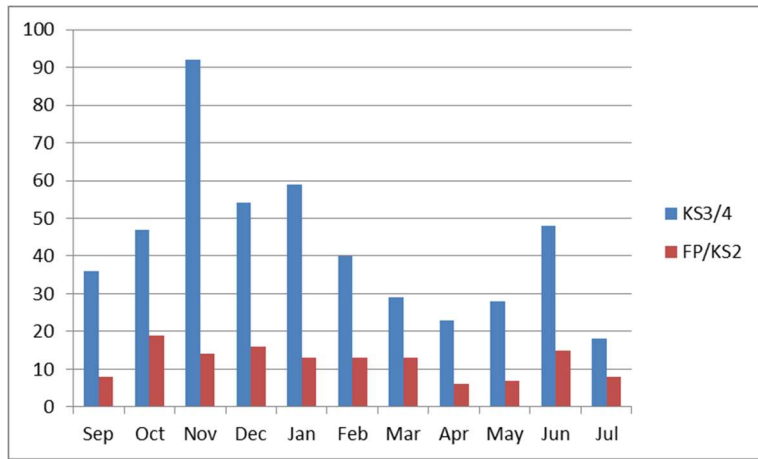


KEY	
DISB	- Persistent disruptive behaviour
VA	- Verbal abuse / threatening behaviour against an adult
OTH	- Other
PA	- Physical assault against adult
PP	- Physical Assault against pupil
VP	- Verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against a pupil
DAM	- Damage
DRU	- Drugs/Alcohol
BUL	- Bullying

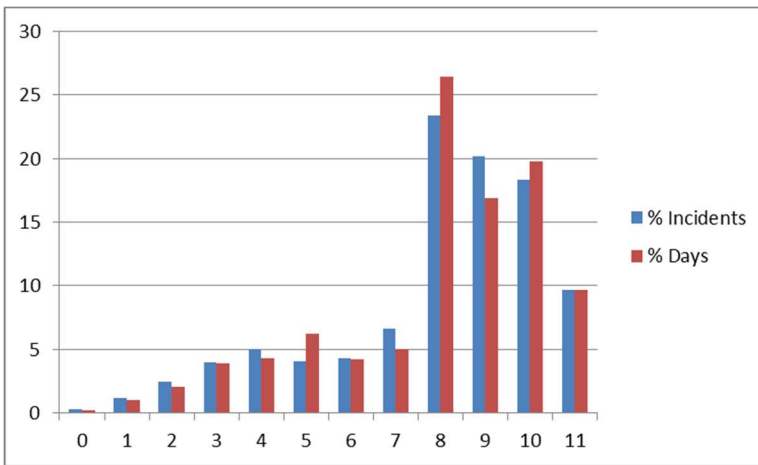
In terms of reasons for exclusion, the main reasons have remained largely unchanged and in line with national trends:

- persistent disruptive behaviour
- verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against an adult
- physical assault on a pupil

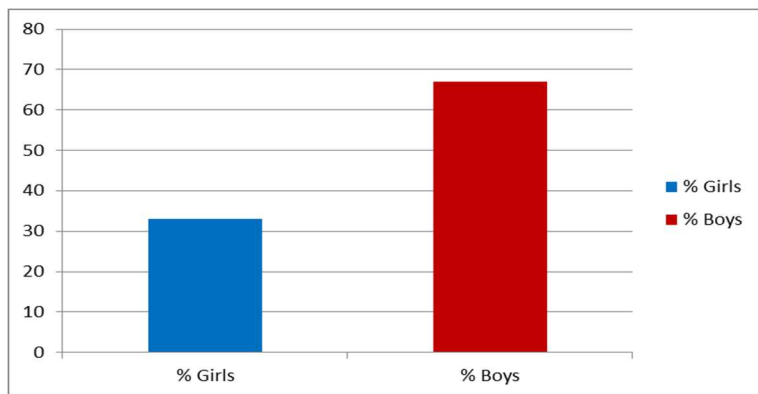
**6.1.7 Exclusions by Month**



**6.1.8 Exclusions by Year Group as a percentage**



**6.1.9 Percentage of Exclusions – Boys/Girls**



#### 6.1.10 **Permanent Exclusions**

It should be noted that because of the limited number of pupils care needs to be taken when drawing any statistical conclusions and due to the limited number further statistical breakdown is not possible.

There were a total of three permanent exclusions in 2018/19 compared to nine in 2017/18 and 12 in 2016/17. Of these all were in KS3/4.

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

Knowing that the Council is working to ensure that the use of exclusions is appropriate and proportionate and that work with schools is ongoing to share good practice to see a reduction in the use of exclusions should provide a level of reassurance to the public.

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

Work is ongoing with a range of partners (other South East Wales Councils, the EAS as well as Health and Social Services) to ensure that we are doing all we can in to minimise the use of exclusion.

#### 6.4 ***Thinking for the long term (forward planning)***

Exclusions, and the use of exclusions, fit within the wider context of education including curriculum change, the focus on wellbeing as well as school to school and regional working.

We know that there is expertise in our schools and we know that there are areas where further focus is required. We are working closely with schools and the EAS regarding a range of Inclusion issues including exclusions.

#### 6.5 ***Preventative focus***

Work is ongoing to ensure that the use of exclusions is appropriate and proportionate, that support and challenge is provided as required, that learning from other regional partners is maximised, that appropriate processes are followed and that schools are benefiting from good practice within Blaenau Gwent and further afield.

#### 6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

Education works closely with Health and Social Services, with the EAS and with other regional Councils. Where alignment and further collaboration is possible these are being pursued.

#### 6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***

Education are working with other agencies and services, taking a multi-service, multi-agency and regional approach.

#### 6.8 ***EqIA (screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)***

There are no adverse impacts in relation to this.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 Suitable monitoring is in place. Exclusions are monitored fortnightly with appropriate challenge and support provided to schools as necessary. Exclusions are also reported to DMT, the Inclusion Monitoring group and Wider group in terms of the involvement of the EAS.

8. **Background Documents / Electronic Links**

N/A

REF: PE.201