

Committee: **Public Services Board Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **13th December 2021**

Report Subject: **Welsh Government Early Years Integration Transformation Programme Pilot Childcare Offer – Joint working Pilot – Blaenau Gwent Pathfinder**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr David Davies, Chair of PSB**

Report Submitted by: **Robert Holcombe, Interim Director of Finance and Procurement (Aneurin Bevan University Health Board) & Ceri Bird, Service Manager, Blaenau Gwent Children’s Services.**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
08.11.21	02.12.21	02.12.21			13.12.21			BG Local Well-being Partnership

1. Purpose of the Report

To update the PSB Scrutiny Committee on the progress made to date on the Welsh Government’s new Early Years Integration Transformation Pilot in the Blaenau Gwent Pathfinder area, including approval to roll out further into the town of Blaina from January 2022.

2 Scope and Background

- 2.1 The Early Years Integration Transformation Pilot (EYITP) emerged out of a recognition by Welsh Government that there was need to address the inequalities in early years’ services across Wales and develop a fluid, responsive early year’s system that will ensure every child in Wales has the best start in life and access to the same services.
- 2.2 The period of life from pre-birth to the end of the Foundation Phase, or 0-7 years of age, is a critical part of childhood. It is widely agreed that early childhood experiences are crucially important for children’s long-term development and their achievements in later life. At these times children and their families have regular contact with a number of different services such as midwifery, health visiting, various family support workers, childcare and early years’ education provision etc. These services are currently accountable to different bodies and can work independently without sharing information or coordinating their support to families. Welsh Government recognised it was time to streamline these services so all children were able to access what they needed when they needed it with no distinctions and barriers put in the way.
- 2.3 Following an offer from Welsh Government to be part of a pilot study, Blaenau Gwent Public Service Board (PSB) agreed to become a pathfinder for the Early Years Integrated Transformation Pilot in June 2019. The Board agreed it

would have the main governance and oversight for the Blaenau Gwent element of the pilot as the programme crosses over Health, Social Services and Education services. Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB), who is the PSB sponsor for the EYITP in Blaenau Gwent has responsibility for the pilot in Blaenau Gwent and is assisted by Ceri Bird, Service Manager, Children's Services who manages the pilot for Blaenau Gwent.

- 2.4 The Gwent Regional Early Years Transformation Steering Board oversees the regional footprint element of the Early Years Integration Transformation Programme and the fluid work between Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, Caerphilly Borough Council and Newport City Council and liaises directly with Welsh Government. Caerphilly County Borough Council are the grant recipients for the Gwent region.
- 2.5 It was agreed by Blaenau Gwent PSB in January 2020 that Phase 1 of the pilot in Blaenau Gwent would be a small pilot to test the model in the self-contained village of Cwm, Ebbw Vale in September 2020. Cwm was chosen by the PSB as it is a self-contained village with a definitive divide between the 2 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) that make up the community. One LSOA is Flying Start and the other non-Flying Start and this would give a perfect base to test the new way of working on a small area. It was agreed in March 2021 that then following a successful pilot in Cwm, Phase 2 would be in the Brynmawr / Nantyglo area in Autumn 2021 which currently has no Flying Start infrastructure. It was agreed that further areas across Blaenau Gwent will then follow on into the pilot if funding was agreed by Welsh Government.

3.0 **Progress to Date**

- 3.1 Phase 1 of the pilot went live in Cwm in September 2020. The new model has brought services together in an integrated way, so they are readily available and accessible to the whole community as they need them without the problem of the Flying Start / non Flying Start geographical divide. Feedback from families has been extremely positive and we have evidence that families feel listened too and not separated from friends and neighbours who live in Flying Start areas. Families are now happy they are able to access services when they needed them, rather than being dependant on postcode eligibility and that they now have a Family Support Worker allocated to them that is there to support them.
- 3.2 The pilot core team in Cwm was established in September 2020 and consists of the Flying Start and Generic Midwives, the Flying Start and Generic Health Visitors, a Family Support Worker, a Clinical Psychologist, the Community Psychiatric Nurse, a Dads Support Worker and the Project Coordinator. Other agencies are invited to attend team discussions when the cases being discussed might necessitate that additional support. Wider support might be in the form of Families First, Supporting People, other housing support, Communities 4 Work, Bridges into Work, various financial support services, ALN support, Speech and Language Therapist, Play Therapy, Parent Infant Mental Health, substance misuse services, domestic abuse support etc.

- 3.4 Despite the pilot needing to be delivered in a different way due to the pandemic, we have still managed to successfully launch the pilot and bring the team together virtually every Monday morning for the “What Matters Meetings”.
- 3.5 The ‘What Matters Meetings’ have been successful in opening up services to all families with children 0-7 years in Cwm regardless of postcode. The meetings bring together services in an integrated way to avoid multiple visits to families by different services and this reduces a delay in support. The pilot has been able to increase local based support for generic families with a named support worker or dad’s worker and ultimately opening up responsive specialist services for all families without the need for waiting lists.
- 3.6 Early feedback from generic staff is that they are feeling more responsive and able to bring in additional support quicker and Flying Start staff are able to focus on what matters to the family rather than being restricted to the 4 core elements of the FS programme.

Other successes to date are: -

- More focus on the Blaenau Gwent Flying Start electronic birth book and ABUHB Responsive Feeding pilot to bring the registration age to 12 weeks after conception to track the child and provide support at the earliest possible stage. This will also enable the accurate planning and allocation of workloads with the aim of ensuring that no family is missed out.
- ABUHB being able to access WCCIS as a joint pilot alongside BGCBC.

4.0 **NEXT STEPS**

- 4.1 Plans are currently underway to move into Brynmawr this month, November 2021, and then Nantyglo in January 2022 as already approved by BG PSB but ABUHB Health Visiting Department has recently had a restructure and Health Visitors have been given new caseloads in Blaenau Gwent.
- 4.2 Brynmawr, Nantyglo and Blaina caseload are being run as a team, if we took Brynmawr and Nantyglo without Blaina this would mean one Health Visitor would have a caseload half in the pilot and half outside the pilot which would mean the services would be very difficult to run and there would be inequality of services being provided to clients. As a result of this we sought the BG Local Well-being Partnership’s to roll into Blaina at the same time as Nantyglo in January 2022, which was approved in November 2021.

5. **Options for Recommendation**

5.2 Option 1

That the Public Services Board Scrutiny Committee notes the roll-out outlined for 2022 and accepts the report.

5.3 Option 2

That the Public Services Board Scrutiny Committee considers the proposed roll-out outlined for 2022 and make specific recommendations to the Local Well-being Partnership

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

This programme supports the Corporate Plan under the Social Services priority “To promote and facilitate new ways of delivering health and social care involving key partners and our communities”.

The Blaenau Gwent Well-being plan lists as one of its five objectives ‘The best start in life for everyone’. Key to this priority is aligning services to mitigate inequity.

7. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

Funding is allocated from Welsh Government on a Health Board footprint basis and is managed by Caerphilly County Borough Council as the grant recipient. In 2020/21 Blaenau Gwent received £50,000 to fund the project coordinators role and £48,000 for staffing infrastructure. Aneurin Bevan University Health Board received regional funding to support the cost of additional health visiting, CPN and midwifery support for Blaenau Gwent.

7.2 The funding for 2021/22 has been confirmed as £50,000 for the project coordinators role and an indicative grant allocation of approximately £388,642 for the Gwent Pathfinders between the 4 partners.

8 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

- That synchronising organisations and programmes will be too complex and the pilot will have to be abandoned.
- Funding may limit scope to roll out into the areas that really need it.
- That COVID 19 will have a third wave and the Pilot will be paused or abandoned.

9. ***Legal***

Welsh Government provide full terms and Conditions of the grant. The grant will not allow for redundancy costs.

10. ***Human Resources***

Fully funded by this Welsh Government grant.

11. ***Supporting Evidence***

11.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

Not yet provided as pilot in its infancy

11.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***

In the long term a more joined-up, responsive early years system leading to better outcomes for children.

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

Welsh Government has undertaken extensive consultation with stakeholders and aims to involve service providers and parents joining forward.

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

An approach that ensures services delivered before birth and in the early years work together in an integrated, multi-agency way to nurture children, support parents and promote child development in the broadest sense. This will improve the immediate impact for families and develop better longer term outcomes for children.

11.5 ***Preventative focus***

There is compelling evidence, for example from Professor James Heckmann and Professor Sir Michael Marmot, that demonstrates the effectiveness, value and high return on investment in early years intervention programmes in tackling inequalities, giving children the best start in life and improving the development of children and their prospects in adulthood.

The benefits from early intervention are vast, but not exclusive to disadvantaged children and families. Early action can bring cost effective benefits by reducing the knock-on costs of expensive health, social care, criminal justice and welfare support later in life.

11.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

This programme is very much focused on collaboration and partnership working with other departments of the Authority and also third sector and Health Board partners. The three local authorities chosen for this pilot, Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly and Newport are working together and also have excellent strong historic working relationships with Swansea and Flintshire who have also been chosen as pilot authorities and were also colleagues for Childcare Offer pilot.

11.7 ***Integration(across service areas)***

We have held the first workshop in Blaenau Gwent and are working alongside the Education Department, Governance, Education Achievement Service and Health. To ensure integration between services for children aged 0-7.

11.8 ***EqlA(screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)***

NA

12. **Monitoring Arrangements**

12.1 Blaenau Gwent Local Well-being Partnership will take over the BG PSB's role of having the main governance and oversight for the local element of the Early Years Integration Transformation Programme through the ABUHB representative who is the PSB sponsor for the EYITP programme.

Blaenau Gwent CBC Corporate Leadership Team will have accountability for the funding awarded through this grant as well as other grant decisions and commissioning. Blaenau Gwent Social Services Senior Management Team will hold operational accountability.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

N/A