

# Public Document Pack



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To: Cllr David Healey (Chairman)

Councillors: Janet Axworthy, Sian Braun, Bob Connah, Paul Cunningham,  
Gladys Healey, Joe Johnson, Tudor Jones, Dave Mackie, Ian Smith,  
Martin White and David Williams

**Co-opted Members:**

Lynn Bartlett, David Hytch, Rebecca Stark and Wendy White

12 March 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

**NOTICE OF REMOTE MEETING**  
**EDUCATION, YOUTH & CULTURE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**THURSDAY, 18 MARCH, 2021 at 2.00 PM**

Yours faithfully

Robert Robins  
Democratic Services Manager

Please note: This will be a remote meeting and 'attendance' will be restricted to Committee Members and those Members of Council who have asked the Head of Democratic Services for an invitation. Such attendees may only speak at the Chair's discretion.

A recording of the meeting will be available to view on line within 48 hours of the meeting at <https://flintshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcasts>

If you have any queries regarding this, please contact a member of the Democratic Services Team on 01352 702345.

## A G E N D A

### 1 **APOLOGIES**

**Purpose:** To receive any apologies.

### 2 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)**

**Purpose:** To receive any Declarations and advise Members accordingly.

### 3 **MINUTES** (Pages 5 - 14)

**Purpose:** To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2021.

### 4 **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING** (Pages 15 - 24)

Report of Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator

**Purpose:** To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Education Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee and to inform the Committee of progress against actions from previous meetings.

### 5 **COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER UPDATE** (Pages 25 - 30)

Report of Chief Officer (Education and Youth) - Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education

**Purpose:** To provide an update on the impact the emergency situation has had on the Business Plan for Holywell Leisure Centre and Cambrian Aquatics

### 6 **UPDATE ON COUNCIL FUNDING FOR SCHOOLS** (Pages 31 - 38)

Report of Chief Officer (Education and Youth) - Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education

**Purpose:** To outline to the Committee the proposal for distributing the additional £1m allocated to secondary schools in the 2021/22 budget.

7 **SELF-EVALUATION REPORT OF EDUCATION SERVICES** (Pages 39 - 100)

Report of Chief Officer (Education and Youth) - Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education

**Purpose:** To update Members on overall service performance over the last two years

8 **HWB DIGITAL PROGRAMME** (Pages 101 - 120)

Report of Chief Officer (Education and Youth) - Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education

**Purpose:** To provide an update on the Hwb Digital Programme and the outcome of the assessment to identify the levels of access to devices and broadband for learners across Flintshire

9 **SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND EXCLUSIONS** (Pages 121 - 132)

Report of Chief Officer (Education and Youth) - Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education

**Purpose:** To provide the Committee with an update on learner attendance and exclusions for Flintshire Schools

10 **RECOVERY STRATEGY UPDATE** (Pages 133 - 152)

Report of Chief Officer (Education and Youth) - Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education

**Purpose:** To provide oversight on the recovery planning for the Committee's respective portfolio(s).

***Please note that there may be a 10 minute adjournment of this meeting if it lasts longer than two hours***

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## **EDUCATION, YOUTH & CULTURE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**28 JANUARY 2021**

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Education, Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

**PRESENT: Councillor David Healey (Chair)**

Councillors: Janet Axworthy, Sian Braun, Bob Connah, Paul Cunningham, Gladys Healey, Joe Johnson, Tudor Jones, Dave Mackie, Ian Smith and Martin White

**CO-OPTED MEMBERS:**

Lynn Bartlett, David Hytch and Wendy White

**APOLOGIES:** Mrs Rebecca Stark and Senior Manager School Improvements Systems

**SUBSTITUTIONS:** Councillor Patrick Heesom (for Councillor David Williams)

**ALSO PRESENT:** Councillors Veronica Gay and Carolyn Thomas attended as observers

**CONTRIBUTORS:**

Councillor Ian Roberts, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education; Chief Officer (Education & Youth); Mr David Edwards, Mr Martin Froggett, Gaynor Murphy and Vicky Lees (GwE) (for agenda item 5), Damian Hughes, Senior Manager, School Planning and Provision (for agenda item 6), Anthony Smith, Corporate Health and Safety Advisor (for agenda item 7) and Jay Davies, Strategic Performance Advisor (for agenda item 8)

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator, Democratic Services Officer and Democratic Services Support Officer

**30. COUNCILLOR KEVIN HUGHES**

The Chairman led the Committee in a silent tribute to Councillor Kevin Hughes who had sadly passed away.

Councillor Tudor Jones spoke of his friendship with Councillor Kevin Hughes and his many achievements in a short time as a County Councillor, particularly his campaign around free sanitary products being made available in schools. He commented on his last message imploring people across Flintshire to remain safe which he said had been very powerful and said that he would miss him greatly.

The Chief Officer (Education & Youth) spoke on behalf of all officers within the Education portfolio and commented on their sadness at hearing that Councillor the whole portfolio who were so desperately sorry to hear the sad news about Kevin and Kevin Hughes ad passed away. She said that he had been hugely influential on the Committee and praised his energy, enthusiasm and creativity. She said that it had

been a pleasure working with him over the years and that he would be sorely missed by all officers who had been grateful for his support.

Mr. David Hytch said that Councillor Kevin Hughes had been a great asset to the Committee and commented on his proactive contributions and how he was always unfailingly positive. He said that he would be a great loss to the County Council, the community in which he representation but most of all to his family.

The Chair spoke in support of all the previous comments and said that Councillor Kevin Hughes has been a tremendous Member of the Committee. He recalled the Committee considering the implications of social media on school children and how Councillor Hughes has arranged a site visit for himself and the Chief Officer to enable engagement with school children. Councillor Hughes had then prepared a press article to highlight the importance of keeping children safe on social media but did not reference his involvement which showed his unselfish nature and his desire to protect children.

### **31. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)**

The Chairman, Councillor Gladys Healey and Councillor Tudor Jones declared a personal interest in agenda item 6 – School Modernisation Update.

### **32. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2020 were received.

Councillor Bob Connah proposed that the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. The proposal was seconded by Joe Johnson.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **33. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING**

The Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator introduced the draft Forward Work Programme and advised that formal feedback from Estyn on Blended Learning would be included as part of the self-evaluation of Education Services report to be presented at the next meeting. She drew Members attention to the reports to be presented to the joint Education Youth & Culture and Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny meeting on the 17 June and advised that a report on Intensive Assessment and Therapeutic Support, as suggested by Councillor Mackie, had been added.

On action tracking, the majority of the actions had been completed, with information from IT on funding from Welsh Government (WG) for digital learning still to be provided to the Committee.

Mr David Hytch thanked the Chief Officer (Education & Youth) for the information circulated on Adult Community Learning but clarified that his specific question during

the last meeting had been around how potential clients would be identified. The Chief Officer advised that due to the increase in funding and partnership working with Wrexham Council and the Deeside Community Trust, courses would be advertised more widely with an extensive range of programmes being made available to all people above the age of 19. Courses would be advertised for learners to apply to but also community partners could signpost or refer in – such as Coleg Cambria and Communities for Work, who were represented on the partnership.

The recommendations outlined within the report were proposed by Councillor Paul Cunningham and seconded by Councillor Gladys Healey.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Forward Work Programme be noted;
- (b) That the Facilitator, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, be authorised to vary the Forward Work Programme between meetings, as the need arises; and
- (c) That the progress made in completing the outstanding actions be noted.

**34. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT AND EXAMINATION 2021 UPDATE**

The Chief Officer (Education & Youth) introduced the School Improvement and Examination 2021 Update report and welcomed the following GwE officers to the meeting, who would assist in presenting the report:-

- Mr. Martyn Froggett, Secondary Core Lead for Flintshire
- Mr. David Edwards, Primary Core Lead for Flintshire
- Mrs. Gaynor Murphy, Secondary Improvement Advisor
- Mrs. Vicky Lees, Primary Improvement Advisor

The Chief Officer commented on the Blended Learning report presented to the Committee at its meeting in December and explained that this report gave a broader overview of the support the regional service had provided to all local authorities during the emergency situation. The focus had been on the well-being of learners, school communities and staff which had helped to shape and maintain the focus on school improvement in all schools whilst providing support during the pandemic.

The Chief Officer provided an overview of the support provided for core skills of literacy and numeracy and the professional development plan delivered by GwE for teachers and classroom assistants to ensure quality learning whether in the classroom or via digital remote learning.

The detailed presentation on Accelerating Learning Programme was provided which covered the following areas:-

- Context – Literacy and numeracy, delivering and maintaining high quality teaching across the curriculum with high quality, structured and targeted interventions;
- Accelerating the learning;
- Primary – examples of learning sequences, evidence reviews and teaching and learning strategies;

- Accelerating the learning within the Secondary Sector;
- Literacy Toolkit;
- Literacy Targeted Offer;
- GCSE English Language – Inference, Accelerate;
- Mathemateg GwE;
- Impact

In response to a comment from Councillor Ian Smith, it was agreed that a larger print copy of the accelerated skills model, shown as part of the presentation, be circulated to the Committee following the meeting.

Mr David Hytch thanked officers for the report and presentation which he felt had been informative and commented on the positive co-ordination and collaboration between the local authority, schools and GwE. He commented on the responses to individual surveys, as shown within the appendix to the report and questioned whether this related to Wales as a whole rather than just Flintshire and suggested that it should be highlighted within the report that the wellbeing of pupils and staff was of the highest priority. He also commented on the immense strain schools were feeling in getting the balance right between school improvement and prioritising staff and learner wellbeing, as stated within the report, and whilst he welcomed advisors looking to verify the quality of learning, in the circumstances he hoped that the pressure schools were under would be taken into account. The Chief Officer responded that it was not their intention to put extra pressure on schools but the local authority had responsibility standards in schools and engaged regularly with Estyn. She reassured Members that additional pressure was not being put on schools, it was a case of monitoring the situation and adjusting support accordingly.

Mr. Froggett explained that it was not possible to undertake the usual standard of quality assurance and confirmed that focus was around supporting schools during a difficult time with the priority being on wellbeing. Discussions had been held with Head Teachers and the role of GwE was to mitigate their concerns and support them through the emergency. Mr. Edwards supported the comments and gave examples of live sessions provided at the requests of schools.

In response to a question from Mrs Bartlett, the Chief Officer outlined the importance of providing support for parents and advised that GwE had been proactive around this issue when advising schools of what an effective blended learning offer should be. A document had been provided to schools which provided guidance on communicating with parents to provide reassurance. Mrs. Gaynor Murphy advised of videos provided to schools to share with parents to assist them in supporting their children with basic literacy. Mrs. Bartlett thanked officers for their response and commented on her own personal experience and the positive way in which schools had adapted during the emergency situation, but raised concerns around the wellbeing of teachers and parents.

Councillor Dave Mackie commented on literacy and numeracy support and asked if this was additional to existing support. He also commented on accelerated learning and asked if this meant tasks being completed in less time and was it improving the availability of materials. Mrs. Lees responded that the Accelerated Learning Programme provided schools with tools to measure where the pupils were



with their online learning to assist when they returned to face to face learning in schools. The Programme strengthened literacy and numeracy skills and provided support to help pupils progress.

The Chairman thanked GwE for the way in which it had responded to the emergency situation and for the packages of support provided to schools and parents which were underpinned by the wellbeing of students. He commented on the challenge for GwE in liaising with schools to create grades for GCSE and A Levels and asked if the national reading and numeracy tests would still need to be taken. The Chief Officer responded that there were significant challenges ahead which was why joint working in schools was key to identify the sources of evidence upon which to base those judgements and this would be shared with pupils and parents. This information would be very transparent with learners aware of the date when the final assessments had to be submitted. Qualification Wales were working to provide guidance on this. It was a significant challenge for schools and GwE would be providing structured support but it would be schools making these decisions not GwE. Mrs. Lees confirmed that the Welsh Government National Personalised Assessments for reading and numeracy were still live and schools were able to access each child's account but there was no requirement for schools to carry out these tests during the current situation. The Chief Officer confirmed that this guidance had been circulated via the Head Teachers' Federation and Mr. Edwards also confirmed all schools were informed that they could use these tests for diagnostic purposes, as appropriate.

Councillor Mackie commented on the various training options available to teachers through GwE and suggested that information on how many teachers had taken part in the training sessions, their feedback on the training sessions and how many training sessions had taken place, could be included in future reports. He also commented on pupils who were not engaging and asked what additional support was being provided to assist pupils to re-engage and how what support would be provided to enable these pupils not to fall too far behind when they returned to face to face learning in schools. The Chief Officer referred to the Professional Learning Offer which had been provided as part of the report, which enabled the Committee to view the range and depth of professional learning courses being offered to schools. Mr. Froggett reported on the many training opportunities available and the National Programmes, such as, MPQH and middle leadership which had restarted recently with strong subscriptions from Flintshire. The Chief Officer said that schools would engage with whatever aspect of support they felt they needed and explained that the virtual offer also made the training more accessible and it was for schools in discussions with the Supporting Improvement Advisors to engage with any programmes they felt they required.

The Leader of the Council commented on the range of techniques being used by teachers to engage with young people during the emergency situation and said that structured play activities would be required to allow pupils to develop both academically and socially. He expressed caution around the expectations being imposed on young people, especially younger children who would need to adjust to the structure of school once again and that all young people needed to be assessed to ascertain their needs. He had written to the Minister for Education as WLGA Spokesperson for Education requesting additional resources to meet the cost of additional support which would be required.

Mrs. Wendy White commended the packages of training provided in Flintshire and provided information on the training and development of leaders that was being provided in Catholic Schools and that this was available to any teacher or associate member of staff. This programme sat across the North West diocese and was available online with the focus on developing people coming into North Wales especially with regard to talent management to highlight what Wales had to offer in their fantastic schools. This was working in harmony with Flintshire.

Mrs Bartlett spoke in support of the comments made by the Leader of the Council and said that she was very pleased that the focus in Wales had been on well-being and to not allow these children to think they had failed. She felt that pupils should be congratulated for how they had developed new ways to entertaining themselves, supported their families, developed new interests and progressed their IT skills during this pandemic.

The recommendations outlined within the report, including the additional wording that the Committee applauds the range of support delivered by GwE, as suggested the Chairman, were proposed by Councillor Paul Cunningham and seconded by Mrs Lynne Bartlett.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Committee confirmed it had been able to effectively scrutinise the work of GwE in their delivery of school improvement services to Flintshire schools during the Covid-19 pandemic;
- (b) That the Committee acknowledged and applauded the extensive range of support delivered by GwE to enable schools to quickly and effectively change their models of educational provision in direct response to the Covid-19 pandemic; and
- (c) That the Committee acknowledged the effective partnership working between GwE and the Education Portfolio to ensure that Flintshire schools received high quality and timely support in an unprecedented period of change and anxiety.

### **35. SCHOOL MODERNISATION UPDATE**

The Senior Manager (School Planning and Provision) presented the report which outlined progress of the School Modernisation Programme across a wide number of projects. Despite significant challenges due to the emergency situation, the School Modernisation Team had made significant progress in the Programme and had maintained and delivered in anticipated timelines by adapting working methods.

Updates on specific projects within the Programme were provided by the Senior Manager, as outlined within the report.

Councillor Tudor Jones commented on the proposal to establish a federation between Ysgol yr Esgob VA and Lixwm VA primary school and said that the co-operation between both schools and been very positive. He also commented on the

childcare offer at both schools and thanked the Senior Manager for his support in ensuring this was included as part of the project.

Councillor Dave Mackie asked if additional projects would be considered following completion of Band A and B of the Programme and also if an update on the High School in Saltney could be provided. He also asked if clarification on MIM funding could be provided to the Committee. The Senior Manager explained that MIM was a new model of the Private Public Partnership (PPP) and that WEPCo was a subsidiary of the Welsh Bank of Wales and was also in partnership with Welsh Government (WG). The overarching percentage intervention rate the authority gleaned from this was 81%. He confirmed that this was a better model than traditional model where schools were built with a lot of money and then there were insufficient funds to maintain the buildings. This model provided a 25 year life cycle for the building so when the building was handed back to the local authority it was in excellent condition with no maintenance issues. He also advised that the Band C Programme was due to commence in 2025 with planning work having already commenced.

The Chief Officer reported that work was progressing on preparing for consulting on proposals for the High School in Saltney, which had been difficult due to the emergency situation. Suggestions were being considered around providing the consultation document electronically to ensure a high level of engagement. She reassured Members that this project remained a high priority.

In response to comments made by Councillor Patrick Heesom, the Leader of the Council advised that the local authority had significantly invested in schools located in the west of Flintshire and outlined recent projects.

Mrs. Wendy White thanked the Senior Manager and his Team for his support. She commented on the need for Catholic schools to provide 15% funding as part of a project and raised concerns that this was not possible for small schools. She advised that Welsh Government (WG) were currently being lobbied to re-consider this going forward to ensure schools were not left out because of the lack of funding.

The recommendation outlined within the report was moved by Councillor Janet Axworthy and seconded by Councillor Gladys Healey.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the Committee note the content of the report and progress of the School Modernisation programme.

### **36. SCHOOLS COVID LESSONS LEARNED & RISK ASSESSMENTS**

The Chief Officer introduced the report and thanked the and thanked the Corporate Health and Safety Advisor and Health & Safety Team for the support provided to schools during the emergency situation. She outlined the changes which had been introduced around risk assessments and reassured Members that schools were working safely and continually monitoring the situation.

The Corporate Health and Safety Advisor reported on the advice and support provided to Schools and advised that all school risk assessments had been reviewed

twice, with clear feedback and recommendations provided where necessary. Following the review of school risk assessments at the end of the autumn term, the Health and Safety Team had produced a report which summarised the key lessons learnt. This had been shared with all schools to ensure continuous improvement of the risk assessment process. Details of the lessons learnt were outlined within Appendix 1 of the report.

Mr. David Hytch thanked the Corporate Health & Safety Advisor for the support provided to schools during the emergency situation. He commented on the lessons learnt document at Appendix 1 and asked whether it was appropriate for school governors to actively conduct safety inspections of school premises and raised concerns around the risks to them. The Corporate Health & Safety Advisor agreed that this was currently difficult with the Health & Safety Team also currently limiting inspections. Although it was difficult to carry out physical inspections governors could review documentation and hold discussions with staff instead to ascertain if things were working or not. The Chief Officer explained that this was a recommendation and not a directive and would only take place if the person was willing to visit the school premises and it was safe to do so.

The recommendations outlined within the report were moved by Councillor Paul Cunningham and seconded by Councillor Gladys Healey.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Committee welcome the assurance provided that schools have robust risk assessments in place and effective control measures to maintain safe school environments; and
- (b) That the Committee acknowledged the work of the Corporate Health and Safety Team in supporting schools in the pandemic and note the lessons learned to date.

**37. COUNCIL PLAN 2021-22**

The Chief Officer (Education & Youth) introduced a report to consider the proposed Council Plan for 2020/21 with specific focus on the Committee's respective portfolio. She provided background information and gave a brief summary of the Plan, with particular focus around:-

- The new curriculum for Wales;
- Continued work to raise standards and achievement for young people;
- Youth Service provision;
- Aura Leisure and Library Service;
- Archive Project;
- Additional Learning Needs; and
- Welsh Medium Strategy

The Chief Officer invited the Strategic Performance Advisor to outline the contents of the draft plan and the process for further development. The Strategic Performance Advisor informed the Committee that a number of elements within the plan had been revised. He provided information on the partnership working across portfolios and said that this would be shared with all Overview & Scrutiny Committees for their

feedback. The final draft plan including Overview & Scrutiny committee feedback would then be presented to Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet and Council. He added that with regard to monitoring of the Plan, the aim was to be able to demonstrate impact as an authority in a strategic sense, and that the Plan was ambitious but also realistic in view of current circumstances.

In response to a question from Councillor Patrick Heesom, the Chief Officer advised that the summary bid document for the Archive Project was confidential and drew his attention to a number of reports which had been presented to Cabinet and available to view.

Mr. David Hytch congratulated the local authority on an ambitious Council Plan and endorsed the comments made by the Chief Officer. He commented on the 'Green Council' element of the Plan and reported that there had been a loss of 97% of wildflower meadows nationally. He said that the Biodiversity Officer was aware of a national campaign to maintain botanical diversity and asked whether including the creative management of roadside verges to increase botanical diversity, within this priority area, would be helpful in furthering the ambitions of the Biodiversity Officer.

The Chairman welcomed the positive document and suggested that Councillors be encouraged to highlight parts of the Council Plan within their local newsletters to Flintshire residents. He suggested that the well-being of all Council staff be flagged up as an objective with goals set on what the Council would like to achieve. He also commented on the challenges for rural communities and said that he would like to see stronger emphasis on how the Council were addressing the challenges rural communities were facing.

The Chief Officer explained that a significant amount of work had been carried out to ensure the well-being of staff and that this was an internal process, whereas the Council Plan was an outward facing document to present to all resident of Flintshire the priorities of the Council. Officers agreed to feedback the comments and highlight areas within the Council Plan where priorities would assist rural communities.

The recommendation outlined within the report was moved by Councillor Janet Axworthy and seconded by Councillor Tudor Jones.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Committee notes the developed themes of the Council Plan 2021/22 prior to approval by Cabinet.

**38. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS IN ATTENDANCE**

There was no members of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 2pm and ended at 4.54 pm)

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**Chairman**

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## EDUCATION YOUTH & CULTURE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Thursday, 18 <sup>th</sup> March 2021
<b>Report Subject</b>	Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking
<b>Report Author</b>	Education Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview & Scrutiny presents a unique opportunity for Members to determine the Forward Work programme of the Committee of which they are Members. By reviewing and prioritising the Forward Work Programme Members are able to ensure it is Member-led and includes the right issues. A copy of the Forward Work Programme is attached at Appendix 1 for Members' consideration which has been updated following the last meeting.

The Committee is asked to consider, and amend where necessary, the Forward Work Programme for the Education Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

The report also shows actions arising from previous meetings of the Education Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the progress made in completing them. Any outstanding actions will be continued to be reported to the Committee as shown in Appendix 2.

### RECOMMENDATION

1	That the Committee considers the draft Forward Work Programme and approve/amend as necessary.
2	That the Facilitator, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee be authorised to vary the Forward Work Programme between meetings, as the need arises.
3	That the Committee notes the progress made in completing the outstanding actions.

## **REPORT DETAILS**

<b>1.00</b>	<b>EXPLAINING THE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING</b>
1.01	Items feed into a Committee's Forward Work Programme from a number of sources. Members can suggest topics for review by Overview & Scrutiny Committees, members of the public can suggest topics, items can be referred by the Cabinet for consultation purposes, or by County Council or Chief Officers. Other possible items are identified from the Cabinet Work Programme and the Improvement Plan.
1.02	<p>In identifying topics for future consideration, it is useful for a 'test of significance' to be applied. This can be achieved by asking a range of questions as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Will the review contribute to the Council's priorities and/or objectives?</li><li>2. Is it an area of major change or risk?</li><li>3. Are there issues of concern in performance?</li><li>4. Is there new Government guidance of legislation?</li><li>5. Is it prompted by the work carried out by Regulators/Internal Audit?</li><li>6. Is the issue of Public or Member concern?</li></ol>
1.03	In previous meetings, requests for information, reports or actions have been made. These have been summarised as action points. Following a meeting of the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee in July 2018, it was recognised that there was a need to formalise such reporting back to Overview & Scrutiny Committees, as 'Matters Arising' was not an item which can feature on an agenda.
1.04	It was suggested that the 'Action tracking' approach be trialled for the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee. Following a successful trial, it was agreed to extend the approach to all Overview & Scrutiny Committees.
1.05	The Action Tracking details including an update on progress is attached at Appendix 2.

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	None as a result of this report.

<b>3.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT</b>
3.01	In some cases, action owners have been contacted to provide an update on their actions.



<b>4.00</b>	<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
4.01	None as a result of this report.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Appendix 1 – Draft Forward Work Programme  Appendix 2 – Action Tracking for the Education Youth & Culture OSC.

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	Minutes of previous meetings of the Committee as identified in Appendix 2.  <b>Contact Officer:</b> Ceri Shotton Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 702305 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:ceri.shotton@flintshire.gov.uk">ceri.shotton@flintshire.gov.uk</a>

<b>7.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
7.01	<b>Improvement Plan:</b> the document which sets out the annual priorities of the Council. It is a requirement of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to set Improvement Objectives and publish an Improvement Plan.

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**CURRENT FWP**

Date of meeting	Subject	Purpose of Report	Scrutiny Focus	Responsible / Contact Officer	Submission Deadline
<p><b>Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> June, 2021</b></p> <p><b>2.00pm</b></p> <p><b>Joint meeting with Social &amp; Health Care OSC</b></p> <p><b>All Members to be invited to attend for the Out of County Placements item</b></p>	<p><b>ALN Tranformation</b></p> <p><b>Looked After Children</b></p> <p><b>Safeguarding in Education</b></p> <p><b>Multi Systematic Therapy Project</b></p> <p><b>Out of County Placements</b></p>	<p>To provide Members with an update on the Authority’s implementation plan and any national/regional updates</p> <p>To provide an update on the provision for, and outcomes of Looked After Children and to review the Corporate Parenting Strategy for Flintshire.</p> <p>To provide Members with an update on the discharge of statutory safeguarding duties in schools and the Education portfolio.</p> <p>To provide an update on the multi-agency service to provide intensive therapeutic support to young people.</p> <p>To provide an update on Council’s strategic and operational response as part of its ambition to support more children locally and to rebalance the provision of care.</p>	<p>Assurance Monitoring</p> <p>Assurance Monitoring</p> <p>Assurance Monitoring</p> <p>Assurance Monitoring</p> <p>Assurance Monitoring</p>	<p>Senior Manager - Inclusion and Progression</p> <p>Senior Manager (Children) &amp; Senior Manager - Inclusion and Progression</p> <p>Senior Manager - School Improvement Systems &amp; Healthy Schools Practitioner</p> <p>Senior Manager (Children)</p> <p>Senior Manager (Children) &amp; Senior Manager - Inclusion and Progression</p>	

<b>Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2021</b>  <b>2.00pm</b>	<b>Annual Report from Regional School Improvement Service, GwE</b>	To receive an update on the support provided by the regional school effectiveness and improvement service, GWE and its impact on schools	Assurance Monitoring	Chief Officer (Education & Youth) and Managing Director of GwE	
	<b>Social Media and Internet Safety</b>	To provide Members with an update on the Portfolio's Social Media and Internet Safety policy and provision	Assurance Monitoring	Chief Officer (Education & Youth)	

**INFORMATION REPORTS TO BE CIRCULATED TO THE COMMITTEE**

Page 20

Item	Purpose of information report	Month
Health & Safety in Schools	Information report on accidents during the academic year and the actions taken to support schools in achieving healthy and safe environment	December

**REGULAR ITEMS**

Month	Item	Purpose of Report	Responsible / Contact Officer
	<b>School Modernisation</b>	To update Members on the progress made with School Modernisation	Senior Manager School Planning & Provision
<b>February</b>	<b>Self-evaluation on education services</b>	To update Members on overall service performance	Interim Chief Officer (Education & Youth)
<b>April</b>	<b>Learner Outcomes – include attendance and exclusions in annual learner outcomes report</b>	To provide Members with a summary of learner outcomes across primary and secondary school	Interim Chief Officer (Education & Youth)
<b>June</b>	<b>Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Service (GwE)</b>	To receive an update on progress with the development of the regional school effectiveness and improvement service, to include a presentation from the Chief Officer of GwE.	Interim Chief Officer (Education & Youth)
<b>December</b>	<b>School Balances</b>	To provide the Committee with details of the closing balances held by Flintshire schools at the end of the financial year	Finance Manager
<b>Annually</b>	<b>Learning from the School Performance Monitoring Group (SPMG)</b>	To receive the annual report on progress and learning from the SPMG	Senior Manager – School Improvement;
<b>Annually</b>	<b>Social Media &amp; Internet Safety</b>	To receive an annual report assurance/monitoring	Healthy Schools Practitioner
	<b>Class Size Grant</b>	To receive a regular update on how the Class Sizes Grant from Welsh Government was being used and how this aligned to the School Modernisation Programme	Senior Manager School Planning & Provision

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**ACTION TRACKING FOR THE EDUCATION, YOUTH & CULTURE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Agenda item</b>	<b>Action Required</b>	<b>Action Officer(s)</b>	<b>Action taken</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
17.12.2020	6. Blended Learning	In response to a question from Cllr Ian Smith about how the £50m funding was shared between local authorities and how much it amounted to per pupil, Claire Homard agreed to provide an overview from the IT team who are leading on this.	Claire Homard	Information circulated to the Committee via e-mail on 29.01.2021.	Completed
28.01.2021	5. School Improvement and Examination 2021 Update	Following a comment from Cllr Ian Smith, Claire Homard suggested that a copy of the accelerated skills model, in larger print, be circulated to the Committee following the meeting.	Claire Homard / Ceri Shotton	Information circulated to the Committee via e-mail on 26.02.2021.	Completed

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## EDUCATION, YOUTH & CULTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Thursday, 18 <sup>th</sup> March 2021
<b>Report Subject</b>	Community Asset Transfer Update
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Housing and Assets)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an update on the progress of Cambrian Aquatics and Holywell Leisure Centre over 2020/21 and how the impact of COVID-19 has been managed for both Community Asset Transfers.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To review and consider the progress of the CAT's during the pandemic
2	To consider the continued grant support for both Cambrian Aquatics and Holywell Leisure Centre into 2021/22.

## REPORT DETAILS

1.00	<b>UPDATING ON THE COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER OF CONNAHS QUAY SWIMMING POOL AND HOLYWELL LEISURE CENTRE 2020/21</b>
1.01	<p><b>Background</b></p> <p><b>Cambrian Aquatics</b> Connah's Quay Swimming Pool was transferred to Cambrian Aquatics in May 2016 as part of the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) scheme under the terms outlined in the 15<sup>th</sup> December 2015 Cabinet Report and related subsequent delegated approvals.</p> <p>The benefits for Flintshire County Council of this CAT were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The sustained operation of a swimming pool that was at risk of closure;</li><li>• An annual revenue saving of approximately £0.260m that has supported overall budget reductions in leisure and libraries;</li><li>• A long term saving on capital refurbishment costs.</li></ul> <p>Cambrian Aquatics have been operating successfully since 2016.</p> <p><b>Holywell Leisure Centre</b> Holywell Leisure Centre was one of the largest and complex Community Asset Transfers undertaken under the CAT programme. It started trading on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 and is managed by nine voluntary Trustees and a small management team.</p> <p>The Leisure Centre has both a wet and dry side sports facility (indoor sports and swimming pool) a small café and a Library, it also hosts the town's library and manages the sporting facilities at the High School, Ysgol Treffynnon.</p> <p>The main aim of the organisation is to maintain and extend Leisure and Sporting facilities for the local Holywell community and surrounding villages.</p> <p>The benefits for Flintshire County Council of this CAT were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The sustained operation of a leisure centre that was at risk of closure;</li><li>• An annual revenue saving of approximately £0.340m that has supported overall budget reductions in leisure and libraries;</li><li>• A long term saving on capital refurbishment costs.</li></ul> <p>Holywell Leisure centre has been operating successfully as a Trust since 2017.</p>
1.02	<p><b>COVID-19</b> The pandemic has impacted the leisure industry particularly hard with extended periods of closure during the majority of 2020 and into 2021</p>

	<p>together with a slow return of the customer base on reopening during the lifting of various lockdown restrictions.</p> <p>During the first lockdown both CAT's have worked hard to minimise the impact of COVID-19 and maintain operations when government restrictions have allowed. Some of these changes are included below.</p> <p><b>Cambrian Aquatics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Converted the Café area into a beach change facility</li> <li>• Introduced a one way system around the building</li> <li>• Improved the flooring in the Café to manage footfall more safely and assist cleaning the facility.</li> <li>• Introduction of measures to ensure a safe return to swimming lessons when permitted by the regulations</li> </ul> <p><b>Holywell Leisure Centre</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertook capital investment work to the plant room during closure</li> <li>• Introduced a one way system around the building</li> <li>• Put measures in place to ensure a safe return for customers</li> <li>• Holywell maternity clinic was temporarily relocated to the leisure centre in partnership with BCUHB and space was converted to provide three consulting rooms</li> <li>• Development of a new website</li> <li>• Introduction of a new remote booking service</li> <li>• Creation of new Marketing and Communications post</li> <li>• Recruited additional Trustees to cover identified skill gaps and further support the business</li> </ul>
1.03	<p><b>Financial Support</b></p> <p>The main financial risk to both CAT's during the pandemic is that neither CAT had high levels of reserves to protect and support any cash flow issues as a result of lockdown and the impacting income loss.</p> <p>It was imperative to access available grant support as soon as possible to ensure cash flow was sufficient to cover costs such as salaries as they became due.</p> <p>Both CAT's have been successful in accessing external funding support through a number of routes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic Resilience Fund</li> <li>• Furlough scheme</li> <li>• NNDR relief</li> <li>• 'Bounce Back' loans</li> <li>• Welsh Government 'income loss' grant</li> </ul> <p>The Council have also worked in partnership with both CAT's over the past year by providing temporary cash flow support where required and accessing Welsh Government Covid-19 relief grant on behalf of both companies to support income lost during lockdown.</p>

	The extension of the furlough scheme until the end of April and access to support through the Welsh Government income loss scheme should provide continued financial support to both CATs for this financial year.
1.04	<p><b>Looking forward into 2021</b></p> <p>Recovery of customer numbers and activities previously offered by clubs to the community is the focus for both CAT's following this second lockdown, recovery will need to run ahead of the potential diminishing Covid-19 financial support offered by the National Government.</p> <p>There will be a drive to focus on marketing to bring back existing and new customers, to retain their experienced staff base and to ensure a safe return for customers. With careful planning and targeted spend both CAT's hope to emerge from the pandemic with the continued help and support of the community and funding providers.</p>

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	<p><b>Revenue:</b> The Council provide an annual subsidy and it is proposed to continue with this grant support at current levels into 2021/22.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £67,535 p.a for Cambrian Aquatics</li> <li>• £90,537 p.a for Holywell Leisure Centre</li> </ul> <p><b>Capital:</b> There are no implications for the approved capital programme for either the current financial year or for future financial years</p> <p><b>Human Resources:</b> There are no implications for any change to current workforce structures or roles.</p>

<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
3.01	<p><b>Key Risks and Mitigation</b></p> <p>The cash flow position for both CAT's deteriorates if reduced customer numbers become evident after reopening and national COVID-19 financial support ends – The Council will work to resolve issues as they arise. In the worst case the CAT's will transfer back to the Council and a range of options from closure to another community asset transfer to an alternative operation would be considered.</p>

<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/ / CARRIED OUT</b>
4.01	Regular partnership review meetings are held with Cambrian Aquatics and Holywell Leisure Centre.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	None

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	None

<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
7.01	<p><b>Contact Officer:</b> Neal Cockerton, Chief Officer (Housing &amp; Assets)  <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 702500  <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:neal.cockerton@flintshire.gov.uk">neal.cockerton@flintshire.gov.uk</a></p>

<b>8.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
8.01	<p>Community Asset Transfer – The transfer of a building to a community organisation with a 27 year lease and peppercorn rent.</p> <p>Reserves – Funding set aside in an organisations accounts to deal with unforeseen operational issues or specific issues in the future.</p>

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## EDUCATION, YOUTH & CULTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Thursday, 18 <sup>th</sup> March 2021
<b>Report Subject</b>	Update on Council funding for schools
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Education and Youth)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to outline to members of the Committee the proposal for distributing the additional £1m allocated to secondary schools in the 2021/22 budget.

The Estyn inspection of the Local Authority in 2019 raised concerns about the long term nature of deficit budgets in certain secondary schools. As part of their inspection report a key recommendation was that the Authority took steps to address the deficits. The additional funding in the budget is primarily to provide additional resource to those schools in financial difficulty.

However, It is also acknowledged by the Authority that in recent years secondary schools in general have experienced pressure on budgets. A proportion of the funding will go to those schools not meeting the principles set out in this report.

Because of the timing and purpose of the funding the Council will allocate the funding in 2021/22 as a supplementary allocation.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To approve the principles set out in section 1.05 of this report as the basis for allocating the £1m additional funding to secondary schools in 2021/22.
2	To note the allocations set out in Appendix 2.

## REPORT DETAILS

1.00	<b>BACKGROUND</b>
1.01	<p>Estyn Inspection of Local Government Education Services – June 2019 The inspection report stated the following:</p> <p><i>‘The local authority’s allocation of resources to its education services and schools reflects the high priority given to education in the corporate plan. However, the local authority has allowed a small number of schools to carry a financial deficit balance for too long’.</i></p> <p><i>Recommendation 4 - Manage the reduction in school budget deficits more effectively.</i></p>
1.02	<p>Appendix 1 to this report sets out the year end balances for secondary schools for information.</p>
1.03	<p>A range of actions have been undertaken to respond to the Estyn recommendation including introducing a new protocol for reviewing schools in financial difficulty.</p> <p>In additional detail financial analysis was undertaken which highlighted the funding shortfall in secondary schools particularly small schools with pupil numbers below 600. The conclusion being that the current formula values do not provide sufficient funding for schools below this size to meet the fixed running costs and provide the breadth of curriculum required in a modern secondary school.</p> <p>As part of the budget setting process for 2021/22 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) proposals were put forward to increase the funding levels for secondary schools. The outcome of this being an additional £1m allocated in 2021/22.</p>
1.04	<p>This funding will enable the Authority to start to address the recommendation made by Estyn. Because of the basis of the funding the decision has been made to issue the funding as a supplementary budget in 2021/22 so that it can be targeted to the schools with the greatest need.</p>
1.05	<p><b>Allocation principles</b></p> <p>The principles by which the funding will be allocated are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum size of secondary school = 600 pupils.</li> <li>• Pupil demographic will be taken into account through the application of a deprivation factor. (FSMs * Funding Formula Element 4 CAT scores ÷ Pupil Numbers)</li> <li>• Where a school does not meet the above criteria but has a deficit of greater than 10% of delegated budget as at March 2020 an allocation equal to the deficit % of delegated budget will be allocated. This is to support schools with significant deficits and to help ensure that current pupils are not being disadvantaged because of historical difficulties.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In acknowledgement of the hardship faced by Secondary schools in general the balance of funding will be allocated to schools who do not meet the criteria above on a per pupil basis.</li> </ul> <p>Appendix 2 sets out the allocations for 2021/22.</p>
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<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	Funding requirements for secondary schools will need to be considered by the Authority going forward in the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT &amp; RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
3.01	Ongoing monitoring of schools in line with the Authority's Protocol for Schools in Financial Difficulty.

<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT</b>
4.01	Education and Youth Portfolio Management Team.
4.02	Schools Budget Forum.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Appendix 1 - Secondary School Year End Balances Appendix 2 - Supplementary Allocations 2021/22

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	<i>Combined Council Fund Revenue Budget 2021/22 Final Closing Stage 02.21.pdf</i>  <i>Licenced Deficit Protocol – Revised 16/9/2020</i>

<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
7.01	<b>Contact Officer: David Bateman</b> <b>Telephone: 01352 704178</b> <b>E-mail: <a href="mailto:David.bateman@flintshire.gov.uk">David.bateman@flintshire.gov.uk</a></b>

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## Appendix 1 Secondary School Year End Balances

School	Delegated budget 2019/20*	2019/20 year end balances	% of budget	2018/19 year end balances	Change between years
Elfed High School	3,819,221	-43,187	-1.1%	198,622	-241,810
Connah's Quay High Scho	4,491,360	124,042	2.8%	-34,477	158,520
Flint High School	3,763,533	32,031	0.9%	55,680	-23,649
St. Richard Gwyn	3,250,533	-542,265	-16.7%	-508,276	-33,989
Hawarden High School	4,829,037	45,408	0.9%	47,808	-2,400
Ysgol Trefynnon	2,367,518	-761,298	-32.2%	-646,173	-115,125
Castell Alun High School	5,698,472	1,072	0.0%	-8,674	9,746
Alun High School	6,598,362	18,624	0.3%	122,466	-103,842
Maes Garmon	2,743,703	-180,110	-6.6%	-173,177	-6,933
Argoed High School	2,705,957	-12,974	-0.5%	-56,000	43,027
St. Davids High School	1,903,380	-775,645	-40.8%	-452,609	-323,035
Deficits		-2,315,478		-1,879,387	-436,091
Surplus		221,176		424,576	-203,400
Net	42,171,076	-2,094,302	-5.0%	-1,454,811	-639,491

\* Includes ALN 1:1 Allocation

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## Appendix 2 – Supplementary Allocations for Secondary Schools 2021/22

School	School Size < 600 Pupils	Deficit > 10% of delegated budget	Based on pupil numbers
	750,000	80,155	169,845
Elfed High School			25,711
Connah's Quay High School			30,520
Flint High School			20,212
St.Richard Gwyn R.C. High School		80,155	
Hawarden High School			27,640
Ysgol Trefynnon	190,767		
Castell Alun High School			30,261
Alun School			35,501
Ysgol Maes Garmon	27,729		
Argoed High School	66,236		
St.David's High School	465,268		

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## EDUCATION, YOUTH AND CULTURE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Thursday, 18 <sup>th</sup> March 2021
<b>Report Subject</b>	Self-Evaluation Report of Education Services
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Education & Youth)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Flintshire County Council undertakes an annual self-evaluation of its education services. Normally it is written against the framework for the inspections of Local Government Education Services published by Estyn but as this framework was suspended as a result of Covid-19, this report is presented in a different format with each service area focusing on its work over the last twelve months and how it has responded and adapted to the ongoing health emergency. It also identifies areas for ongoing development which will be reflected in the Council Plan and the Portfolio Business Plan for 2021-2022.

The suspension of key data collections by Welsh Government during the pandemic has resulted in many of the key performance indicators by which the portfolio usually measures its progress not being available. Pupil assessment data at all key stages is also unavailable to be able to make judgements on standards.

The committee has already received detailed reports on how schools have adapted their provision and developed a blended learning approach for pupils and also how the regional school improvement service, GwE have provided robust support for school improvement so this is not revisited as part of this report.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales, Estyn, have maintained contact with the portfolio during the last twelve months and have undertaken a thematic review of the work of education services across Wales. Their positive report about Flintshire's response is included as part of this report.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That members note the content of the self-evaluation report and provide their feedback to officers on the current performance of education services.
2	That members note the positive thematic report undertaken by Estyn on the work of education services in Flintshire to support children and young people during the pandemic.

## REPORT DETAILS

<b>1.00</b>	<b>EXPLAINING THE SELF EVALUATION REPORT</b>
1.01	<p>The last twelve months have been unique and posed unprecedented challenges for the Council, particularly in relation to its delivery of education services. The statutory provision of education for all learners was suspended for the period March 2020 to September 2020 and schools were forced to completely repurpose themselves as childcare hubs for vulnerable children and children of critical workers.</p> <p>Since the restart of education provision in September and the rising rates of infection through the Autumn Term and early Spring Term, the delivery of education in all Flintshire schools has been significantly disrupted with pupils having to isolate for extended periods of time.</p> <p>In January 2021, Welsh Government directed all schools to cease face-to-face learning for the majority of pupils and only making provision for those children identified as vulnerable or those of critical workers in the face of escalating infection rates. Foundation Phase pupils have only recently returned to school and more learners are able to return from 15<sup>th</sup> March and then after Easter, when all pupils will have returned to full time school.</p> <p>The committee has already received and commended a report on Blended Learning which gave assurance on how schools have facilitated the ongoing learning offer for pupils on digital platforms during the lockdown periods.</p>
1.02	<p>The prime purpose of self-evaluation is to lead service improvements to secure the best possible outcomes for children and young people supported by the Education and Youth Portfolio. Only by robustly evaluating the strengths of the current provision and identifying areas for further improvement can the Portfolio continue to refine the manner in which it delivers services to secure better outcomes.</p>
1.03	<p>Flintshire County Council normally undertakes an annual self-evaluation of its education services against the framework for the inspections of Local Government Education Services published by Estyn but as this framework was suspended as a result of Covid-19, this report is presented in a different format with each service area focusing on its work of the last</p>



	twelve months and how it has responded and adapted to the health emergency.
1.04	The suspension of key data collections by Welsh Government during the pandemic has resulted in many of the key performance indicators by which the portfolio usually measures its progress, not being available. Pupil assessment data at all key stages is also unavailable to be able to make judgements on standards.
1.05	Each section of the report provides an overview of the service area, how it has adapted and its ongoing development priorities which will be reflected in the Council Plan and the Portfolio Business Plan for 2021-2022. Where progress has been possible, against the Estyn recommendations following the 2019 inspection of Education Services in Flintshire, these are reflected in each service report.
1.06	Although the formal inspection frameworks for school and local authority education services remains suspended, Estyn has maintained regular contact with schools and education officers. Welsh Government commissioned Estyn to undertake a review of the work of local authorities in supporting their learning communities in schools and pupil referral units (PRUs) during the period March to October 2020 and this was undertaken in the Autumn term.
1.07	The feedback report is based on virtual meetings with Education Officers, the Cabinet Lead Member for Education, the Chair of the Education & Youth Scrutiny Committee and a sample of headteachers in schools and PRUs.
1.08	<p>The report is attached at Appendix 2 and outlines the swift and effective response of the Council to support children and schools from the outset of the pandemic.</p> <p>It acknowledges the strong leadership from the Council's Emergency Response Team and the Education Portfolio. It highlights the strength of the shared collaborative approach across the Council and with external partners e.g. GwE, to effectively adapt services to meet the needs of children, young people and their families during the national emergency.</p> <p>It also notes the thorough review of the Council's response through the work of the Education, Youth and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The report is very positive and does not identify any recommendations for further improvement.</p>

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	There are no revenue / capital implications as a result of this report.

<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
3.01	<p>Impact Assessment not required for this report.</p> <p>The Education Portfolio has a detailed risk assessment which outlines key risks related to the delivery of education services and the continued disruption of teaching and learning as a result of the ongoing pandemic and method statements which describe how these risks are managed. These are regularly reported to the committee.</p>
<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT</b>
4.01	N/A for this report.
<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	<p>Appendix 1 – Education &amp; Youth Portfolio Self-Evaluation Report 2020-2021</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Estyn Thematic Review Feedback Letter for Flintshire</p>
<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	N/A
<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
7.01	<p><b>Contact Officer:</b> Claire Homard Chief Officer Education &amp; Youth</p> <p><b>Telephone:</b> 01352 704190</p> <p><b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:claire.homard@flintshire.gov.uk">claire.homard@flintshire.gov.uk</a></p>
<b>8.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
8.01	<p><b>Estyn</b> – the Education and Training Inspectorate for Wales</p> <p><b>GwE</b> – Regional School Improvement Service for the North Wales region commissioned by Flintshire County Council</p>

# Education & Youth Portfolio

## Self-Evaluation Report

2020-2021



**Connah's Quay  
High School**



**Flintshire County Council**

Contextual Information

**Ysgol Penyffordd**

Formed in 1996 following local government reorganisation, Flintshire is a well governed and high performing unitary local authority in the north east corner of Wales bordering

Cheshire, Wrexham and Denbighshire. Flintshire has a strong track record of being a direct provider of local services from Education to Streetscene to Housing. Whilst direct provision is at the core of its model, Flintshire is also a creative and flexible council and operates both as a provider and a commissioner of services. It has been instrumental in developing collaborative arrangements such as a regional school improvement service, an employee-owned mutual in leisure, libraries and cultural services and a local social housing trading company. Continuing to develop sustainable models of delivery and maintaining high quality services continues to be a priority for the Council.

Flintshire provides local public services for 155,155 people who live in 65,489 households. It has the largest population of the North Wales authorities and is the sixth largest in Wales. With 5,831 staff the Council is the second largest employer in the County and provide services including, education, housing, leisure, libraries, planning, refuse collection, environmental health, recycling, roads, social services, trading standards, transport and tourism. Flintshire has 78 schools (64 Primary, 11 Secondary, 2 Specialist & 1 PRU) providing education for 23,565 pupils (all ages), including those educated other than at school. 15.3% of the total population are of school age.

Based on the 2011 Census, the Welsh language is spoken by 14.4% of the population in Flintshire compared to 19% across Wales. The County has 5 Welsh medium primary schools and 1 Welsh medium secondary school. There are no dual stream or bilingual schools presently in the County. The County also has a mixed provision of faith based education with 7 Church in Wales Voluntary Aided primary schools, 5 Roman Catholic primary schools and 1 Roman Catholic secondary school.

Flintshire has a strong tradition of supporting a local infrastructure of non-maintained early years' provision through both English and Welsh, which supports the Council in its delivery of childcare and early years' education. Flintshire has successfully embedded the Welsh Government's flagship childcare policy of 30 hours free provision for working parents and there is a strong network of childminders, playgroups and private day nurseries delivering this combination of childcare and early education prior to children transitioning into schools.

The current (PLASC 2020) population of school aged pupils entitled to Free School Meals (e-FSM) is 19.09% compared to a Wales average of 18.24%. The County has a mix of affluent and deprived areas. 20.68% of school aged pupils are designated as having a Special Educational Need in Flintshire compared to a Welsh average of 20.79%.

### Structure of the Council

Flintshire County Council has 70 Councillors that are normally democratically elected every 5 years. It is currently run by a minority Labour administration with a political make up of: Labour 34, Independent Alliance 16, Conservative 6, Independents 3, Liberal Democrats 5 and New Independents 4. There is currently 1 non-aligned member and 1



vacancy.

Leader of the Council – Cllr Ian Roberts



Chief Executive – Colin Everett

The Council has a Cabinet and a Scrutiny function. Decisions are usually made by the Cabinet for all issues including major policy matters. The role of Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to hold the Cabinet to account and to assist in the improvement and development of the Council's policies and services. Flintshire has five Overview and Scrutiny Committees covering: Corporate Resources; Community, Housing & Assets; Education, Youth & Culture; Environment & Economy; and Social and Health Care.

### Flintshire's Corporate Plan 2017-23

The Council has a good track record of being a high performing authority. The Council Plan 2017-23 was adopted by the Council in September 2017 and is reviewed on an annual cycle. The year-end Council Plan report for 2019/20 shows good progress has been made with 88% of activities being assessed as having made good progress and 91% having achieved the desired outcome. Performance indicators show good progress with 78% meeting target and 14% not meeting target but ending the year within an acceptable range. Risks are managed effectively with the majority assessed as moderate (67%).

The Corporate Plan is in the process of being refreshed for 2021/22. The refreshed plan has the Council's wellbeing objectives embedded within its priorities and is aligned to the ongoing recovery following the response to the pandemic. The draft Council Plan has six themes and they are:

- Poverty
- Affordable and Accessible Housing
- Green Society and Environment
- Economy
- Personal and Community Well-being
- Education and Skills

### Working in Partnership

Flintshire County Council has a longstanding and proud track record of partnership working. The communities it serves rightly expect statutory and third sector partners to work together to manage shared priorities through collaboration. The Flintshire Public Services Board (PSB) is at the heart of promoting a positive culture of working together and concentrates energy, effort and resources on providing efficient and effective services to local communities and is a key vehicle in delivering the response phase of the Council to the pandemic.

The priorities of the Public Service Board are:

- Independent Living
- Integrated Community Social and Health Service
- Developing and Inspiring Resilient Communities
- Safeguarding

Public Services Board partners include: Natural Resources Wales, Public Health Wales, North Wales Police, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, National Probation, Flintshire Local Voluntary Council, North Wales Fire and Rescue Service, Coleg Cambria, Glyndwr University and Welsh Government.

### **Explanatory Note - Self Evaluation Report 2020-2021**

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought about huge changes in the delivery of education services over the last twelve months, including the temporary suspension of statutory schooling between March and September 2020. Since the start of the autumn term, education provision has been regularly disrupted by outbreaks of the virus within communities, requiring schools and the Council to rapidly adapt to different models of delivery. This has been further challenged by the Welsh Government's decision to suspend face to face learning for the vast majority of pupils since January 2021 and schools having to extend their digital learning offer for pupils. Recent announcements have brought Foundation Phase learners back into school from 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021 and the Council is currently planning for the return of Key Stage 2 learners and Years 10-13 from 15<sup>th</sup> March. The remaining pupils in years 7-9 will return after the Easter holidays.

The suspension of the Estyn Inspection Framework for schools and local government education services during the last year, which is usually the basis for the portfolio's self-evaluation report, means that the report structure is very different this year. This has also been influenced by the suspension of key data collections by Welsh Government, meaning that many of the key performance indicators by which the portfolio usually measures its progress are not available. Pupil assessment data at all key stages is also unavailable to be able to make judgements on standards.

In this context, each service area within the portfolio has produced a self-evaluation report on their work for the reporting period 2020-21 and these are compiled into this single document. Regular reports on the portfolio's response during the lockdown period and the response of schools to the requirement to develop blended learning approaches have already been presented to the Education, Youth and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Estyn have also monitored the work of the portfolio through regular engagement with senior managers and through engagement calls with schools and their

report on the council’s performance in supporting learners during the pandemic should be read alongside this self-evaluation report.

## **Table of Contents**

<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Page</b>
Inclusion & Progression Services	6
School Improvement Services – Welsh Advisory Service	14
School Improvement Services – Healthy Schools and Healthy Pre-Schools	18
School Improvement Services – Early Entitlement (Funded 3 yr olds)	22
Integrated Youth Provision	28
Youth Justice Services	32
School Governance Support Service	38
School Planning and Provision	40
Education Contextual Data	45

## **Education & Youth Senior Management Team**

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**Inclusion & Progression Service  
Self-Evaluation Report**

**Contents**

**Section 1      Service Overview**

**Section 2      Review of 2020-2021**

**Section 3      Recommendation from Estyn Report**

**Section 4      Next Steps / Future Priorities**

**Section 1 – Service Overview**

The Inclusion & Progression Service provides support, guidance and intervention to children and young people with a range of individual needs. This is delivered by a number of services namely:

- Additional Learning Needs Service
- Education Psychology Service
- Young Person’s Counselling Service
- Inclusion Outreach Team (ASD)
- English as an Additional Language/Gypsy Traveller and Looked after Children Service
- North East Wales Sensory Service
- Communication, Language and Speech Service (CLASS)
- Education Welfare Service
- Progression Team
- TRAC & ADTRAC
- Behaviour Support Team
- Plas Derwen Portfolio Pupil Referral Units

The service discharges the Council’s statutory duties in relation to children and young people with special educational needs (SEN), meeting the requirements as outlined in the SEN Code of Practice for Wales. The service also has responsibility for the statutory processes around school attendance and exclusion. Whilst the duties associated with the SEN Code have not been relaxed as a result of the Covid pandemic, Welsh Government (WG) has altered the requirements around



attendance and exclusion and teams within the service have adjusted their function in response.

## Section 2 – Review of 2020-2021

The Inclusion & Progression Service has responded proactively and responsively during what has been a very challenging year. The initial lockdown in March led service managers to review and consider their role in supporting children and young people, schools and families in these unprecedented circumstances and how their range of interventions could be delivered in as safe a manner as possible. Staff were directed to work from home in line with government directive and equipment was quickly distributed to facilitate this. Whilst new delivery models were being developed by managers, staff were required to complete home working assessments to ensure that an appropriate working environment was established and to use the initial lock down time to ensure that all mandatory training was up to date.

Flintshire quickly established a Hub model across the school network utilising primary, secondary and specialist schools and the portfolio of pupil referral units, Plas Derwen, to offer childcare and provision for vulnerable children. The Senior Manager for the Inclusion & Progression service was designated lead for vulnerable children and operated as part of the Silver Tactical Group to ensure that decision making was taken in line with wider Flintshire policy and was also informed by other service developments. Close working was undertaken with colleagues in Children's Services to ensure that a shared definition of vulnerable was developed for use across the Council and its schools and this was used to inform decisions in relation to provision/intervention. A total of 138 children and young people met the definition and accessed provision in the Resilience Hubs during the initial lockdown period.

Having established staff as remote home workers, managers identified ways in which they would continue to offer support and intervention to designated pupils during lockdown and the actions that were required to make this successful. This included:

- Making direct contact with families to agree ways of working
- Providing access to specialist equipment at home for pupils with sensory impairment to facilitate home schooling
- Delivery of educational packs to support targeted learning
- Training videos to support staff and parents to engage with online platforms
- Adaptation of the WG live streaming guidance to suit the service's delivery model and support pupil/staff safety
- Access to targeted staff training to enable teams to deliver specific online intervention, e.g. Counselling
- Developing protocols and amending parental consent for secure video observation and video led consultation to facilitate assessment by the Education Psychology Service
- Development of training/awareness raising resources for schools and parents

Safeguarding and welfare were key priorities for the services in the initial weeks. The Education Welfare Service extended their role to support schools and Social Services with additional welfare/safeguarding checks. Managers established stronger links with other Council services such as the Benefits and Housing teams and also other third sector agencies. Support, advice and guidance was offered to families to ensure they had access to food and relevant benefits.

Translation support was offered via the English as an Additional Language Team and additional welfare packs were provided by the Gypsy/Traveller and Progression Teams. Since the implementation of Track, Trace & Protect (TTP) in Flintshire, the Inclusion & Progression Service has supported the TTP team to contact families where there has been difficulty with this, using their knowledge and in some cases, already well established communication links.

WG recognised the difficulties during the lockdown period for schools and councils to deliver against their statutory duties for children and young people with special educational needs (SEN). Although mooted in a number of forums, no alterations were, however, made to the legislation covering this area and as a result, Learning Advisors within the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) service have continued in their work to meet the statutory obligations. The team responded swiftly in response to the Covid restrictions to identify and determine approaches to support and to ensure statutory obligations were fulfilled. The Council's decision making Moderation Panel continued to be held, without any break or disruption to service with the use of online platforms to facilitate this process.

The lockdown period saw a significant reduction in the number of requests for statutory assessment, 37 as compared with 110 for same period April – August in 2018/19. This period also contributed to an increase in the number of assessments being completed outside of the designated 26 week timescale. This was due in the main to the suspension of health appointments which are an integral part of the process, along with the difficulty for Educational Psychologists to complete their statutory element of the process due to pupils not being in school. To prevent a negative impact of the delays, schools were supported to identify alternative means of support for pupils and extensions to Service Level Agreements were instigated to ensure that additional support remained available to individuals. Schools were also supported to complete outstanding annual reviews of Statements using alternative means. This included telephone and online platform reviews and ensured that all of the reviews for the academic year 2019/20 were completed.

As well as working with Flintshire schools to support access to provision for statemented pupils, information was collated and recorded regarding the provision and education for vulnerable learners in non-maintained provision. Regular communication has been maintained with providers and risk assessments were collated and reviewed to ensure safe working practices were being implemented.

Officers have recognised the importance of communication during these challenging times and have responded promptly to queries from schools and families. Ahead of the 'Check In, Catch Up' period in June, all services created a one-page service profile outlining how services would operate amid the restrictions. This template was shared with external agencies such as Health to provide a consistent approach to information sharing with schools/families. The profiles have been reviewed and updated in response to the change in restrictions/operational guidance.

It has been important to be flexible and responsive during the past year and to understand the emerging needs of pupils, schools, families, teams and other professionals. The frequency of managerial meetings has increased to a fortnightly occurrence to ensure that information is shared in a timely manner and that managers feel supported and authorised to modify their delivery models as required within the Council/WG policies. School cluster meetings were scheduled for the second week of the term in September so that school staff could share any concerns experienced on their return to schools with Educational Psychologists, ALN officers and Education Welfare officers who could offer support and guidance. Training materials were identified, developed and collated at both local and regional level. Learner Support was included

as a specific area on the support dashboard created for schools by GwE in collaboration with local authorities. This housed a range of relevant support documents in recognition of the anticipated pupils and also staff needs. The Education Psychology service and Behaviour Support Team also created a range of targeted resources focusing on wellbeing. A toolkit and training resource was developed to support schools to create a suitable environment for those pupils experiencing a range of behaviours, social and emotional difficulties, and a group that was anticipated to experience greater difficulty attending school with the Covid restrictions in place. A guidance document on bereavement was also developed and shared with schools which fed into the Grief Recovery training that was offered to schools via Plas Derwen PRU.

Advice and guidance was also given in support of looked after children. Officers liaised with both the Fostering Team and Foster Carers to ensure the effective communication of key educational messages. Information was also shared with regards to Trauma Informed Practice, Attachment Theory and the use of Boxall Profiling.

The multi-agency Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) Panel continued to operate on a fortnightly basis to monitor the engagement young people who have been excluded or are accessing alternative education in the form of home tuition or bespoke packages. Parents who have chosen to home educate their children (elective home education) have been contacted during the pandemic and made aware of the funding available from WG to support them with this.

Access to IT equipment to support remote learning has been an important issue. The Inclusion & Progression Service has worked alongside schools and families to identify those most in need to ensure that these pupils have had access to both hardware and internet access. Free top up internet 'Hot Spot' vouchers have been secured to increase the level of access where required.

Work has continued against the Council's Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Transformation Plan. Progress ahead of the ALN and Education Tribunal Act (ALNET) 2018 implementation in September 2021 remains on track and officers have worked hard to maintain the momentum across services and our schools. Training has been delivered on Person Centred Practices and also the completion of Independent Development Plans. A new ALN IT system framework has been procured and this is under development to operate as the schools' and Council's database to support the implementation of ALNET. The Statutory requirement to have an Early Years Additional Learning Needs Lead Officer (ALNLO) has been fulfilled.

The new build for Plas Derwen Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) is on track for completion in September 2021. A transition Plan has been developed to support the move from 4 different centres into the new build and work is on track against this. The staff are also being supported in their transition by Sycol, a company experienced in this area.

### *Successes*

The service has experienced a number of successes despite the impact of the pandemic and the work undertaken by the teams was positively recognised by Estyn in their thematic review undertaken during the Autumn Term. The requirement for closer working with schools to gain an understanding of their different operating models has served to strengthen relationships between schools and services, facilitating swift and decisive support for families.

The increased direct contact with parents has in some cases enabled them to become more informed regarding their child's educational needs and how these can be supported, including a greater understanding of the specialist resources and equipment available to them. Families have

also benefitted from the advice, support and resources offered particularly in relation to food and benefits.

Stronger links are now in place between internal and external services/agencies. Managers have a broader knowledge of third sector provision to be able to signpost both schools and families. The move to online platforms has been swift by requirement across key agencies and not hampered by lengthy bureaucratic inter-agency discussion. Weekly meetings have been established between Social Service, Health and Education to facilitate information sharing and practice development.

Local, regional and national links with service counterparts have been strengthened with attendance at meetings being facilitated by the use of online platforms. This has supported services to respond quickly and effectively, benefitting from the sharing of knowledge, experience and resources.

Despite the difficulties experienced with the implementation of the statutory assessment process for children with Special Education Needs (SEN), the levels of appeal to the SEN Tribunal for Wales remain very low with one case paused whilst an assessment period in a new provision is underway and one other having taken place in January 2021.

The CLASS team has worked in partnership with BCUHB to support the implementation of the Foundation Phase Talk Boost training across 11 primary schools with 31 teachers and 32 teaching assistants having completed the training. This is part of the wider Pathfinder Project to support the development of language skills with young children. The training has been well received and training for a new cohort of schools is planned for.

The level of young people designated not in education, employment or training (NEET) is relatively low with the figures for January 2021 for Year 11 leavers being:

- Tier 1 – 50 (moved out of area)
- Tier 2 – 29 (Unable to engage due to pregnancy, illness, custody etc.)
- Tier 3 – 11 (currently not engaged with no known barriers)

No looked after children are NEET.

EAL learners have, with very few exceptions, remained engaged with the school process, have attended when possible and have engaged with learning in some format appropriate to needs. In some instances, isolated pupils have been linked via technology to access support together. There is great potential for technology to support with this namely bringing families from the same country and learners at the same level together to receive the support they need in a more efficient manner.

### *Lessons Learnt*

The move to remote working has had a number of benefits in relation to service efficiency, particularly in terms of time and expenses. Staff have engaged with the new way of working but it has exposed some areas of skill deficit within teams with regards to IT skills/competency. Whilst there is an increase in time available due to the lack of a need to travel, time management and the use of online platforms needs to be managed carefully with an increase in expectation around availability. Online engagement can be challenging and managers are supporting officers to work effectively within this new operating model.

Staff anxiety and feelings of isolation have been evident. The two-way flow of information and the frequency of this has been important to ensure people feel well-informed and supported. Many have taken up the social engagement opportunities which have been instigated by managers to support with this; the cross service nature of this and wider team meetings has strengthened the links across the service areas. Careful consideration has also been given with regards to staff working out of Tŷ Dewi Sant to support their wellbeing. Flexible working practices will need to be considered and reviewed in line with individual and service needs going forward.

The wider understanding of IT as a tool has improved across schools, services and families. Managers are identifying where this has enhanced their usual provision and are looking to maintain it as part of their operating model going forward. Online platforms have been used to conduct meetings with providers not based within the locality and this form of contact will be maintained to reduce the need for extended travel in the future.

Whilst there are examples of very positive engagement from pupils and parents to remote engagement, it hasn't suited all and there are particular groups where this has been more evident, e.g. the Travelling community. Despite significant attempts a number of pupils have generally failed to access online learning and access to education, either in school or at home, has been significantly reduced throughout the pandemic. It has become apparent that the relationships between the school and the home is significant in many cases, with the development of trust and understanding being a requirement for progress to be made. Services and schools will need to be willing to adapt practice and reconsider the nature of our intervention if we are to reengage these individuals and actually support their educational progress.

A further group that has been impacted on by the lockdown has been the Year 6/7 transfer pupils, in particular those with ALN. Schools responded positively to the challenges of offering transition activities within the Covid restrictions, with many developing video footage of the schools for pupils to view. The limited transition opportunities and the ongoing restrictions in place within our schools has resulted in some pupils having struggled to settle well into Year 7. Services are engaging with schools and families to see what else can be offered to reduce the impact of Covid restrictions for the coming year.

There has been a wealth of resources made available to schools in response to the pandemic. It has been important to review these and be selective in terms of what is shared with schools by services so that they can make informed choices from quality products. A corporate format and an increase in the eLearning modules available has been identified as a requirement for services going forward.

### **Section 3 – Recommendation from Estyn Report**

A number of strategic actions for the Inclusion & Progression Service were identified in response to Estyn Recommendations 2 & 3. Improving levels of attendance and reducing exclusion remain priority areas for the service. However, it has been challenging to measure any impact of changes implemented to date on the levels of both given the Covid restrictions and changes to WG legislation and recording.

A Senior Learning Adviser for Engagement was appointed in January 2020 with a remit to review the operation including the use of data by key services such as the Education Welfare Service

(EWS). Attendance and exclusion were identified as priority areas for Flintshire internal audit to support improvement; the audit is due for completion in the Spring Term 2021.

A new Mission Statement has been developed for the EWS, with the referral process being revised and clarified with schools. The Senior Learning Adviser has taken lead responsibility for permanent exclusion to increase the status and monitoring of this area.

A new Education Support Officer (ESO) post has been established within the EWS. An audit process for school attendance utilising the ESO has been developed and three high schools have been identified to work as partner schools to trial the process. Following completion of the audit process, a report is compiled which reviews the existing practice and offers recommendations for improvement. Schools will offer feedback on the process to help refine this targeted intervention going forward. Data will be used to review the impact of the intervention.

To support the increased use of data to facilitate improvement, the Senior Learning Adviser Engagement has worked closely with the Schools Management Information Team (SMIT) to review the existing data sets and develop a process of regular data collection and analysis for both attendance and exclusion. Education Welfare Officers are required to review these with their schools and Team Manager to identify any areas of concern.

Senior managers are reviewing and refining policy and procedures to ensure shared understanding and agreement around these within the service which is then being disseminated to schools.

The service will be represented on the Early Help Hub to help strengthen links with other agencies and to feed relevant information into the decision making processes in support of children and families in need.

Services such as the Behaviour Support Team (BST) and Education Psychology Service have continued to offer support to schools to develop strategies to reduce the number and frequency of short term exclusions. BST officers have also attended regular behaviour planning review meetings with mainstream schools and multi-agencies, to offer a coordinated approach to improving attendance.

Plas Derwen is leading on the roll out of the National Nurturing Schools Programme across Flintshire. This initiative is an integral part of the service's strategy to improve attendance and support a reduction in exclusion through the development of inclusive practices across schools. To date, fourteen schools have signed up to this project with twelve about to embark on their training in the summer term and two schools moving into Year 2 alongside Plas Derwen in their training schedule.

The Education Psychology Service has delivered the Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) training to 39 staff from 24 primary, secondary and special schools. Ongoing supervision from an Education Psychologist is being offered to support the participants in their delivery roles.

## **Section 4 – Next Steps / Future Priorities**

### **Educational Engagement and Achievement**

- Work in collaboration with schools and other agencies to identify effective strategies and interventions to support pupil progress, particularly vulnerable children post Covid.
- Respond to the outcomes of the internal audit on attendance and exclusion.
- Implementation of a revised operating model for Engagement Services linked to supporting an improvement in attendance and reducing exclusion.
- Adaptation and development of training offer to schools and families, building on the success achieved this year. Identification of priority areas for training and intervention, e.g. supporting children who have been language deprived as a result of the Covid restrictions through the further roll out of the Talkboost training.
- Further develop the role of the Emotional Wellbeing Group to identify appropriate and effective intervention and develop appropriate regular forums to share effective practice.
- Complete the review of the Behaviour Support Service and Secondary Intervention as part of the Plas Derwen Outreach provision.
- Implement the Young Person Counselling Service pilots within the primary sector.
- Continue the work into Emotionally-based Schools Avoidance (EBSA) by the Education Psychology service.
- Continue to identify and source alternative education opportunities via the Progression Service.

### **Digital Learning Opportunities**

- Continue to support staff, schools, pupils and parents to use IT equipment and software effectively.
- Increase the electronic and physical library of adapted books available for all pupils with Visual Impairments.
- Continue to roll out the use of Video Interactive Guidance via the Education Psychology service.
- Continue with the development and implementation of the ALN support system Eclipse.
- Develop innovative ways of using IT to support engagement and also training.
- Developing the online presence of Plas Derwen in social media to promote the service and the New Build.

### **Specialist Education Provision**

- Continue to embed the ALN Transformation plan to deliver a new statutory approach for supporting children and young people with additional learning needs from 0-25 years.
- Consider innovative ways for the Education Psychology Service to disseminate psychology and best practice, working with other teams and settings to ensure consistency on quality assessment protocols and processes.
- Complete the feasibility studies around the extension of specialist provision within Flintshire.
- Continue the work of the Plas Derwen Transition Group ensuring that moving into the new build is as seamless as possible for pupils and staff.



**School Improvement - Welsh Advisory  
Service**

**Self-Evaluation Report**

**Contents**

- Section 1     Service Overview**
- Section 2     Review of 2020-2021**
- Section 3     Recommendation from Estyn Report**
- Section 4     Next Steps / Future Priorities**

**Section 1 – Service Overview**

The Welsh Advisory Team (WAT) consists of 3 staff; 2.8 full time equivalent working in English and Welsh medium primary schools and 1 Admin. Support, 20hrs per week. This includes the service manager/team leader. There are 59 English-Medium primary schools and 5 Welsh-Medium primary schools. According to Welsh Government's Welsh-Medium provision, primary school categories all 59 English-Medium schools are defined as category 5 schools and all 5 Welsh schools are defined as category 1, Welsh -Medium primary schools.

The team's main objectives are to contribute to Flintshire's Welsh in Education Strategy, improve standards in Welsh (first and second language) and develop the language skills and teaching of the education workforce in primary schools.

The Welsh Advisory Team provides targeted support following careful analysis of information from a range of sources, e.g. key officers, school improvement priorities and Estyn reports. Support ranges from advice and guidance on school effectiveness in relation to the teaching of Welsh; guidance on curriculum changes, implementation and delivery; comprehensive and flexible in-service training programme by subject specialists; support for teachers and headteachers before and following an inspection; advice and support in developing the school's self-evaluation processes in relation to Welsh; classroom advice and support for teachers who deliver first and second language Welsh; support for KS2/KS3 moderation; opportunities for more able and talented pupils to extend their Welsh language skills; support for latecomers in Welsh-Medium schools at Key Stage 2 and support for Flintshire's Welsh-Medium secondary school with the 'Trochi' programme (6 week programme to yr 6 learners from English-Medium primary schools wishing to transfer to Welsh-Medium secondary education). The Service also provides support and guidance to primary schools in relation to Siarter Iaith (for Welsh-Medium) and Cymraeg Campus (for English-Medium) programmes for developing the use of Welsh beyond the classroom setting.

The Service collaborates closely with the regional school improvement service, GwE, to



support schools with the greatest need. The Service also provides input into the regional

## Section 2 – Review of 2020-2021

strategy for Welsh.

The Service delivery for 2020-2021 has been reviewed and adapted significantly to respond to the changing needs of schools as a result of the pandemic. The main focus of this delivery has been creating and adapting resources to enable primary schools to have access to suitable resources for effective blended learning to ensure that Welsh is still accessible in the home learning environment. This was developed alongside the national and regional plan for blended learning - developing new approaches to teaching and learning to accommodate pupils who are learning in different environments – at home or at school. The emphasis has been on producing high quality resources to promote best practice in Cymraeg as well as on progression.

### **March to September**

Series of ‘**Challenges**’ prepared for F/Phase and KS2 primary children to encourage use of Welsh whilst at home during the initial lockdown period. Given that children only hear Welsh at school in the majority of families, the focus for the team was to ensure the activities were both engaging, fun and age appropriate. Informal feedback from 10 schools demonstrates these were useful and very much appreciated.. They were fun for the children and manageable for the teachers. A high proportion of the teachers working in English medium primary schools lack confidence and the skills to be able to prepare Welsh activities that are different from the normal day to day class routine. Subsequently the provision of challenges by the Welsh Team alleviated the concerns that some teachers may have had.

- Nationally prepared challenges were prepared for WM schools, focusing on the Siarter Iaith. These were disseminated to Welsh medium schools.
- Team planned and prepared 4 units of work. These included detailed teacher’s notes and supporting planned activities and resources, including sound files for a block of 4 weeks work. These were for primary teachers to utilise when children began to return to school for the ‘check in, catch up’ sessions in the summer term.  
Meithrin/Derbyn:Nursery/Reception – Golchi Dwylo and Dau Gi Bach  
BI 1 a 2/Yr 1&2 – Nature Sensory Walk outdoors and related activities  
BI 3 a 4/Yr 3&4 – Hobbies and Food and related activities  
BI 5 a 6/Yr 5&6 – Presenting Personal Information and related activities

These were planned by adapting resources already available, whilst ensuring the characteristics required for effective blended learning were included, e.g. making effective use of digital technology such as J25, Educandy, Adobe Spark. All PowerPoints included voice recordings to ensure correct pronunciation. Teacher notes for each unit were also prepared. They were organised into focused activities, with step by step guide for teachers who were less confident using Welsh. The notes took into account the need to challenge some learners, whilst making the activities accessible to all. Feedback from schools was very positive.

- The challenges and units were sent to all primary schools. Welsh medium schools could access them if they deemed appropriate for the linguistic nature of the children given a very high proportion of their learners come from homes where English is the main language e.g. 2 schools had latecomers during 2019 2020.

- WAT provided resources focusing on the alphabet with the teacher responsible for the Trochi programme at Ysgol Maes Garmon.
- Blended learning resources were adapted and created for Regional School Improvement Consortia section on the Hwb platform (SWAY). Team manager participated in weekly video conference meetings and cascaded information to neighbouring Welsh Advisory teams within the GwE region to ensure resources available reflected the language patterns and materials used in the North. WAT created 5 units of work (Cathod, Miwsli, Sami Samon, Cadw'n Heini, Salad Ffrwythau) and adapted several others to ensure a Northern version of a particular resource was available for Flintshire schools. Links to these resources have been emailed directly to schools and have been tweeted in a means to optimise the number of teachers using them. It's intended that they'll be available on Hwb for the long term and are therefore useful for all primary schools over the coming months.
- During the summer term the team responded to individual requests from teachers and schools. Each response being bespoke and tailored to the requirements of the request. Cross authority (Wrexham, Denbighshire, Conwy and Flintshire) discussions were hosted online in preparation for September with the objective of approaching online training in a consistent manner, whilst also utilising a common resource. WAT adapted training handbooks that the four authorities could use in the autumn term. Voiceovers were prepared by Flintshire for the KS2 handbook. This is an invaluable resource that will be used for the short and longer term. Voice recordings of language phrases will ensure staff using the resource can practice and ensure accurate pronunciation of common phrases with the learners. The focus of the resource is developing staff's use of everyday Welsh language – teachers and teaching assistants.
- Professional development of the WAT through Hwb webinars in preparation for the shift towards working in a more digital manner was invaluable in moving forward with implementing a different working model during the summer term and beyond, e.g. Adobe Spark, Screen Castify.

### **September Return**

- A monthly newsletter is prepared and disseminated to all primary schools. 6 sent to date. The objective of these is to cascade relevant information linked to the work of the Service, resources available, training and updates from external partners. They're also a means of 'touching base' with all primary schools. WM schools may wish to utilise some resources normally used in English medium primary schools and vice versa, depending on the linguistic ability of cohorts.  
*Feedback from a member of staff: 'I have also read the Athrawon Bro newsletter and I am planning to use the resources and yard games in my lessons next week! They are really useful.'*
- Another 12 units of work including teacher notes, supporting PowerPoint including sound files and further resources to support delivery for approximately 4 weeks, were being prepared for primary teachers using the blended learning model. All resources offer progression in language skills from Nursery to Year 6. This is an important factor given the varying language level that schools could potentially be working with given the on-going situation. *Recent feedback from one school: 'The Power Point – gweithgareddau gwanwyn 5 & 6 is working really well for distance learning. It's great how the children can hear the correct pronunciation of the words too. My class have enjoyed playing the games in Educandy today. Thank you.'*
- Careful planning has taken place to enable the service to deliver training online. The rollout of this has been in discussion with the Primary Head's Federation and has been carefully

mapped out to ensure it complements the current day to day working of schools. This focused training began with teachers who are new to the school and who have very little or no Welsh language skills, enabling them to use basic everyday phrases. They have been divided into 4 F/Phase and KS2, 1hr long sessions. Each session focus' on differing language phrases the teachers can then utilise during the course of the school day. The resource 'Cymraeg ar Dy Dafod' is used. 1 session carried out to date. 6 teachers attended the first online session. 100% of attendees were satisfied that the training met with its objectives. 100% also felt the resources presented were suitable for their needs. All teachers attending identified targets bespoke to their own situation.

- Regular cross-authority discussions re preparing for the Language, Literacy & Communication element within the Curriculum for Wales. Other neighbouring authorities agreed to adopt a handbook containing progressive language patterns created by Flintshire. Exemplar thematic planning models incorporating Progression Steps 1, 2 and 3 are currently being created and these will be utilised as models during forthcoming training.
- The Service has also been preparing resources that fit into current topics e.g. Black Lives Matter and Wildlife. These link into the blended learning models prepared by GwE and are available on Google Classroom.
- Collaborative working nationally with Siarter Iaith co-ordinators across the country has been maintained. The focus areas are planned collaboratively, then resources are shared, minimising duplication on a national level, e.g. Gemau Buarth, resources to support parents with the Welsh language at home. The next focus is on the Dimensiwn Cymreig across the Areas of Learning Experience in the new curriculum.
- Each member of the team has adopted a flexible method of working with schools during this period, responding to school needs as and when required.
- Welsh Cluster Model Meetings have been hosted digitally to maintain contact


### **Section 3 – Recommendation from Estyn Report**

Indirectly supports Recommendation 1 – Improve outcomes for learners in Key Stage 4 by developing high standards of Welsh in the primary sector

### **Section 4 – Next Steps / Future Priorities**

The work of the Welsh Advisory Team supports the key priorities in the Council Plan for 2021-22:

- Maintain support for the rollout of the revised curriculum for pupils from 3-16 which better prepares them for their future lives and employment by March 2022
- Continue to support the raising of standards at primary school level to enable onward learner progression by March 2022
- Increase the capacity and take up of Welsh medium education to achieve Welsh Government targets by March 2022
- Further Improve the Welsh language skills of staff in schools to more effectively support learners and the delivery of the curriculum by March 2022
- Continue to improve pupils' standards of Welsh in all schools to encourage greater bilingualism by March 2022



**School Improvement – Healthy Schools and  
Healthy Pre-Schools  
Self-Evaluation Report**

- Section 1     Service Overview**
- Section 2     Review of 2020-2021**
- Section 3     Recommendation from Estyn Report**
- Section 4     Next Steps / Future Priorities**

**Section 1 – Service Overview**

A team of four officers are funded by Public Health Wales to support schools and pre-school settings to actively participate in both the Welsh Network of Healthy Schools Schemes (WNHSS) and the Healthy and Sustainable Preschool scheme (HSPSS). The team work to ensure that health education and promotion becomes an integrated part of the curriculum, ethos and whole school community in line with national and locally agreed targets in line with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act. Officers also coordinate a number of initiatives and grants which enhances this work and can vary from year to year depending on health priorities. For 20/21 they include:

- Welsh Government School Holiday Enrichment Programme (SHEP)
- Welsh Government Period Dignity Grant
- School Health Research Network (SHRN)
- Public Health Wales Physical Literacy Project

**Section 2 – Review of 2020-2021**

From February 2020 the manager of the team began maternity leave for 12 months and a member of the team acquired additional responsibility to enable the service to be suitably covered. As a result of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the Healthy Schools and Pre-Schools programmes were suspended from 19<sup>th</sup> March until 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2020 across Wales. All the team were required to work from home on a permanent basis and continue to do so. During this time two members of the team were redeployed to the initial development and roll out of the 'Test Trace Protect' (TTP) system in Flintshire.

Once the team were remobilised they began to work under the direction of the national PHW team and the three priority areas for both schools and pre-schools:

- Infection Prevention Control
- Mental and emotional health and wellbeing
- Physical activity (Active travel, outdoor learning)

A national planning group was established for developing and coordinating the adaptations to the WNHSS and HSPSS for the Covid-19 recovery phase in the Autumn Term. Further working groups were subsequently established. Key outcomes for the working groups have been the development of policies, guidance and resource directories for schools and pre-schools which are being finalised currently before distribution. Training for the team was provided with an emphasis on infection prevention control.

From March 20 – February 21 schools have paused their participation within WNHSS and assessments have been placed on hold until September 21. Visits have not been possible and in-schools coordinators have had their work redirected accordingly. Support via email and phone calls has taken place. 72 school staff have begun to access online / virtual training opportunities from the Autumn term onwards including ‘Supporting Children’s Sleep’ training from the Sleep Charity, Dealing with Loss and ‘Tremendous Trees and Wonderful Woodlands’ training with Natural Resources Wales. The School Holiday Enrichment Programme (SHEP) did not take place across Wales in 2020.

Settings participating in the HSPSS have increased their engagement during the Autumn term 2020 and many have had virtual meetings and regular communication thereafter. Uptake for the pre-school virtual training has been good with 109 pre-school staff attending to date including Wellbeing, Sleep, Dealing with Loss, Physical Literacy, Jabadeo and Natural Resources Wales. Some Assessments have also been undertaken virtually.

The Period Dignity grant was reduced for the financial year 2020/21 and schools received an allocation of the funding direct to their budgets based on the number of females within their school in Year 5 and above. Secondary schools had a larger weighting than primary schools in regard to funding. Food banks and Youth clubs also received funding direct.

Public Health Wales funded a Physical Literacy Project for pre-schools in Flintshire which involved ‘train the trainer’ training for the team over three courses with GwE. The team have since developed their own materials and delivered training for the first time virtually in January 2021 to pre-school staff. Settings will also receive resources and further training on Jabadeo to supplement physical literacy development.

In line with the Strategic Equality Plan Objectives 2020-2024 the development of a Trans policy and guidance for primary schools has been paused following legal challenge to a number of local authorities in 2020. In the absence of the Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance (which is now also on hold), we are not in a position to move forward until Welsh Government provide further clarification.

The electronic system to record and report on identity based bullying in schools has been developed and 10 schools have expressed an interest through the Headteacher Federation meetings to pilot the system, which is hosted on Flintshire workspace. This has been paused with schools currently closed, however we aim to have some feedback before the end of the summer term, with a view of launching in Sept 2021.

The School Health Research Network (SHRN) conducted their survey during the Autumn term 2019 and all secondary schools participating had their individual reports shared in April 2020. The Flintshire SHRN County report was issued May 2020. The report uses students' responses to the 2019/20 School Health Research Network Student Health and Wellbeing Survey to report on the following areas of health and wellbeing:

- Food, fitness and physical activity
- Wellbeing and emotional health
- Substance use and misuse
- Sex and relationships

6733 pupils from all 11 secondary schools in Flintshire participated in the survey during the Autumn term 2019. This is higher than the first survey undertaken in Autumn 2017 which had 6585 participants. Once schools received their reports, members of the Healthy Schools Team were able to develop one page profiles summarising each schools data and provide support in the development of action plans accordingly. The County SHRN Action Plan 2019-2024 has been updated in line with the latest data. Below is a summary of improvements made across schools within the county by comparing the 2018 data with 2020 data. Alongside this, areas of regression which require further prioritisation going forward.

#### **Improvements made:**

- Increase in students who agree teachers care about them (Fig 12)
- Reduction in bullying (Fig 21 & 22)
- Reduction in students who have ever sent someone a sexually explicit image of themselves (Fig 24)
- Increase in young people speaking to teachers about violence in relationships (Fig 28)
- Reduction in alcohol consumption (Fig 35)
- Reduction in cannabis consumption (Fig 39)
- Reduction in sexual intercourse (Fig 44)
- Increase in use of contraceptives (Fig 46)

#### **Areas of regression:**

- Reduction in exercise (Fig 6 and 9)
- Increase in sedentary behaviour (Fig 8)
- Increase in pressure felt by young people (Fig 14)
- Decrease in students who feel there is support available (Fig 15)
- Increase in young people going to bed after 11.30pm (Fig 16)
- Reduction in views about body being about right (Fig 29)
- Increase in use of legal highs (Fig 43)

### Section 3 – Recommendation from Estyn Report


The actions identified below have been paused with limited engagement opportunities due to school closures and Maternity Leave however this work will be prioritised going forward into 2021.

#### Implement the actions against the recommendations from the Estyn Inspection 2019

- Develop engagement strategy to discuss attendance issues with children and young people to hear their views on what helps and what hinders good attendance e.g. through School Councils & Youth Council.
- Review Substance Misuse Policy to better reflect current position and support appropriate consistent sanctions across Flintshire schools.

### Section 4 – Next Steps / Future Priorities

- Funding confirmed from PHW for WNHSS and HSPSS 21-22 to continue to provide support to schools and preschools across a wide variety of health themes for policy, guidance and training.
- Nationally there is a priority to support The Framework Guidance on embedding a Whole Schools Approach which is to be released this spring and Flintshire are leading on the assessment tool implementation for the region. Stronger links with GwE are a priority for Wellbeing provision and a local and regional mapping for wellbeing is a key action going forward in order to better support schools implement the above guidance. This will be particularly relevant for the recovery phase and will form part of the county's wellbeing steering group work plan.
- Funding has also been confirmed for Period Dignity grant and this has been increased for 21-22 and we will continue to support schools, youth clubs and foodbanks to utilise this funding.
- Nationally SHEP funding has been increased therefore planning for summer 2021 provision will begin shortly.
- The SHRN survey will take place between Sept-Dec 2021 therefore will need to reengage secondary schools to ensure all participate in the survey alongside supporting the implementation of their school based action plans and pupil voice as part of that.
- Ongoing work in line with the SEP priority areas will continue including the pilot of the Bullying reporting system.



**School Improvement - Early Entitlement  
Service  
Self-Evaluation Report**

**Contents**

- Section 1     Service Overview**
- Section 2     Review of 2020-2021**
- Section 3     Recommendation from Estyn Report**
- Section 4     Next Steps / Future Priorities**

**Section 1 – Service Overview**

Early Entitlement Service: Early Entitlement Team: Team Leader  
3 full time teachers  
1 part time specialist support assistant (0.8)  
1 part time ALNCo (0.3)

Eligible children, whose 3<sup>rd</sup> birthdays fall within relevant timeframes each academic year, are entitled to 10 hours of funded education in a registered Early Entitlement setting/school, for a maximum of 2 terms following the term in which they are 3 years old.

Early Entitlement Team (EET) aims:

**Education:** to support the provision of quality learning opportunities in non-maintained settings providing Early Entitlement (EE) education.

**Workforce Development/Training:** to keep abreast of national initiatives and directives and to disseminate relevant information/guidance to non-maintained settings through regular visits, support documentation and training.

**Vulnerable Learners:** to support the engagement, well-being and performance of vulnerable groups

**Partnerships:** to foster effective partnerships in order to deliver an integrated and effective service which will support the delivery of high quality educational provision for 3 year olds.



## Section 2 – Review of 2020-2021

### **Education: to support the provision of quality learning opportunities in non-maintained settings providing Early Entitlement (EE) education.**

Early Entitlement education has been impacted greatly by the response to Covid-19. Many non-maintained settings have struggled to remain open. In Summer 2020 the EE scheme was suspended by Welsh Government and all EE registered playgroups and a third of private day nurseries closed. No summer eligible EE children were registered with the scheme. Spring funded EE children had their places withdrawn.

The EET have been working from home since 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020. In response to the closure of settings and the focus on 'home learning' the EET created a new Facebook Page and in May, June and July 2020 used it to bilingually share a learning activity suitable for 3 year olds each day. Parents of Spring funded EE children were invited to view the EET's activity ideas directly or through 'Home Learning' sites set up by the child's setting. Parents of non EE children could sometimes access the ideas through their child's setting. The response to the Facebook Page was very positive with setting staff and parents signing up. The Page received lots of 'likes'. Direct feedback from one parent indicated that it was a very valuable resource for those supporting young children at home.

Between September and December 2020 registered EE providers were open but were operating under challenging and restrictive conditions. No 'in person' visits were made by the EET to settings- settings have no funded EE children this term and many settings' risk assessments didn't include EET members as 'essential visitors' at that time.

During Autumn 2020 and Spring 2021 the EET have supported setting staff remotely rather than in person - in the Autumn this was via a minimum 4 calls/ on screen meetings and in the Spring increased support has been provided to settings through phone calls, on screen meetings or online training sessions.

EET have followed WG and LA advice in prioritising the wellbeing of setting staff and children and have sought to support the educational work of setting staff in a balanced and appropriate way. The level of EET interaction with planning, assessing and self-evaluation work has been tailored to the unique level of challenge faced by individual settings. All settings however, have been offered bespoke support in expanding their Continuous Provision environment safely. Some settings increased their Continuous Provision areas after discussing challenges with their EE teacher. This gave the children access to a wider range of learning opportunities which would encourage the development of additional skills.

Four EE settings in an Estyn/CIW 'Progress Review' inspection category proved challenging to support and monitor. Again the challenge was balancing the setting staff's wellbeing with the work that was necessary to evidence addressing the inspection action plan. It is also difficult to monitor real improvement in a setting in a follow-up category without visiting in person. Many settings now use the 'see-saw' digital observation format and EET members, in many cases, are only able to access this through using a setting's own laptop/tablet. The challenge for EET was how to confirm that children were making good progress. The LA's feedback to Estyn in February 2021 was able to show ongoing improvement in the work of 3 of the settings. A CIW/Estyn panel will meet in

March to discuss the evidence provided and to make a decision as to whether the settings can be removed from their follow-up category.

During Autumn 2020 the EET had to disseminate support paperwork electronically rather than in person. EET adapted paperwork to reduce the costs for settings in printing paperwork themselves. However working electronically and printing documents was not possible in some settings and additional arrangements had to be made to post paperwork out. The majority of open settings indicate that they have completed baseline assessments on EE children using this paperwork. The assessments will help settings plan to move individual children on in their development.

The EE teachers report that there is evidence of ongoing commitment to the delivery of EE education within many settings but that it is difficult to confirm the degree to which the children's progress is being planned for and how effective it is without being present in the session and viewing relevant paperwork.

Being supported remotely is challenging for some of our non-maintained EE settings. These settings have very limited Wi-Fi and staff are unable to have an on-screen meeting with members of the EET during an EE session. These settings often also find it difficult to plan and assess in an electronic format and to forward paperwork electronically for the EET to review. Other EE settings have adapted to remote support well and show that there may be a place for some ongoing opportunities to support them occasionally in this way in the future.

The EE service has considered the long term impact of financially challenged settings and has tried to provide ongoing funding where possible.

**Workforce Development/Training: to keep abreast of national initiatives and directives and to disseminate relevant information/guidance to non-maintained settings through regular visits, support documentation and training**

During Summer Term 2020 EET members completed online courses and researched national initiatives, examples of good practice etc. to strengthen future support of settings. Umbrella support organisations for the non-maintained sector, charities and LA projects such as the Pathfinder Project have offered a high volume of quality training opportunities throughout the Covid response period and EET members have continued, whenever possible, to attend relevant online training. The EET's research and own professional development during the year has influenced the advice given to settings and will influence the focus and content of this year and next year's training programme e.g. through the EET's strengthened understanding of how to support children's language and communication difficulties.

The new ALNET Act (Wales) 2018, which is due to be implemented September 2021, is proving to be a priority in terms of training for EE settings and for the early years non-maintained sector generally. The EET is currently playing a lead role in raising awareness of the new ALN Act for the early years' non-maintained sector and in identifying, shaping and delivering training linked to the transformation of the ALN system. By December 2020 the EET had created a draft document which i) outlined features of provision to be offered under the new ALNET ACT and ii) identified elements of 'good practice' which should be seen in high quality settings. This document was then shared with other services for approval and for further input and in its final format will be integral to a number of future training courses for the wider early years, non-maintained sector within the LA.

The challenge for the EET this year has been devising training courses which can be delivered remotely. To date the 'training' has been non-interactive e.g. a 'wellbeing' PowerPoint presentation was created by EET and sent out to all EE providers in October 2020 to support the team's focus on staff and children's wellbeing. The EET also created a Welsh narrated presentation aimed at raising awareness of the new ALN Act – this was sent out alongside the English version to all non-maintained, early years' settings within the LA. EET members have now familiarised themselves with the technology required to host remote, interactive training and will be involved in training this way in March 2021.

### **Vulnerable Learners: to support the engagement, well-being and performance of vulnerable groups**

**Disadvantaged Learners:** The Early Years Pupil Development Grant (EYPDG) has been used by the EE Service since 2015 for the professional development of the EE setting workforce with a view to strengthening staff's impact on the engagement, well-being and performance of disadvantaged learners. For the 2020-21 financial year the majority of the grant has been used to enable the EET to assess the influence of EYPDG funded training and support to date and to act upon the information gained to improve future support of vulnerable learners.

EET members have conducted individual conversations with all EE settings in relation to their knowledge and understanding of the EYPDG, the ongoing impact of any training and the ongoing use of resources. The EET have collated all responses and have created an action plan to address some of the areas of weakness e.g. by creating a support document to increase setting staff's awareness of the EYPDG and its purpose, planning to increase reference to vulnerable learners in all EE training and encouraging settings to include greater reference to vulnerable learners in their annual self-evaluation or Quality of Care Report.

A proportion of this year's EYPD grant has been used to provide each non-maintained EE setting with funding to be used specifically to support the engagement, well-being and performance of disadvantaged learners. Non-maintained EE setting staff were asked to consider disadvantaged learners in their own settings, to identify appropriate resources to develop the specific skills of those learners and to inform the EET of those resources and skills. The EET approved/ did not approve each resource request and in doing so were able to gain further insight into settings which showed understanding of the challenges faced by disadvantaged learners and the methods of addressing these challenges.

**Learners with Additional Learning Needs:** The support provided for an EE child with developmental delays or difficulties traditionally takes place within the setting and through offering advice to setting staff on strategies etc. that they can use with the child. As many EE settings closed due to Covid for large parts of the last financial year, the EET has had to adapt the format of this support by regularly by-passing settings and staff and speaking directly to parents. The EE's ALNCo has checked on the wellbeing of EE registered children during lockdown periods and has offered parents strategies for supporting the children's development if required. Parents have expressed their gratitude for this contact and for the ALNCo's input.

The EE ALNCo's direct involvement with parents this year has highlighted the valuable insight this interaction can provide and the more rounded picture the EE service has gained of individual children.

The EE Service has also increased the EE ALNCo's level of involvement with setting staff this year and more structured approaches to offering strategies for supporting individual EE children

have been put in place. Current feedback on this increased specialised input indicates that staff feel the strategies are having a positive impact on the child/children's engagement in learning. Support for children with developmental delays or difficulties is an area which the EET is focusing on in partnership with childcare services and the Inclusion Service in order to create a more integrated, clearer process for requesting and receiving support under the new ALNET Act (Wales).

**Partnerships : to foster effective partnerships in order to deliver an integrated and effective service which will support the delivery of high quality educational provision for 3 year olds.**

Partnership working on a local, regional and national level has long been a strength of the EE service but during the Covid response period this has expanded much further. Video conference technology has supported an increased volume of meetings between local services/ stakeholders and highlighted the need for clear, open communication. During Summer Term 2020 the EE Team leader worked collaboratively with other services (Flying Start and Childcare Development) to create documents clarifying the Covid response in the Early Years and to appropriately place vulnerable children under the Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme (CCAS).

The EET has worked in partnership with Flying Start, the Childcare Development Team and the Inclusion Service to agree an ALN training programme for the non-maintained sector and is trying to simplify and clarify the process of providing additional support for individual children within non-maintained settings. EET helped the Inclusion Service to create an initial document which would form the basis of future ALN training for the early years, non-maintained sector. Other services then provided further input (Flying Start, Childcare Development Team, Speech and Language Service, Educational Psychology Service) to create a document with agreed content.

EET have worked cooperatively with Social Services teams to identify a range of resources suitable for supporting children's speech, language and physical skills. This work was to make effective use of a Welsh Government grant given to support children's development due to the impact of Covid. The EET shared a format they had devised for allocating resource money to EE settings and this same format has been adopted by the wider group to allocate the grant funding to all childcare and education providers working within the early years, non-maintained sector in Flintshire. The EE team leader now sits on a temporary panel which will approve the resource orders made by settings.

The EE team leader also sits on a panel that approves applications for small and large grants from childcare providers across the LA and on a panel that approves sustainability grant applications from the Childcare Development Team's (Social Services) budget. The same panel is now used to agree sustainability grant applications made by EE providers to the EE Service. Being part of the work of these panels provides the EE team leader with an insight into the financial stability of EE settings and the possible level of EE provision within a setting in the future.

EET have worked in partnership with the Pathfinder Project to identify opportunities for extending good practice in Flying Start settings into EE settings- a pilot is planned to introduce Wellcomm - a speech and language screening tool - into some EE settings over the next term.

Regionally the EET continues to work in partnership with other North Wales EE Teams via termly meetings and the EE Team Leader attends regular local and regional meetings supporting ALN transformation work. On a National level EET members continue to support the work of Estyn (termly stakeholders meeting) and Welsh Government (New Curriculum working parties).

### Section 3 – Recommendation from Estyn Report

N/A – No recommendations in relation to this service area

### Section 4 – Next Steps / Future Priorities

- Review and adapt written policies and procedures of the EE Service. Consider these in relation to the actions within the 2020 audit report and the strengthening of current processes which aim to ensure the EE Service is cost effective.
- Review and strengthen the expectations of engagement and provision from EE setting staff –engagement and provision should be of good quality to ensure that the learning outcomes for EE children are high. RAG rating EE settings through an external, impartial format may support the work of the EE Service in identifying EE settings with low levels of engagement and low quality provision who should have the de-registration process initiated.
- Continue to work in partnership with the Flintshire Inclusion Service and other education, social and health services to create an integrated, outcome effective and cost effective process for identifying and supporting children with learning disabilities and difficulties across the 0-5 year age range within the LA, under the requirements of the new ALNET Act (Wales). The outcome of the new Act may necessitate an increase in the level of support the EE Service is required to give to individual settings and children.
- Act upon the information gained through reviewing the impact of the Early Years Pupil Development Grant within EE settings to date, to ensure future use of the grant is strengthened in terms of its effectiveness in raising the educational standards of disadvantaged learners.
- To ensure the ongoing continuous professional development of the EET, particularly in relation to the new curriculum and ALNET Act (Wales). To deliver training to EE setting staff to enable them to effectively deliver the requirements of the new curriculum and ALNET Act in relation to supporting and meeting the educational needs of EE children.



## **Integrated Youth Provision Service Self-Evaluation Report**

### **Contents**

- Section 1    Service Overview**
- Section 2    Review of 2020-2021**
- Section 3    Recommendation from Estyn Report**
- Section 4    Next Steps / Future Priorities**

### **Section 1 – Service Overview**

Local authorities are obliged to provide and/or secure the provision of Youth Support Services (youth services), deliver Play Sufficiency and provide a Youth Homelessness Service. Flintshire Integrated Youth Provision (FIYP) delivers on these statutory duties for Flintshire County Council. FIYP provides open access services including youth clubs and play services, detached youth work and targeted support for specific groups of young people. This includes provision which is directly delivered (e.g. youth workers in schools) and commissioned (e.g. NEWCIS to support young carers).

This provision takes place within various settings, including schools, homes and in communities. This includes dedicated provision for young people more at risk of poor outcomes such as young carers and young people with disabilities, at risk of exclusion, having unhealthy relationships and with emotional and mental health problems.

### **Section 2 – Review of 2020-2021**

The pandemic closed youth clubs, outreach services, community-based activities and most schools. FIYP adapted quickly. FIYP introduced:

- Policies for safe digital and remote engagement with young people and staff. This was supported with staff training.

- The establishment of 'Estyn Llaw – Reaching Out'- a fully bilingual support team to offer services to young people. The service moved to make available secure digital, remote services to young people. This includes:
  - 1:1 support for young people
  - Online meetings for Flintshire Youth Council and Young voices speak out
  - Online youth clubs. This includes an online youth club for Welsh language speakers (that involves 60+ young people) and Inspire (mental health hospital based youth work support ) online youth clubs for young people with self-harm needs and a more targeted on line Pride club for LGBTQ+ young people led by Estyn Llaw.
  - A Facebook page to share information and advice and encourage contact
  - Facilitating access to laptops for young people at risk of digital exclusion.
  - Developing and distributing digital resources to support young people at risk as they transition from primary to secondary school.
  - Digital sexual health support provision by our Sexual Health nurse/youth worker and sexual health team
  
- Digital methods for FIYP staff meeting, planning and training. The pandemic response has made it significantly easier to involve part time and sessional staff in team meetings and team development.
  
- Increasing the availability of youth worker support in key environments for young people. This includes:
  - Enhancing the availability of a dedicated youth worker 1 full day minimum per week every week at 5 secondary schools. When school lockdowns ease and schools can utilise these staff within schools, the service is ready to mobilise this support. This also supports effective implementation of the Curriculum for Wales.
  - Enhancing support for young people discharged from hospital for reasons of self-harm to help build resilience and wellbeing.
  - Co-locating a youth worker with social work teams that support looked after children and care leavers at risk of homelessness. FIYP has also recruited a youth homelessness prevention co-ordinator to oversee a strategic approach to the delivery of statutory duties to prevent homelessness for young people. A targeted youth worker is also employed and based within the Council's housing team.
  
- Additional support for young carers and carers in partnership with NEWCIS carer organisation.
  
- Working with partners operating the Duke of Edinburgh Award to facilitate an assessment method to recognise the progression of young people differently within the pandemic.
  
- Informal education and play activities each day at 5 Resilience Hubs, with schools asking staff to continue working with individual children on their return to school at 11 schools. Placement of 4 play staff in to Ysgol Maes Hyfryd special provision to support the school to offer a supported place to vulnerable children.

- Jointly delivered with partners including 28 Town and Community Councils, AURA, URDD, Kicks for Kids and DAFFODILS, a summer play scheme for children aged 5-12 at 55 sites was delivered (including 2 Welsh Medium play schemes at Ysgol Gwynedd (18 on register) and Ysgol Maes Garmon (62 on register). During 17-29 August 2020, 1,865 children participated including 30 disabled children supported by volunteer buddies. Feedback was provided by 64 parents/carers which was all extremely positive about the benefits for children and working families (especially within the context of COVID-19) and about the quality of organisation. Local media also gave positive coverage to the summer playscheme. See <https://www.leaderlive.co.uk/news/18757183.flintshire-play-schemes-adapt-another-successful-summer/> (*Flintshire play schemes adapt for another successful summer* article, The Leader, 29 September 2020) and <http://www.deeside.com/flintshire-county-councils-summer-playscheme-deemed-a-success-even-with-added-setback-of-covid-19/> (*Flintshire County Council's 'Summer Playscheme' deemed a success, even with added setback of COVID-19* article, Deeside.Com, 30 September 2020)

Education and Youth portfolio reorganisation now has the Youth Justice Service directly managed by the Chief Officer from January 2021. As a FIYP management team, we are also progressing plans to seek a Quality Mark for FIYP youth work in 2021. We also developed proposals for service development that were approved by Cabinet in November 2020. This includes expanding online services for young people and the availability of youth workers within environments accessed by young people (e.g. at AURA sports clubs) and having a more sustainable and safe youth club offer, once COVID-19 guidance supports the safe and phased reopening of youth clubs. The Cabinet decision includes transferring management of 8 buildings to schools or as part of community asset transfers and developing new provision at Hwb Cyfle and continuing to support the community-based Roc youth club in Mold.

The Cabinet decision generated positive media coverage. See: <https://www.leaderlive.co.uk/news/18860646.flintshire-youth-work-services-flintshire-set-provide-online-support-wake-coronavirus-pandemic/>

### Section 3 – Recommendation from Estyn Report

FIYP is contributing to the delivery of Recommendation 2 - Reduce exclusions and increase attendance in both primary and secondary schools. This includes:

- Building on initial pilot work in Ysgol Treffynnon which was subject to special measures and then expanded to two other secondary schools in 2019/20, FIYP is progressively co-locating more youth workers within secondary schools to support young people experiencing barriers to engaging with education such as poor self-esteem and confidence, unhealthy relationships and bullying.
- Supporting learners that are struggling with school attendance and/or at risk of exclusion through programmes such as Forest School.
- Investing in the Inspire programme to support young people that have engaged in/at risk of self-harm. While data collection for the evaluation is currently underway, the evaluator advises that 57% of young people of school age engaging with the evaluation report that Inspire has '*helped with school or college*'.



This reinforces the positive acknowledgement by Estyn (p.7) that *'staff from the Integrated Youth Service contribute purposefully in engaging individual learners at risk of disengaging with education'*

#### Section 4 – Next Steps / Future Priorities

FIYP is implementing the Cabinet decision and consulting on proposals with young people, staff, parents/carers, Councillors, partner services and community members. As at 19 January 2021, feedback has been received from:

- 58 young people (of which 10 identify as LGBTQ+, 20 report having a disability and/or health and/or neurodiverse condition and 7 are young carers).
- 13 councillors
- 5 schools/college
- 20 partner agencies in the statutory and voluntary sector
- 33 parents/carers
- 20 FIYP staff members
- 11 wider community members including retired youth workers, army cadets' instructor, parent governor and a teaching assistant.

The consultation closed on 12 February 2021. The feedback will inform the development of an update report to Cabinet and the new emerging FIYP Plan for September 2021 to August 2024.

The FIYP Plan 2021-2024 will set out FIYP strategic direction aligned with core Council and Education and Youth portfolio priorities. For example, the FIYP Plan 2021-2024 will set out how FIYP will:

- further support schools and education colleagues with delivery of the Curriculum for Wales
- deliver on statutory requirements for a Youth Homelessness Prevention Service
- increase joint work with statutory and voluntary sector partners to utilise youth work approaches to prevent problem escalation for children and young people.



## **Youth Justice Service & Flintshire Sorted Self-Evaluation Report**

### **Contents**

- Section 1    Service Overview**
- Section 2    Review of 2020-2021**
- Section 3    Recommendation from Estyn Report**
- Section 4    Next Steps / Future Priorities**

### **Section 1 – Service Overview**

The Youth Justice Service undertakes statutory functions under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to reduce offending by children and young people. The Youth Justice Service undertakes functions in the following areas;

- Prevention and diversion including administration of Out of Court Disposals (Bureau),
- Provide Court Services to youth, magistrates and Crown Court (including out of hours)
- Manage and deliver statutory Court Orders
- Provide support to victims of crime
- Manage Custodial Sentences and Remands to Youth Detention
- Support young people as they make transitions.

The YJS is required to adhere to the National Standards for Youth Justice. As part of our functions we are responsible for undertaking assessments, planning, intervention and supervision to young people which requires undertaking a holistic assessment and intervention. As part of our role we are required to ensure appropriate risk and safety and wellbeing management to support young people, victims and communities. The Youth Justice Service produces an annual Youth Justice Plan in line with its statutory requirements which details our strategic and operational objectives which is overseen by the local Youth Justice Executive Management Board and Delivery Group.

The Youth Justice Board Cymru have also created a wider strategy through a Youth Justice Blueprint which outlines a number of key priorities to create a whole systems approach to Youth Justice which;

- Develops a youth justice system which treats children with fairness and respect and helps them build on strengths and positive life choices,
- Support children live crime free, positive and healthy lives, improving wellbeing and making communities safer,
- Reduce the number of children in the Youth Justice System through effective prevention and diversion,

- Reducing re-offending and create safe environments in which children are protected from harm and supported to thrive,
- Deliver a bold ambitious approach which is transformative with sustainable services that provide continuity through the care system and.
- Work with key stakeholders to strengthen the integrated partnership approach to the delivery of youth justice services which promotes a child first approach.

The Blueprint aims to develop and strengthen whole systems approaches to prevention, pre-court diversion, community, custody, resettlement and transitions and system oversight.

Flintshire Sorted Young People’s Drug and Alcohol Team provide a comprehensive service to children and young people up to the age of 22-years-old and aim to minimise the risk of drug and alcohol related harm to individuals, families and the community.

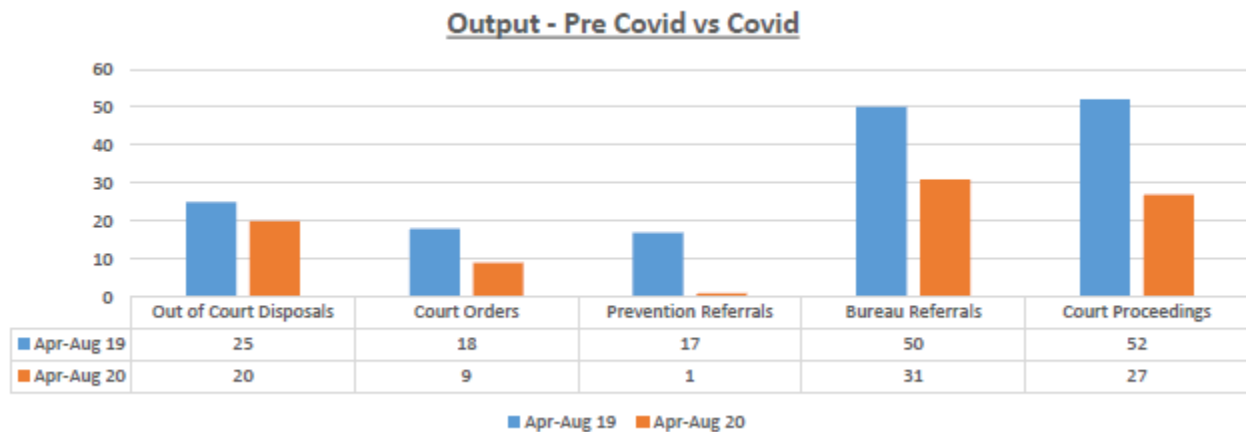
Flintshire Sorted incorporate prevention work within schools and the community, as well as targeted work for those young people at increased risk of misusing substances. Furthermore, a therapeutic service is available for individuals and small groups of young people, whose substance use is having a negative impact upon daily functioning and mental health.

Flintshire Sorted work collaboratively with young people to identify individual need and tailor an intervention to best meet that need as well as aiming to improve resilience and future aspirational outcomes.

Flintshire Sorted offers consultation and guidance to young people, parents and professionals and will deliver bespoke training packages on request.

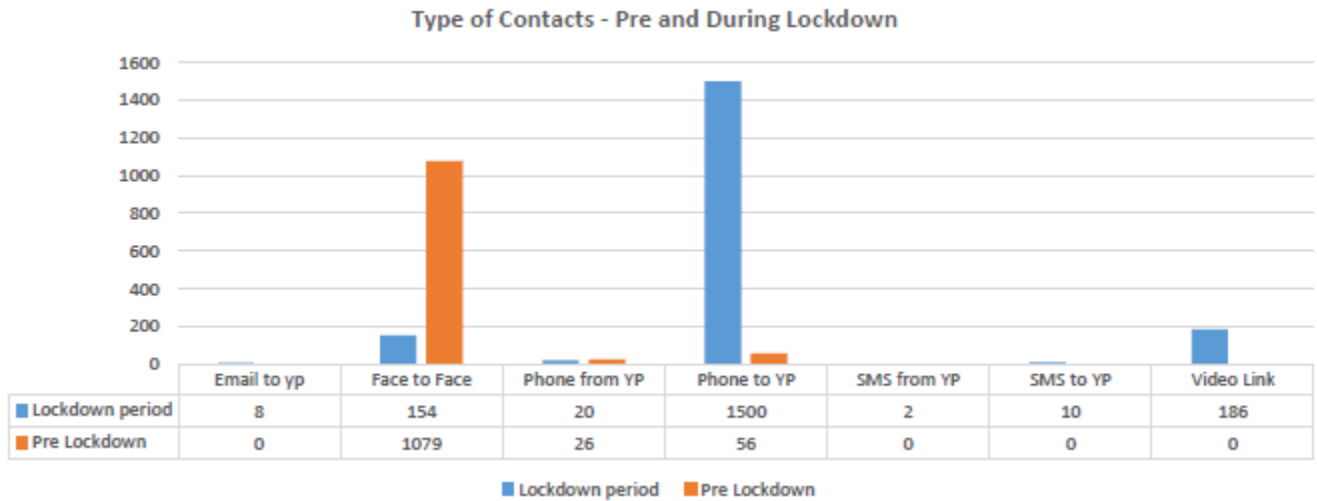
**Section 2 – Review of 2020-2021**

On 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 the Youth Justice Service suspended standard face to face provision and implemented a Operational Business Continuity Plan which supported increased remote ‘virtual’ delivery of face to face services whilst still ensuring we maintained our statutory functions. During the pandemic the YJS and Flintshire Sorted have seen a reduction in the number of referrals from partner agencies and statutory agencies such as HMCTS and North Wales Police.



**Figure 1: Comparison Referral rates between April-August 2019/2020**

As part of our Business Continuity Plan the YJS increased virtual levels of contact with young people as a result of reduced face to face contact. As part of these contacts we also ensured that young people continued to access education and were referred to local Education Hubs where required.



**Figure 2:** Comparison contact type (August 2020)

In order to support our young people assessed as most at risk of re-offending, serious harm to others or presenting with safety and wellbeing concerns we implemented a Risk Register which was reviewed weekly by the YJS Management Team and enabled the YJS to undertake face to face doorstep visits where required.

HM Courts and Tribunal Services (HMCTS) suspended all routine Court work during the initial phases of the pandemic, however, the YJS was able to list priority cases where such hearings were required to manage risk or safety and wellbeing. The YJS continued to track and monitor Court work during the pandemic through weekly Court Team Meetings.

Out of Court Disposals and Referral Order Panels continued virtually during the pandemic, however, all face to face reparation (Unpaid Work) activities were suspended and practitioners were encouraged to explore with families projects that could be completed within their home environment.

Multi-Agency Risk Management Meetings and the Flintshire Missing Exploited and Trafficked Panel (MET) have continued virtually during the pandemic.

Flintshire Sorted (Young Person’s Drug and Alcohol Team) also suspended face to face work during the initial phases of the pandemic, however, were able to offer door step visits in line with our Business Continuity Plan. Flintshire Sorted continued to offer Education Hubs access to targeted virtual drug and alcohol support to vulnerable learners.

The YJS was required to devise and submit a Covid Recovery Plan to the Youth Justice Board which has been supported and reviewed by the YJS Executive Management Board. Our YJS and Sorted Covid Recovery Plan outlines a phased approach to re-commencing services. Currently the YJS is in phase 2 of recovery which requires following risk assessment and adherence to

public health guidance;

- Increased face to face contact with high risk or vulnerable young people or young people commencing assessment with YJS or Sorted,
- Increased one to one face to face Sorted support for young people in schools,
- Commence a project to re-commence small scale outdoor Unpaid Work projects in the community,
- Ability to map community tensions and anti-social behaviour issues and explore Community Engagement activities.

Following the new Welsh Lockdown, some of these activities have continued in Phase 2 of our Recovery, however, we have also curtailed aspects where increased contact has not been assessed as essential.

During the first phase of the pandemic the YJS assessed the following challenges and successes;

Challenges;

- Limitations to quality of assessment and interventions due to the absence of face to face or home visits.
- Providing in person staff / young person / victim and family support.
- As lockdown restrictions eased the YJS were notified of an increase in anti-social behaviour and the use of Dispersal Orders in some communities.
- Delivery of unpaid work and reparation activities was curtailed.
- Delays in Court hearings resulting in a backlog of Youth cases.
- Unable to utilise WhatsApp messaging due to confidentiality.

Success;

- Staff have adapted and responded quickly to new ways of working.
- Improved oversight of high risk cohort and increased frequency of supervision with young people.
- Some young people and families have preferred alternative methods of service delivery.
- Staff have developed new interventions and been creative in how they fulfil requirements of orders and outcomes.
- Improvements in multi-agency staff representation at risk and safety and wellbeing meetings due to new technology platforms.
- Progress has still been made against YJS Delivery Plan.

As a result of the lessons learnt, the YJS has continued to work towards increasing face to face contact even following further lockdowns. We have also reviewed our methods of communication and have sought agreement following revision to our safeguards for the increased use of WhatsApp as a means of communication for young people over 16 years of age. We have also ensured that there continues to be multi-agency monitoring of community anti-social behaviour

issues and a pro-active offer of YJS support where young people have been identified (through Police Yellow Cards) as at risk of engaging in further offending, anti-social behaviour or substance misuse. The YJS has also seen an increase in the number of Community Safeguarding and Public Protection Incidents (CSPPI's) in respect of concerns regarding young people's emotional and mental health. The YJS has a Critical Learning Policy with all of its partner agencies in order to capture best practice and lessons learnt to inform future practice.

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, the YJS staff have adapted to the challenges and come together as a workforce. The YJS Executive Management Board and Delivery Group have continued to meet regularly and progress has been made against our annual Youth Justice Plan. During the pandemic the work related to the Youth Justice Blueprint has been suspended and has recently re-commenced. Much of this work is being co-ordinated through the YOT Managers Cymru team.

### **Section 3 – Recommendation from Estyn Report**

The contribution of the Youth Justice Service is focused on Recommendation 2: Reduce exclusions and increase attendance in both primary and secondary schools.

During the pandemic the YJS were successful in recruiting an Education Officer and we reviewed our transition agreement with the Education Department. This allowed for greater focus on our cohort to (i) ensure that young people had the necessary plans in place to support a return to education (ii) any support required to reintegrate back into education was identified and (iii) those young people assessed as NEET or not accessing their full education entitlement were highlighted. The YJS continued to attend the local EOTAS Panel to highlight the needs of vulnerable YJS learners.

All children and young people referred to the YJS are co-allocated to our YJS Education Officer who will triage the case with respect to education. This process requires liaison with schools and ensures that information is shared with school and education department with the YJS. The triage assessment also identifies any current plans / assessments currently in place and ensures cases have been elevated to the Inclusion Service where attendance is an issue. The YJS continued to attend the local EOTAS Panel to highlight the needs of vulnerable YJS learners.

The YJS also undertook a local restructure and appointed a Senior Manager for Youth Justice & Flintshire Sorted in order to build on the strengths of the Senior Management Team within the Education and Youth Portfolio. Such an appointment will support the portfolio on making further progress against ESTYN Post Inspection Action Plan.

### **Section 4 – Next Steps / Future Priorities**

- As part of our Youth Justice Plan the YJS is keen to explore with the Head Teachers Federation amendments to the Exclusion Policy & Substance Misuse Policy which aims to prioritise diversionary activities with the YJS and Flintshire Sorted in respect of substance misuse and possession of offensive weapons.

- Continue to strengthen the profile of learners open to the YJS who are not accessing their full education entitlement.
- Complete the review of the Flintshire Missing, Exploited and Trafficked Panel, strengthen data analysis with North Wales Police and Partners and strengthen partnerships with schools and education.
- Work to be undertaken between the YJS and Inclusion Service to improve monitoring of exclusion and attendance of the YJS cohort and provide this information to the YJS Executive Management Board.



## School Governance Support Service Self-Evaluation Report

### Contents

- Section 1     Service Overview**
- Section 2     Review of 2020-2021**
- Section 3     Recommendation from Estyn Report**
- Section 4     Next Steps / Future Priorities**

### Section 1 – Service Overview

The governor support role within the Education portfolio is part of the role of a Senior Manager. The portfolio does not have a dedicated full time staff resource for governor development. The part time provision and support provided to governing bodies however, is enhanced by access to the dedicated resource and help line provided by the national Governors Cymru web service.

The key priorities of the service relate to supporting governing bodies during ‘schools causing concern’ procedures; federations; Education Improvement Boards; training and development; Flintshire Governors Association; appointment of council governors to governing bodies, Schools Budget Forum and Education, Youth & Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

### Section 2 – Review of 2020-2021

As a result of the Covid pandemic, face to face training sessions for school governors have not taken place since March 2020. However, the Council remains compliant with the statutory duty to provide the regulatory school governor training programme as the Welsh Government statutory governor training modules are available on line via [www.e-learning-governors-in-wales.org.uk](http://www.e-learning-governors-in-wales.org.uk)

The wider local authority governor training programme delivered in previous years to reflect changing national, regional and local priorities cannot currently be replicated on-line. However, a training module was commissioned by the six north wales authorities during the summer term 2020 to develop an additional, non-statutory on-line module in support of the strategic role of governors.

Use of the on-line training portal continues to be very good with 661 completion certificates issued during calendar years 2016/19 and 193 issued during 2020. This suggests a good level of



engagement during the pandemic with training being completed on Induction; role of Chair; role of Clerk; understanding school data and complaints handling. There are approximately 1250 governor positions within the Authority.

The network of North Wales Governor Support Officers have continued meeting virtually each term with the GWE leads for Governor Support. The network has been able to continue to share approaches and resources to support governor development during the pandemic. GwE also continues to offer support to individual governing bodies, when requested, through their professional learning offer for 2020/21 including development support for school governors on Wellbeing, Curriculum for Wales, Additional Learning Needs and welsh language.

Administration of the Flintshire Governors Association continues to be provided by the Council. The Forum has proven to be an effective, regular consultative platform and a timely vehicle for providing updates on key national and local issues. Over a third of schools were regularly represented at the meetings. However, whilst no meetings have been possible during the pandemic, an alternative termly newsletter has been set up to keep governing bodies updated on national/local developments. In addition, meetings of the Schools Budget Forum and the Welsh Education Strategic Form are currently held virtually and there remains consistent representation by governors.

Schools still continue to have subscription access for 2020/21 to the Governors Cymru web based support service. Access to the Governors Cymru helpline and web based resources provides an effective additional resource for governors and has been of particular support to governors during the pandemic.

The Council continues to administer the nomination of Local Authority governors to school governing bodies. This process has not been adversely affected by the pandemic. Vacancies on governing bodies remain at a consistent level and no major concerns relating to 'resignations' arising from the pandemic have been reported.

### **Section 3 – Recommendation from Estyn Report**

There were no specific recommendations relating to governor development.

### **Section 4 – Next Steps / Future Priorities**

The service priorities in the short /medium term:

- the commissioning and delivery of a safeguarding module for governors
- consideration of commission through PSOW bespoke complaints handling training
- development of the Flintshire Governors Association newsletter as an interim process to full meetings;
- consideration of how/what future training and development should be before return to any face to face sessions



## School Planning & Provision Service Self-Evaluation Report

### Contents

- Section 1     Service Overview**
- Section 2     Review of 2020-2021**
- Section 3     Recommendation from Estyn Report**
- Section 4     Next Steps / Future Priorities**

### Section 1 – Service Overview

The School Planning & Provision service oversees the planning of school places and asset management through the Council's Capital programme and the Welsh Government capital schemes for School Modernisation & 21st Century Schools. The service is responsible for the Council's School Admission policy and practice and School Transport policy, and is client to the Integrated Transport Unit.

### Section 2 – Review of 2020-2021

#### **School Modernisation**

Despite significant challenges brought about by the pandemic, the School Modernisation Team have made significant progress in the School Modernisation Programme.

The Programme has been maintained and delivered in anticipated timelines/budgets by adapting working methods and by the use of technology. In addition, projects have been brought forward within the programme to ensure appropriate delivery and offset potential delays i.e. where proposed projects and or areas required statutory consultation that could not be appropriately progressed during the pandemic.

#### **Lixwm Primary School**

In March 2020, post consultation, Cabinet agreed with the proposal to change the designation of Lixwm Primary School from a County Primary (CP) to a Voluntary Aided (VA) school. The change in designation came into effect 1st September 2020. Subsequently, the Governing Bodies of Ysgol yr Esgob VA, Caerwys, and Lixwm VA Primary School agreed to undertake a consultation

on a proposal to establish a federation between the two schools.

The consultation, with which the Council assisted, was progressed in accordance with the Federation of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations (2014). Consultation commenced 16<sup>th</sup> November 2020 and closed 18 December 2020. As with all consultations of this nature, a version of the consultation document was produced for children and young people who were likely to be affected by the proposal.

The governors of Ysgol yr Esgob VA, Caerwys, and Lixwm VA Primary School have agreed to proceed, therefore, the schools will formally federated on 7 June 2021, following the statutory cooling off period.

### **Childcare Programme**

The Welsh Government made capital grants available to councils for the purposes of childcare provision across Wales. The objective of the programme is to provide 30 hours of government-funded early education and childcare for up to 48 weeks of the year to all three and four year olds of eligible working parents. The 30 hours will be made up of the existing minimum 10 hours of Foundation Phase Early Education (Early Entitlement) and up to 20 hours of childcare with a registered provider. The Council was successful in being awarded £4,890,000 through this initiative

A key policy driver for the Welsh Government is that the 30 hours offer is as clear and easy as possible for working parents to understand and children to access. The primary purpose of the capital programme is, therefore, to facilitate and support the co-location of the Foundation Phase and childcare provision wherever possible. This is in line with our Prosperity for All commitment to “introduce a new model of Community Learning Centres, providing extended services with childcare, parenting support, family learning and community access to facilities built around the school day”.

Social Services led on the Childcare Strategy and the production of a comprehensive Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) that looked at;

- i) the supply of childcare in Flintshire including: type, quantity of provisions, location, costs, places available, choice and
- ii) the gaps in childcare including: location choice, barriers to take up provision, places unavailable.

The CSA was the basis of the successful bid to Welsh Government for early years’ capital.

The Council made a strategic decision to package up the projects within the Childcare Programme for purposes of efficiency, for effective programme management, use of resources, best value (economies of scale) and procurement. To support this approach the client/operational role for the delivery of the Childcare Grant schemes was transferred from Social Services to the School Modernisation Team within Education and Youth. The Chief Officer for Education and Youth assumed the role of Senior Responsible Officer for the programme in June 2020. The construction programme is being managed through the School Modernisation team.

The programme includes different capital funding packages to maximise investment in a number of school sites and is formed from the following funding streams: WG Childcare Grant, WG Welsh Medium Grant, 21st Century schools, Flying Start and Flintshire County Council’s own Capital funding. The programme also includes a Flying Start project at Aston Family Centre; the Council

funded capital project at Ysgol Brynford and the project at Ysgol Croes Atti, Glannau Dyfrdwy.

In January 2021 Cabinet approved the following projects within the construction programme:-

- Ysgol Bro Carmel, Carmel
- Ysgol Derwen, Kinnerton,
- Westwood CP School, Buckley
- Ysgol Yr Esgob, Caerwys.
- Ysgol Maes Y Felin, Holywell,
- Ysgol Sychdyn
- Aston Family Centre (WG, Flying Start Grant)
- Ysgol Y Llan, Whitford
- Ysgol Glan Aber, Bagillt.
- Ysgol Croes Atti, Glannau Dyfrdwy (WG 21st Century/Childcare)
- Ysgol Merllyn, Bagillt
- Ysgol Brynford (Council's Capital Programme)

It has been challenging of managing a complex programme with multiple WG funding streams with differing criteria and funding limitations. The construction contract will now start as soon as it is feasible in early 2021.

#### **Ysgol Croes Atti, Glannau Dyfrdwy site (WM)**

Proposed project funding through the Welsh Government Childcare Grant and Welsh Government 21st Century school investment programme forms part of an extended package which will see an investment of £1.1m in the Glannau Dyfrdwy site, improving provision for Welsh medium education in the Shotton area - an important strand of the Council's Welsh in Education Strategy. This project is anticipated to start in summer 2021.

#### **Ysgol Glanrafon, Mold (WM)**

The project at Ysgol Glanrafon is funded primarily via external Welsh Government funding through the Childcare and Welsh Medium Grants with the balance secured through the Council's Repair and Maintenance allocations, S106 contributions and a small amount of Salix finance through the Council's energy team to support energy efficiency measures, creating a £4.2m investment programme. Construction commenced on site November 2020 with the anticipated completion being February 2022.

#### **Ysgol Brynford**

This is a council funded project but from a contractual perspective is included in the extended construction package for the Childcare Programme. This proposed project will see an investment of £1.090m in the Ysgol Brynford site with an anticipated start during March 2021.

#### **Welsh Government Infants Class Size Grant**

The £2.7m project, part funded by the Council, at Ysgol Glan Aber, Bagillt to increase capacity and improve facilities was completed as planned in March 2020.

### **Hope, Ysgol Castell Alun**

The £7.6m project will construct a new build three storey Art and Design Technology (DT) & classroom block, relocated next to the sports hall which enables the removal of mobile classrooms, the demolition of the current DT block and the creation of a new car park.

The constructors mobilised in October 2020 and the anticipated project completion is November 2021. The project remains on track.

### **21st Century schools Investment Programme - Band B**

The Phase 2 remodelling of Connah's Quay High School was completed in November 2019 and this completed a total investment of £11m on this site.

### **Queensferry Campus Project**

The Queensferry Campus Project is a positive example of the Council's ability to work in multi-agency approach to secure community engagement and collaboration.

This project will provide new a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) to bring virtually all elements of the current provision onto one site and to address the significant issues around the variety of accommodation currently in use for Plas Derwen. The project also includes investment in Queensferry CP School to address a number of suitability issues and the final legacy issues associated with the facilities shared with the former John Summers High School. Following the successful bid for an additional stream of Welsh Government funding for communities, the Council was successful in bidding for funding for a community learning project worth £2.5m which will be called Ty Calon. The site will also include upgraded rugby facilities Shotton Rugby Club, funded by the Welsh Rugby Union. Additionally, colleagues in Social Services have secured WG Flying Start Funding.

Finished off with the landscaping of the remaining green open spaces, this significant investment will complement the Adult Day Care centre, Hwb Cyfle, and provides a final masterplan solution for the former John Summers High School site.

The constructors started on site in November 2020 and remain on schedule. It is anticipated that the full project will be completed by February 2022 with anticipated handover of the different elements as follows:-

- Plas Derwen – September 2021
- Ty Calon Community Hub - September 2021
- Queensferry CP – October 2021

### **Proposed 3-16 Campus – Mynydd Isa**

In March 2020, Cabinet agreed to amend the Council's nominated Mutual Investment Model (MIM) project to the proposed 3-16 school for the Mynydd Isa area and provided a mandate to officers to engage with Welsh Government's Strategic Partner for MIM. This process began in Autumn 2020. The proposed 3-16 school at Mynydd Isa is notable as the first MIM school project in Wales.

The Council, Argoed High School, Mynydd Isa Primary School and education officers are now

engaged in client engagement meetings with the Welsh Education Partnership Team to develop the new project build. Subject to successful navigation through Council, WG business case and MIM processes, the new 3-16 campus is anticipated to be completed by September 2023.

### **Admissions**

School admissions have continued to be managed in accordance with the WG Admissions Code and the vast majority of parental preferences continue to be met (96%). Despite the pandemic deadlines for the offer of places for September 2020 were met and assistance was provided, where necessary, for Voluntary Aided Schools as the deadlines fell within the first period of school closures.

Lockdown restrictions brought about changes to the school appeals processes and since May 2020 all appeals have been conducted in accordance with both the School Appeals Code and the Education (Admission Appeals Arrangements)(Wales)(Coronavirus)(Amendment) Regulations 2020. All appeals have been determined on the basis of written submissions and support has been provided as appropriate for appellants and panel members. Procedures have been drawn up to ensure that all parties are able to fully present their cases and the appeal is determined fairly and transparently.

In the next 12 months, it is anticipated that the current in-house online system for applying for school places will be replaced which will enable procedures to be streamlined. This will also allow direct access by schools to admissions information which will assist with their forward planning.

### **Section 3 – Recommendation from Estyn Report**

No recommendations from the Estyn Report related to School Planning and Provision

### **Section 4 – Next Steps / Future Priorities**

- Completion of projects started in Band B investment programme and progression of projects not yet agreed individually by Cabinet into the development pipeline.
- Outline priority projects for 21<sup>st</sup> Century School Band C Investment Programme.
- Purchase and implementation of Admissions IT Module
- In accordance with the School Appeals Code, recruitment and training of new independent appeal panel members

<b>Flintshire Schools Contextual Data 2020-21</b>	Number	% of FCC	Avg % Wales*
<b>Total Number of Primary Schools overall</b>	<b>64</b>		
Number of Welsh medium primary schools	5		
Number of Faith primary schools	13		
Number of Foundation primary schools	1		
<b>Total Number of Secondary Schools overall</b>	<b>11</b>		
Number of Welsh secondary schools	1		
Number of Faith secondary schools	1		
Number of Foundation secondary schools	0		
<b>Total Number of Specialist Schools</b>	<b>2</b>		
Number of Specialist primary schools	1		
Number of Specialist secondary schools	1		
<b>Total Number of PRU</b>	<b>1</b>		
<b>Pupil Data (All Ages &amp; excluding EOTAS)</b>			
Total number of pupils	23,406		
Total number in Primary	13,798	58.95%	57.83%
Total number in Secondary	9,396	40.14%	36.50%
Total number in Specialist	212	0.91%	1.10%
Total in faith schools	2,652	11.33%	
Total in Welsh medium schools	1,419	6.06%	
Total number of Looked After Children (Jan 2020 LAC)	206	0.88%	1.42% **
Total pupils eligible for Free Schools Meals	4,051	17.31%	18.24%
Total Gypsy Traveller Pupils	133	0.57%	
Total English as Additional Language pupils	1,527	5.62%	6.36%
Total number of pupils with SEN overall	4,360	18.63%	20.79%
Total number of Statemented pupils	669	2.86%	2.88%
Total number of School Action pupils	2,526	10.79%	10.82%
Total number of School Action Plus pupils	1,165	4.98%	7.10%
<b>EOTAS and Elective Home Educated Pupils</b>			
Total EOTAS including PRU	159		
Total pupils Electively Home Educated (Jan 2020)	124		
<b>Welsh National Index of Multiple Deprivation 2014</b>			
Number of Lower Super Output Areas in Flintshire	92		
% LSOAs in most deprived 10%		2.20%	
% LSOAs in most deprived 20%		12.00%	
<b>(see next page)</b>			

<b>Welsh National Index of Multiple Deprivation 2014 (continued)</b>		<b>% of FCC</b>	<b>Avg % Wales*</b>
% LSOAs in most deprived 30%		19.60%	
% LSOAs in most deprived 50%		34.80%	

\*Where comparative data available

\*\*No longer part of PLASC figures, this figure is from the Children's Services report on Stats Wales



Dear Colin Everett

During the early autumn term, the Welsh Government asked us to undertake a review of local authorities work in supporting their learning communities in schools and pupil referral units (PRUs) during the period from March to October 2020.

This letter outlines the outcome of this work in Flintshire local authority. The content of the letter is based on virtual meetings with officers, the cabinet lead member for education and a sample of schools and PRUs. We have also considered the supporting documentation provided by the local authority and the feedback from surveys of school/PRU leaders, governors, teachers and support staff, parents and pupils. We have referred to the outcomes of the surveys where relevant, although the surveys were mainly be used to inform the national report which was published on our website on 15 January. Here is a [link](#) to that report.

We would like to thank your staff for giving of their time to discuss their work with us and for providing additional information on request.

Yours sincerely



**Meilyr Rowlands**

**Her Majesty's Chief Inspector**

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**The local authority's work to support its schools and PRUs from March to August 2020**

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## **Leadership and collaboration**

Very early in the spring of 2020, Flintshire established a vision for a strategic whole authority approach to working through the crisis. A series of tactical groups were established to co-ordinate and direct the Council's services in all key areas including education, each chaired by a Chief Officer. Frequent meetings ensured strategic decisions were discussed, understood and agreed by all senior managers and could then be disseminated to all services. This shaped their processes for identifying and meeting needs and ensured that all leaders understood their roles and responsibilities in relation to the situation. The portfolio's risk register and mitigations statements have been subject to review and challenge by the Education Scrutiny Committee. This shared, collaborative response has been a notable feature of the authority's work. It has enabled the education service to work more proactively with a broad range of council services, such as Health and Safety, Transport, Information Communication Technology (ICT), Free School Meals, Human Resources, Childcare, Safeguarding, Additional Learning Needs and Youth Services. This collaboration enabled senior education officers to work with teams of staff to shape key areas of support for provision in schools and PRUs, such as meeting the needs of vulnerable learners. The collaborative strategic leadership that the local authority established at the outset of the crisis has been and continues to be highly influential. It has supported schools and PRUs to focus on their core business of developing quality provision for the children and young people within their schools.

During the first week of lockdown, all schools were open to provide childcare for key workers. By the second week, childcare hubs were created to serve clusters of schools. The local authority provided transport for pupils and also used contracted school transport to distribute food to those eligible for free school meals. The most vulnerable pupils, including those with special educational needs, received support at home, upon request. For example, the Language and Speech Service (known as CLASS) provided remote support to parents to deliver interventions and supplied resources for use at home.

The local authority provided clear leadership and guidance for schools in relation to opening for the check-in, catch-up, recover session in July. Support was given to assess risks and develop models for opening in collaboration with headteachers. Schools and PRUs also received clear guidance about how to set up learning areas and guidance about important issues such as what to do in the event of an outbreak of COVID-19 in schools. On a practical level, schools and PRUs received additional support, for example from the council's 'Street Scene' department to set up one-way systems on their premises. This paved the way for schools and PRUs to open with increased confidence in September for all learners.

Local authority officers identify that they have developed a strong understanding of the difference that their work makes to the provision for learners. In particular, they reflect on the effectiveness of partnership working across agencies and identify clearly, the many benefits that this approach brings. This understanding of the benefits of collaboration across departments is a piece of key learning that the local

authority has drawn from its work throughout the crisis and it is something that it is keen to develop further.

Throughout the spring and summer, Flintshire officers worked well with the regional consortium (GwE). They have developed a shared understanding of roles, responsibilities and expectations in relation to achieving strategic goals in the context of the COVID-19 crisis, for example in developing distance learning resources and providing professional support to enable teachers to offer digital learning for pupils. Through our consultation with schools, it is apparent that they generally feel well-supported as a result of this collaboration. In addition, the local authority, in partnership with GwE continued to support schools causing concern, for example by working with them to produce post inspection action plans.

### **Promoting learning**

In the initial stages of the pandemic, the local authority responded swiftly to provide childcare hubs for vulnerable learners and for children of key workers. They worked well with school leaders to develop and implement a vision for this provision, for example by identifying a lead school in a cluster as the location for the hub and establishing health, safety and staffing arrangements. This ensured that the authority offered a continuation of childcare and learning to those most in need of the service at that time. In addition, the local authority engaged with schools and GwE to support an offer of distance learning.

With regard to developing new approaches to teaching and learning, the local authority worked well in collaboration with GwE to identify the most appropriate ways to support schools and PRUs. This included pastoral engagement with school leaders by local authority and regional officers, the development of guidance to support distance learning, provision of professional learning, and ICT equipment and infrastructure for learners and staff. Feedback from schools indicates that this support was timely and helpful.

When thinking about distance learning in the context of school and PRU closures, the local authority was committed to supporting schools and PRUs to focus on learners' wellbeing. The local authority believed that schools were best placed to develop a wellbeing curriculum for learners so they did not provide detailed curriculum guidance. However, officers actively promoted wellbeing provision, such as regular outdoor and physical activity.

A strength of the collaboration between the local authority and GwE appears to have been the way they have facilitated school-to-school support.

### **Cameo: Promoting collaborative cluster work**

The local authority has worked in partnership with GwE to promote school-to-school support by identifying opportunities to share practice across and between clusters of schools. This approach has enabled schools to broaden and adapt their provision for learners. For example, clusters of schools have collaborated to improve logistical arrangements such as the deployment of staff and shared the learning experiences they offer for children, including when working in the outdoors. A very few have also collaborated to share a curriculum based on learners' wellbeing and to provide shared lessons via live streaming.

The local authority identified challenges to supporting learners that attended Welsh-medium primary schools, whose first language is English. They recognise that replicating immersion in a Welsh language rich environment is difficult. As a result of this experience, they are working to develop additional support materials for schools should the need for distance learning arise again.

In secondary schools, the local authority, via its partnership with GwE, has supported schools to develop their distance learning approaches. Regular meetings between officers and headteachers ensure a shared understanding of schools' approaches to distance learning and enabled schools to access support if needed. This has supported schools to offer continuity in their pupils' learning. Levels of learner engagement have generally been positive. However, it has been an ongoing challenge to engage with a core of disengaged pupils.

The local authority, in partnership with schools and GwE, made rapid progress in upskilling staff to use digital learning resources and strategies. This contributed significantly to the capacity of schools and initially this supported schools to stay in touch with learners to monitor their wellbeing. This partnership evolved quickly into a conduit for continuity of learning for pupils through a range of learning platforms. These enabled teachers to provide support and feedback for learners and facilitated interaction with parents. A very few schools used live streaming to provide lessons. They were reluctant to use this approach initially due to potential safeguarding concerns. Overtime, the authority ensured that schools received appropriate Welsh Government guidance.

### **Supporting vulnerable learners**

From the outset of our engagement with the local authority and its schools, it was evident that supporting wellbeing for all learners, through unprecedented circumstances, was the top priority for all within the education service. The local authority was mindful of the impact that matters associated with the pandemic were beginning to have on learners' wellbeing and mental health and of the potential for a continued challenge in meeting learners' needs overtime. In response, the local authority provided guidance and support to schools and PRUs on how to support learners' wellbeing and mental health during the period of closure. In addition, the

local authority's officers have been accessible to schools and PRUs to offer personalised support. The local authority also targeted training for its own teams such as the Young Person's Counselling Service to ensure that support to pupils could be delivered remotely. Overall, schools and PRUs have appreciated the local authority's support greatly.

The local authority worked with schools/PRUs to agree criteria and processes to identify vulnerable learners. This was important as it highlighted the broad range of provision that the local authority would need to offer or facilitate. In turn, this helped officers to tackle issues strategically, for example by deploying teams of staff to specific tasks or through collaboration with agencies such as social services.

### **Cameo: Inclusion services for English as an Additional Language (EAL) learners and Traveller children**

Senior leaders within the local authority identified the strategic importance of a collaborative approach to the provision of inclusion services. They established networks between key agencies such as the benefits agency and Flintshire county council education inclusion services. They also ensured that heads of service and strategic leads for inclusion understood their roles clearly and that more importantly, they felt empowered to work proactively to make sure that the strategic vision for support became a reality on the ground. This approach is exemplified in the local authority's work to support EAL learners and their families, and learners and families from the Traveller community.

Local authority inclusion services built on strong pre-existing relationships with schools to make sure that they knew where the EAL learners and learners from the Traveller community were and to identify specific needs. They ensured that learners had opportunities to continue to learn through the pandemic by supporting them to attend childcare hubs or by providing work at home. In a few instances, this meant home visits. Inclusion services staff supported schools to make this work accessible for learners and families for example by using staff able to communicate in the families' home language when necessary. They also provided a wider network of support by helping families to access benefits such as free school meals to support the health and wellbeing of learners at a challenging time.

Senior leaders have worked with leaders of the education service and strategic leads for inclusion to keep the effectiveness of their work to support inclusion under review.

The range of need is considerable and the authority's response extensive. It has included allocating vulnerable learners to an appropriate learning hub, providing specific support for groups of learners such as those from the Traveller community, continuing to support pupils with special educational needs and supporting those learners disadvantaged by poverty or other exceptional circumstances.

The local authority's educational welfare officers have provided valuable support to schools, for example by checking up on learners that were not engaging with the learning on offer. Strategies to provide learning tools such as laptops were well

received by schools and PRUs although according to schools, levels of engagement with digital learning remained variable among disadvantaged learners. Schools and PRUs, with support from the local authority have also been able to provide support beyond education for disadvantaged learners, for example food vouchers, food parcels and help with housing issues. Schools and PRUs have been complementary about the support received to work with very hard to reach learners.

It is apparent that collaboration has developed as a strength in response to the pandemic. Local authority officers cite numerous examples of how renewed, refreshed or newly formed alliances have strengthened as a result of recent challenges. Examples of proactive collaboration include but are not exclusive to CAHMS, school nurses, Team around the Family and the inclusion and sensory teams. Individually and in combination, these agencies are supporting vulnerable children and those learners with special educational needs effectively in many ways.

The local authority has maintained a strong focus on meeting special educational needs and the needs of other learners requiring extra support. It has adapted its work successfully, for example by using a virtual panel to support statutory assessment processes. This has ensured continuity of support, for example that all Year 7 transfers have been supported to access the specialist provision they required. The local authority has continued to work with schools, for example to facilitate cluster ALN meetings and to review the allocation of support. Officers have worked with schools and PRUs to support learners with statements of special educational needs and those that are likely to require a statement in the future.

It has been a challenge for the authority to ensure that educational provision for pupils with SEN complies with the needs outlined in their statements because these pupils have not been able to attend schools and PRUs each day to receive the specialist input that they normally would, either from teachers support staff or specialist agencies. However, they have provided a range of support material and online sessions for pupils with speech and language difficulties as well as for visual impaired children. In addition, they provided specialised ICT equipment and prepared digital lessons using sign language for learners with hearing impairments. This has been valuable in maintaining specialist skills and services, to support the wellbeing of pupils, their families and staff.

Leaders from Flintshire's PRUs are complementary about many aspects of the local authority's work. They have received helpful support to interpret and implement Welsh Government guidance. The local authority has supported pupils' transition into PRUs successfully through a digital process. The local authority ALN team guided the PRU on how to undertake online reviews. This enabled the PRU to carry out all annual reviews.

PRU leaders highlight the benefits of aspects of multi-agency work, for example with CAMHS and particularly about the role of the local authority Progression Team. The team, supported by Careers Wales, have worked well to successfully place nearly all leavers from key stage 4 into provision in the local further education college. This team has also worked proactively to monitor the progress of EOTAS pupils. PRU leaders were slightly less positive about requirements for duplication of risk

assessments for the authority and the regional consortium. In one instance, the same information was requested twice but the PRU was asked to submit it in different ways for different audiences.

The local authority has also shared bereavement guidance for children, young adults, parents and staff.

#### **Cameo: Bereavement Support**

As part of its overall strategic vision to support school communities through the COVID-19 pandemic, Flintshire County Council education services drew heavily on its understanding of well-established strengths and partnerships.

Through effective collaboration between the authority's educational psychology service and its pupil referral unit provision, Flintshire provided guidance for all schools and offered training for staff to help them to work with children, families and communities that had encountered bereavement. This sensitive approach aligns with the authority's wider approach to supporting health and wellbeing. Many of the schools that have contributed to this thematic report speak positively about the availability of guidance and the value of training, which places them in a better position than they were in previously to cope with very challenging circumstances should they arise.

Overall, the local authority has worked strategically to support learners' wellbeing and meet the needs of vulnerable learners. It has been flexible and adapted its provision as required to ensure that families receive the support they need from schools and central services. Schools and PRUs have indicated consistently that they feel the support for vulnerable learners provided by the local authority has been available and beneficial in relation to most aspects of their work.

The local authority has been proactive in supporting young people through its youth work strategy.

#### **Cameo: Youth outreach work during a pandemic**

Flintshire's 'Estyn Llaw' or 'Reaching Out' team was set up as part of the authority's Integrated Youth Provision response to the COVID-19 pandemic and began its work immediately after Welsh Government announced the first lockdown. The team includes specialist youth workers and a sexual health nurse specialist and is able to provide a bilingual service.

The team has specialist workers based in the Youth Justice Service and Children's Services. The Participation Team's work is guided by the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNCRC). Their priority is to focus on all areas of engagement and participation and they are committed to involve and have representation from all young people in Flintshire. The team works in partnership with the Flintshire Youth Council and the 'Young Voices Speak Out' group.

The team has supported these groups to identify key areas of need for young people during the COVID-19 restrictions including mental health and educational support. They have also worked with them on key tasks, for example, responding to local and national consultations about online safety.

The team has provided online school transition resources for young people who have missed the valuable work that normally takes place at school during the spring and summer terms. This aims to prepare learners both emotionally and physically for the next stages of their education. They also provide advice and signpost young people to information relating to sexual health and relationships, online safety, debt, health and careers information/advice, for example about Flintshire County Council's Modern Apprenticeship Scheme. The team have also offered 'Forest School' experiences to support vulnerable learners to transition back in to education.

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## **The local authority's work to support its schools and PRUs from September**

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### **Leadership and collaboration**

Leaders across the local authority have benefitted from and built on the strong foundations laid through the spring and summer terms. They have, through collaboration with schools and partner agencies, such as GwE, put in place processes and procedures to support schools and PRUs to reopen successfully for pupils.

Since reopening, the local authority has worked with schools and PRUs to emphasise the importance of prioritising the wellbeing of pupils, families and staff. Officers have continued to liaise regularly with school and PRU leaders, for example through engagement with the headteacher federations, to gain an accurate picture of what is working well as well as an understanding of the challenges that schools face. They take good advantage of these opportunities to share strategy with school and PRU leaders and to provide them with information about new resources as they develop, for example, relevant professional learning resources that have been developed by GwE. They continue to provide schools and PRUs with clear and timely advice to support them to deal with issues that arise, for instance when they need to close specific classes or year groups.

The local authority continues to keep the effectiveness of its work under review. Arrangements to share information across the authority and opportunities to provide additional support or challenge are in place, for example through the work of the education scrutiny committee who have kept aspects of the authority's provision, such as the impact of youth work under regular review. These processes ensure that leaders at all levels are empowered to act in the best interests of learners and



that there are appropriate arrangements to seek assurances that their work is making a difference.

### **Promoting learning**

The local authority's schools and PRUs have received useful support to ensure continuity of learning throughout the COVID-19 crisis. The local authority has drawn upon strong, established relationships with school leaders, communities and service providers to ensure that a learner's experience is as normal as it can possibly be against the backdrop of current challenges and restrictions.

The local authority has supported schools and PRUs to think about solutions that enable them to provide a learning offer that builds on prior experiences. It has also provided schools with the confidence to adapt learning experiences, for example by offering more learning in the outdoor environments or by supporting the use of online resources. Overall, schools and PRUs indicate that the return to school-based teaching has been relatively smooth and very positive for learners.

Across the local authority, the capacity of schools to provide distance learning has developed at an impressive pace. The local authority, in partnership with GwE, has played a pivotal role in supporting schools to develop this provision, for example through beneficial exemplar materials. This has supported schools, to provide continuity of learning for pupils at times when they cannot physically be at school. A consistent message from schools is that the development of these approaches and the considerable improvement in staff skills are positive outcomes from a challenging time. However, local authority officers and school leaders have raised some concern about the limitations of band width in some schools where the infrastructure is unable to cope with the volume of digital traffic, for example during the 'firebreak' lockdown when large proportions of pupils were accessing lessons from home.

Through its partnership with GwE, the local authority has provided a flexible professional learning offer that helps schools respond to the challenges of the current situation. For example, useful 'how to' videos and webinars have supported foundation phase staff to adapt their pedagogy and provision.

All of the schools that we engaged with feel supported by the local authority in their plans for using the additional funding through Welsh Government's 'Recruit, recover, raise standards: the accelerated learning programme'. This support has given them confidence that most schools are using the funding appropriately, for example to appoint additional staff to develop learners' basic skills. In a few instances, schools have indicated that they have used this money to cover financial shortfalls while others have expressed concerns about a perceived requirement to spend the money quickly without really thinking through their strategy.

Through our engagement with schools, we have received consistent messages about the valuable support provided by the local authority's human resources department. This support has helped schools to respond to issues appropriately, as and when they arise. A few schools have indicated that they have found it challenging to maintain staffing levels at times, for instance when members of staff

have been in isolation. They also identify difficulties with covering teachers' planning preparation and assessment time.

### **Supporting vulnerable learners**

The local authority's inclusion team has continued to work diligently to support schools and PRUs to meet the needs of vulnerable learners. Through continuous liaison with agencies within and beyond the authority, they have supported vulnerable learners to re-engage with learning at their school or PRU, for example by providing transport services.

Since returning to school in September, to a large extent, meeting the basic needs of vulnerable learners has been easier than it was through the lockdown period. This is largely due to the fact that learners are at school and are therefore able to access services such as free school meals, directly. The authority has also drawn on its experience through lockdown to respond quickly to the need to provide funding for free school meals to pupils that cannot attend school due to COVID-19 related reasons.

The inclusion team has continued to provide valuable support for EAL pupils to enable them to access learning. It has also been proactive in supporting families from the Traveller community to re-engage with education after the summer break. Through discussions with schools, it is evident that schools feel well supported to meet the needs of looked after children.

The local authority is in regular contact with schools and PRUs regarding pupils with SEN. It has appropriate arrangements to monitor the progress and wellbeing of learners that moved to a new school or PRU in September. Arrangements to hold review meetings with schools and parents follow the same procedure that was established in the spring and summer terms as this proved effective at that time. A few schools have had difficulties in accessing the educational psychologists when they need them due to a lack of current capacity in this part of the authority's service. The local authority is aware of this issue and is taking steps to address it.

PRU leaders have found the services of the North Wales TRAC team beneficial. They identify instances where this support has made a positive difference to learners. They also point out that this team provides a once-only support package meaning that if a learner has received support from this agency at an early point in their education that they become ineligible for further support. PRU leaders find this a little frustrating.

In a few instances, PRUs have found that classroom sizes have limited the amount of time that learners can spend at the PRU because the rooms are too small to cope with social distancing measures.

The inclusion team has developed new ways of working in partnership with agencies, to support learners. For example, speech and language specialists undertake assessments online to identify learners' needs. This approach in

combination with the associated professional support for school staff prevents delays to learners receiving the support they need.

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## EDUCATION, YOUTH & CULTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Thursday, 18 <sup>th</sup> March 2021
<b>Report Subject</b>	Hwb Digital Programme
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Education and Youth)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In June 2019, Welsh Government announced a major investment in schools Information technology infrastructure and technology called the HWB Programme. The programme's aim is to raise digital standards in schools by investing in technology to ensure a minimum level of provision across all schools in Wales. The programme provides consistent access to a range of infrastructure, tools and resources to transform digital classroom practices. Equipment is allocated through a fair formula across Wales to support schools to meet the aims of 'Our National Mission', the roadmap set out by Welsh Government, which includes a strong focus on digital learning.

During the lockdown period schools and the Council responded swiftly to concerns about digital disadvantage. Any learners without access to a device were identified and all additional resources from council stock and agreed donations were delegated towards those pupils, a total of 340 devices.

Currently no schools report that they have learners without access to suitable devices and 165 broadband connectors supplied through the HWB allocation are being maintained until July 2021. 84 pupils across 8 settings have requested access to a data uplift scheme being provided through the Hwb programme this term.

In January a gap analysis of devices was undertaken across all Flintshire schools to identify the number of end user devices still needed to reach the ratio of devices to learners agreed for Flintshire as part of the national plan. This has identified that a further 6225 devices are needed in total.

All schools, teachers and students can access the HWB platform as a gateway to digital education services which can inspire teachers and learners to embed digital practices confidently over a sustained time period.

The effective roll out of all phases of the HWB programme has enabled learners in Flintshire to engage to a high level with distance and blended learning and has supported the progress and wellbeing of pupils throughout the pandemic period. There has been very effective working between Education and IT Services to support the delivery of the programme. IT Services have provided significant resources and time to ensure the successful delivery of this programme.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That members note the implementation of the national Hwb programme in Flintshire schools and the work undertaken to increase the ratios of devices to pupils.
2	That members are assured Flintshire learners have not been digitally disadvantaged during the lockdown period by the effective actions of schools and the Council's Education and IT services.

## REPORT DETAILS

<b>1.00</b>	<b>EXPLAINING THE HWB DIGITAL PROGRAMME</b>
1.01	<p><b><u>Background</u></b></p> <p>In June 2019, Welsh Government announced a major investment in schools IT infrastructure and technology called the Hwb Programme. The programme is intended to raise digital standards within schools by investing in technology to ensure a minimum level of provision across all schools in Wales and that the provision meets the published Education Digital Standards. These standards are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based around best practice</li> <li>• Cover the whole school infrastructure and devices</li> <li>• Developed to standardise and future proof school infrastructures</li> <li>• Developed in partnership with Welsh Government and the Society of IT Managers.</li> </ul> <p>The initial investment was estimated at £105m over 4 years. The release of funding was based around 'waves' with each wave covering specific technologies. The elements that made up a particular wave have to meet the national Digital Standards across all schools before Councils can move on to the next wave. Funding is dependent on demonstrating compliance with these standards, specific timescales and commitments from Councils around future investments to support sustainability.</p>
1.03	<p><b><u>Progress to date</u></b></p> <p>£50m was released in year 1 (2019/20) of which the Flintshire allocation was £2.5m with 85% to be spent on equipment and 15% on implementation services. This covered Waves 1 to 3 (core network</p>

	<p>infrastructure in schools such as cabinets, network switches as well as wired and wireless network infrastructure). It should be noted that whilst cabling within schools does feature in the standards, no funding was allocated to bring existing cabling up to meet them. A decision was made within Flintshire to fund this work using the 15% allocation.</p> <p>£30m was released in year 2 (2020/21) of which the Flintshire allocation was £1,510,694.17 with 90% to be spent on devices from a national catalogue and 10% on implementation services.</p> <p>Through a national procurement exercise, it was clear that there would be significant financial benefits to Flintshire if we switched our networking technologies from Cisco to Aruba. In doing so it would allow us to complete Waves 1 to 3 and mean we would have £570k from this allocation left to begin work on Wave 4 (end user devices).</p> <p>This technology shift represented a major challenge as it was new technology requiring extensive training and support but staff were committed to doing this as it was clear that the benefits to our schools would be significant.</p> <p>It was also clear that if we were to meet the time constraints placed on us, we would need to significantly supplement the schools IT support model by utilising corporate IT colleagues and, where possible, external resource.</p>
1.04	<p>The Covid-19 pandemic has also added to the complexity, urgency and focus for some of the work. Schedules were impacted by; the inability to be able to access face to face training for the new technology, supply chain issues with technology providers and ensuring safe methods of work for colleagues.</p> <p>By April 30<sup>th</sup> 2021 we will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed network surveys in all schools</li> <li>• Completed network designs for all schools</li> <li>• Ordered and receipted in excess of 6000 items of equipment to support Waves 1 - 3</li> <li>• Updated cabling in all schools to meet Digital Standards</li> <li>• Completed earth bonding work on all schools networking equipment</li> <li>• Migrated all networking infrastructure from Cisco to Aruba</li> <li>• Replaced existing wireless capability with latest technology and extended that capability across the whole school</li> <li>• Ordered, receipted and delivered the following Wave 4 equipment to schools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 1794 laptops</li> <li>○ 1459 desktop pc's</li> <li>○ 2071 Chromebooks</li> <li>○ 1566 iPads</li> <li>○ 1125 monitors</li> <li>○ 83 Charging Trolleys</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implemented a technology called Govroam in all schools which will allow a wide range of public sector partners to connect securely to their own network via the schools wireless network</li> <li>• Migrated from one premise web content filtering solution (Smoothwall) to cloud hosted solution (Websafe)</li> <li>• Undertaken significant engagement with schools to understand their requirements.</li> </ul> <p>In addition to the above work which forms part of the HWB programme, we have also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-provisioned 180 devices from the corporate desktop replacement programme to support digitally disadvantaged learners</li> <li>• Ordered and delivered 165 MiFi devices to provide broadband for digitally disadvantaged learners</li> <li>• Worked with the Neumark Foundation who have funded 90 devices to date to support digitally disadvantaged learners in Years 10 and 11</li> <li>• 84 pupils across 8 settings have requested access to a data uplift scheme being provided via the Hwb programme this term</li> <li>• Designed and delivered a secure remote access solution which allows schools based colleagues to access SIMS (schools information management system), Masterpiece (corporate finance system) and P2P (electronic ordering solution) from home</li> <li>• Increased Internet capacity for Mold Alun and upgrades ordered for Hawarden and Flint High Schools</li> <li>• Reviewed internet capacity at all remaining high schools.</li> </ul>
1.05	<p>Delivery of this work has been overseen by a HWB Programme Board with Chief Officers and senior managers from the Governance and Education portfolios. The board has met regularly and has been kept updated through detailed highlight reports by the senior IT managers who have led these stages of the project.</p> <p>The implementation has consumed a significant amount of resource within both the schools' IT support model but also from corporate IT. This has had a major impact on the delivery of scheduled corporate IT projects but with the support of the Chief Officer Team this work has been reprioritised, recognising the importance of this programme on our schools and learners. The achievements have been really positive as they have supported our schools and learners at a particularly difficult time for them and the increase in provision of end user devices along with increased wireless capability in schools has meant that schools have much more flexibility in how they are able to deliver blended learning for pupils.</p> <p>Throughout the project, we have relied heavily on the commitment and expertise of the Council's IT staff, many of whom have worked weekends and evenings in order to minimise disruption for schools and to meet the required deadlines. We have worked with local companies to deliver cabling, electrical work and to support deliveries and have also worked with our partners at Theatre Clwyd who have supported us in recent months with secure delivery and storage facilities.</p>



1.06	<p><b><u>Next Steps</u></b></p> <p>Welsh Government has funded the procurement of an additional 50,000 Chromebooks for learners across Wales in addition to agreed HWB funding. Flintshire will be receiving 2,682 of these in late April/early May.</p> <p>As part of the year 3 funding, (£15m across Wales) the Council will be receiving £749,808. This will be used for further investment in Wave 4 end user devices from the national catalogue. We have undertaken significant consultation with schools to complete a gap analysis which looks at the devices a school currently has, number of pupils on roll and aspirations around device ratios for pupils in Flintshire schools. The aspirational device ratio for schools has been set following discussions with headteachers and learning leads and will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One device per pupil for secondary phase</li> <li>• One device per pupil for Year 5 and 6</li> <li>• One device between 2 pupils for Year 3 and 4</li> <li>• One device between 3 pupils in Foundation phase</li> <li>• Schools and settings have also factored in an additional 15% of the school population to cater for devices for vulnerable learners and for small group interventions.</li> </ul> <p>In order to meet this aspiration and excluding the year 3 funding allocation, we have identified a requirement for an additional 3583 devices for learners. We are awaiting the release of the latest version of the national catalogue before we can fully model these requirements but estimate that by using an average cost of £350 per device against the latest HWB funding we will be able to purchase approximately 2,101 devices. This will still have a gap of around 1442 devices to reach the optimal learner/device ratio.</p> <p>To date the HWB programme has very much focused on infrastructure, networks and connectivity and the engagement with the Welsh Government EdTech group (the national group which oversees the project) has been led by IT colleagues. As the programme moves forward, the emphasis will move to digital curriculum delivery and the lead role will move to the Education Portfolio.</p>
1.07	<p><b><u>Considerations going forwards:</u></b></p> <p>We will be developing a generic digital strategy for schools which they will then be able to adapt for their own local use. This will include both the impacts of the sustainable development principles and the Well-being Goals.</p> <p>As a condition of accepting the HWB grant, all schools and Councils had to make a financial commitment to ensure that there was a sustainable fund to maintain and replace equipment on a cyclical basis. The Council has agreed to set aside funding to replace all equipment funded as part of Waves 1 to 3. At the Schools Budget Forum in September 2020, schools agreed to fund the replacement of any subsequent devices for Wave 4 and beyond. Schools accountants will be working with schools to ensure that this commitment is fulfilled.</p>

	<p>We will continue to monitor internet capacity/usage at remaining secondary schools and primary schools and increase where required. To date this cost has been absorbed within existing budgets but may need to be reviewed moving forward if there are widespread requirements for increases based on the performance reports that we run.</p> <p>We will also be making good use of regional consortia and other key partners to share best practise in supporting digital learning.</p>
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<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
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2.01	<p>Human resources to facilitate the continued delivery and maintenance of infrastructure and resources in a timely manner and to monitor programme delivery.</p> <p>Supplementary funding via school budgets over 3 years and beyond to maintain a suitable school stock of appropriate devices.</p>
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<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
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3.01	N/A
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<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT</b>
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4.01	Consultations with schools have been undertaken as part of the device gap analysis.
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<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
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5.01	Appendix 1 – Hwb Programme Memorandum of Agreement
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<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
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6.01	None.
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<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
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7.01	<p><b>Contact Officer:</b> Jane Borthwick – Primary Support Officer  <b>Telephone:</b> 07425 613360  <b>E-mail:</b> jane.e.borthwick@flintshire.gov.uk</p>
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8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	<p><b>Hwb</b> – The digital platform for learning and teaching in Wales.</p> <p><b>Ed tech</b> – Educational technology.</p> <p><b>Chromebooks</b> – Desktop devices similar to laptops.</p> <p><b>Cisco</b> – network technology provider.</p> <p><b>Aruba</b> - network technology provider.</p> <p><b>SIMS</b> - schools information management system which holds all pupil, staff and other information.</p> <p><b>Masterpiece</b> - corporate finance system.</p> <p><b>P2P</b> - electronic ordering solution.</p> <p><b>Govroam</b> - allows a wide range of public sector partners to connect securely to their own network via the schools wireless network.</p> <p><b>Gap analysis</b> - identifying need against existing provision.</p> <p><b>Digitally disadvantaged learners</b> - those without access to broadband or suitable devices, those having to share devices.</p> <p><b>MiFi devices</b> - provides broadband where none available.</p> <p><b>Neumark Foundation</b> – charitable foundation supporting vulnerable learners.</p>

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# Hwb Programme

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## Memorandum of Agreement

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### SUPPORTING NOTES

#### 1. Introduction

This Memorandum of Agreement [Agreement] sets out the principles between the Welsh Government and a local authority in respect of services and funding initiatives provided as part of the Hwb programme (formally known as the Learning in Digital Wales programme). This Agreement sets out the commitment the Welsh Government and the local authority make concerning the delivery of the Hwb programme.

The Agreement does not constitute a legal commitment or create a legally enforceable agreement. It is an agreement entered into in good faith to support the collaboration activity between the Welsh Government and the local authority in respect of Hwb services (for which the Welsh Government is the contract owner) and/or where Welsh Ministers have provided significant EdTech digital investment to support all maintained schools in Wales.

#### 2. Who signs the Agreement?

The Agreement should be signed by the EdTech Delivery Authority representative and countersigned by either the Section 151 Officer or Chief Executive.

Fundamentally, the provision of the Agreement relates to the entirety of the Hwb programme, however **it should be noted a signed Agreement is required for local authorities to access funding from the Hwb in school investment initiative.**

A signed Agreement should be returned to the Hwb Team by the 31 October 2019.

#### 3. Background

As part of the Hwb programme, the Welsh Government has initiated and successfully delivered several investment initiatives since 2012 to help transform the way digital technology is accessed and used for teaching and learning in schools across Wales.

The investment and collaboration between the Welsh Government and local authorities across Wales is widely recognised as having a significant impact on the transformation of digital education services, as well as providing a national platform capable of supporting and delivering real transformation to the education sector.

This pivotal programme of work provides stakeholders across Wales with consistent access to a range of digital infrastructure, tools and resources that can support and assist the transformation of digital classroom practices.

The next phase of the Hwb programme focuses on how the recent investment programmes are able to support schools in adopting and embedding digital learning in the classroom, as well as continuing to streamline and standardise the way digital and ICT is delivered in a school context.

The Welsh Government has set out the [strategic objectives](#) for the Hwb programme which focus on opportunities to further exploit and embed the foundations that have been put in place.

Through engagement with local authorities and schools, it was identified that the level of understanding and investment in ICT and digital across schools is generally lower than other areas of the sector, namely further and higher education. If schools, learners and practitioners are to fully embrace digital transformation, it is recognised we need to ensure schools are equipped to adopt digital services and prepared to maintain them.

The Minister for Education has committed to continued investment in this area of work and officials have created national governance arrangements to ensure sector representatives better understand the landscape in schools across Wales and explore how we maximise the opportunities available.

#### **4. Scope of Delivery**

Through the Hwb programme, the Welsh Government delivered superfast broadband connectivity to all maintained schools in Wales, via the PSBA network. These services meet the aims of the classroom today, while the use of dedicated fibre also provides an easy and sustainable future upgrade path as demand increases.

In parallel, the Hwb platform has delivered an all Wales solution which provides teachers and learners with access to a consistent range of digital resources, online tools and services. Furthermore the Hwb platform has become the gateway for digital education services in Wales, with the platform continuing to go from strength to strength. Work is underway to embed these services and identify new opportunities to support education priorities such as Our National Mission and online personalised assessments, as well as leveraging the potential for all Wales economies of scale which have been demonstrated via the national Microsoft licensing model.

Using these existing platforms, the Welsh Government will continue to provide a range of digital services which will inspire our teachers and learners to confidently embed digital practices, while developing the culture, competencies, skills and knowledge to underpin Our National Mission.

Despite the significant work undertaken to date, it was also acknowledged that further work and investment was needed. Officials recently commissioned an independent evaluation of school ICT networks across Wales. The assessments identified areas of improvement for in-school infrastructure across Wales to help address and/or alleviate the current constraints faced by schools when exploiting ICT to deliver teaching and learning in the classroom. Further work with schools and local authorities also highlighted that strategic planning and investment around digital and ICT was either non-existent or was often under profiled.

A work programme to help standardise the approach across Wales and identify areas for improvement has begun. Through the development of the Education Digital Standards; Safeguarding Standards; the promotion of shared services and identifying opportunities for local authorities to work collaboratively through the use of Hwb services, officials in the Welsh Government and local authorities have started to see a shift in behaviours.

The Minister for Education has [recently announced](#) further funding for schools to improve their EdTech equipment. This funding will support schools on their journey, however it is essential that support is given to schools to ensure they understand and recognise their EdTech digital infrastructure as the 'fourth utility'.

## 5. Document Relationship

The following documents are integral to the Agreement:

- a) Hwb Strategic Overview – [strategic objectives](#) for the Hwb programme
- b) Hwb Charter (annex 1) – Roles and responsibilities for the delivery and use of Hwb programme services

**Dated:** 4 October 2019

(1) **Welsh Ministers**

- and -

(2) **Flintshire County Council**

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## **MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT**

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### 1. Introduction

1.1. This agreement between Welsh Ministers and Flintshire County Council [authority] outlines the commitment of both parties to ensure all maintained

Hwb Programme Memorandum of Agreement | Welsh Government



schools in your authority can maximise the opportunities afforded by the Hwb programme; support the delivery of Our National Mission as well as meeting your authority's statutory obligations for education delivery.

- 1.2. The Welsh Government has made significant investment in areas including high speed broadband, in-schools infrastructure and the Hwb digital learning platform in recent years.
- 1.3. The investment and collaboration between the Welsh Government and local authorities across Wales is widely recognised as having a significant impact on the transformation of Education services, as well as providing a national platform capable of supporting and delivering real transformation to the Education sector.
- 1.4. Following recent discussions between the Welsh Government and the Socitm Cymru group, the Hwb programme has developed proposals to deliver an extensive infrastructure investment programme of work to build on recent investments and the fantastic work already taking place across Wales.
- 1.5. As well as transforming the way ICT services are delivered and managed in schools across Wales, the commitment from Welsh Ministers aims to ensure local authorities and schools build a sustainable model for ICT services in schools for future years.
- 1.6. Welsh Ministers support for the Hwb programme was underpinned by the letters of intent from all twenty-two local authorities to support this significant change programme.

## 2. Purpose

- 2.1. To support the developments with education in Wales, and specifically the inclusion of digital competence at the heart of the curriculum, this Agreement outlines the agreed strategic approach to help ensure every maintained school in Wales receives a consistent experience to digital services.
- 2.2. To maximise the benefits of the Hwb platform, the Welsh Government, in collaboration with local authorities, has developed [strategic objectives](#) which outline the overarching approach for the delivery of digital services in Wales. It is expected that future developments and investment will inspire our teachers and learners to confidently embed digital practices, while developing their culture, competencies, skills and knowledge to underpin Our National Mission.
- 2.3. The Hwb programme can have a significant impact on the schools in your authority, but its success will largely depend on the ability of local authorities

and schools to fully embrace its aims and objectives, as well as understanding the critical role that technology can have in education.

2.4. This Agreement outlines the responsibilities each organisation needs to meet to ensure the Hwb programme can achieve its long term aims to:

- improve educational standards and outcomes;
- prepare learners for life and careers; and
- maximise the opportunities digital presents to reduce the burden on our workforce and to support the wider Welsh economy.

2.5. This Agreement is not intended to represent a defined time period, but instead underpins the working relationships between the Welsh Government, local authorities and schools throughout the life of the Hwb programme. It is fully expected the delivery mechanics and outputs will evolve, however it is hoped the structure being implemented as part of the change programme will provide the flexibility and agility to underpin the delivery of ICT and digital services in schools indefinitely.

### 3. Scope

3.1. The Hwb programme recognises it is impossible to deliver this ambitious programme of work without the support of local authorities across Wales.

3.2. Each local authority has agreed in principle to act as the conduit and ‘intelligent customer’ for their schools, while the Welsh Government commitment is underpinned by the [recent announcement](#) of further investment in EdTech technology.

3.3. To ensure the success of this ambitious change programme and realise the benefits of shared working across Wales, it is vital each local authority is fully committed to:

- Take strategic responsibility for all their maintained schools ICT infrastructure and services and act as the single point of contact for the Hwb programme;
- Ensure all Hwb programme funding allocations are aligned to strategic plans and budgeting cycles, while ensuring funding is spent by the end of the financial year and all implementation work completed by the beginning of the following academic year;
- Be accountable for all ICT financial capabilities and ensure sustainability plans are in place; and
- Undertake and maintain readiness/baseline assessments of schools to inform a holistic council delivery plan and strategy, with regular (minimum six monthly) reports to the EdTech Delivery Authority and Welsh Government until a fully sustainable model is achieved.

3.4. Welsh Ministers have outlined the importance of equitable funding as part of the Hwb programme moving forward.

3.5. In relation to the investment in EdTech equipment, officials have devised a funding formula in conjunction with colleagues working in the Local Government sector. The formula will initially apply an equal weighting based on the number of school buildings (50%) and the number of pupils on roll (50%). The initial weighting distribution is intended to reflect the initial priority of improving the core infrastructure requirements. Over time it is expected the weightings will be adjusted to favour pupils on roll (25% / 75% respectively) as local authorities progress through the programme objectives.

#### 4. Welsh Government Commitments

4.1. The Welsh Government commits to supporting local authorities individually and collectively in accordance with the [strategic objectives](#) of the Hwb programme. In particular, the Welsh Government commits to:

- Develop and implement a strategic and sustainable approach to embed digital services in all maintained schools in Wales;
- Establish a simple and compliant route to market to purchase appropriate equipment and services at the most cost effective price;
- Ensure there is a suitable national infrastructure in place to consistently support the needs of schools in accessing and using digital services;
- Support the digital transformation of education through the delivery of bilingual digital services;
- Continue to support schools with safeguarding learners in Wales;
- Support local authorities and schools to enhance digital capability and skills; and
- Represent the needs of schools by identifying opportunities to secure EdTech funding for local authorities to deliver standardised, consistent and sustainable services to their schools.

4.2. The Welsh Government is committed to reviewing the [strategic objectives](#) on a regular frequency with the EdTech Delivery Authority. Frequent reviews will ensure the objectives and activities of the Hwb programme align to the majority viewpoint of local authorities in Wales.

4.3. The Welsh Government will provide strategic support to individual local authorities by providing dashboards and management information to support the uptake of Hwb services within the authority. The Welsh Government will also facilitate regional and national engagement events to help inform and share areas of good practice across Wales.

#### 5. Local Authority Commitments

5.1. Your authority commits to working with the Welsh Government in accordance with the responsibilities outlined in the Hwb Charter (annex 1), as well as supporting local authorities individually and collectively wherever possible. In particular, your authority commits to:

- Act as the Strategic Digital Delivery Partner for all your maintained schools;

- Provide a nominated lead and dedicated team/function to streamline schools ICT support models and provide a centralised intelligent customer function to assist head teachers to understand and implement their ICT requirements;
- Champion the Hwb programme and ensure the key outcomes are supported within your organisation and across your maintained schools;
- Provide management responsibility for the delivery of the Hwb services and initiatives as outlined in the strategic overview of the Hwb programme;
- Facilitate procurement of ICT equipment to ensure the equipment is fit for purpose; provides value for money and is being purchased via a compliant route (supporting once for Wales principle); and
- Undertake regular strategic school reviews to emphasise the importance of ICT as the fourth utility and ensure sustainability of equipment and services is strategically planned and managed in schools.

5.2. The Welsh Government is committed to reviewing the Hwb Charter as the change programmes in local authorities evolve. The EdTech Delivery Authority will be responsible for reviewing the Hwb Charter.

## 6. Benefits / Outcomes

6.1. We anticipate the outcomes of a collaborative approach to deliver a national school digital infrastructure (geared to the delivery of the current and future curriculum needs) will result in the following outcomes:

- The removal of unsupported and aging equipment across school ICT networks which currently pose cyber security vulnerabilities and potentially significant information assurance risks;
- Enhanced and more consistent experiences for learners in using learning technologies as part of their learning programmes;
- The opportunity to deliver a more sustainable operating model to support school ICT networks, with local authorities ensuring consistent experience to schools and ensuring investment is maximised;
- The adoption of Hwb and other appropriate cloud services, which in turn simplifies the local ICT services and infrastructure needed within a school/local authority network and can realise significant cashable savings locally;
- Realise potential economies of scale through national procurement approaches, which could save the sector millions of pounds over the next several years;
- Schools being better equipped to meet Our National Mission aims and objectives and help demonstrate the Ministerial commitment to digital learning as well as emphasising the importance of using technology appropriately;
- The removal of 'perceived barriers' to enable schools/local authorities to plan and budget for ongoing ICT investment;
- Improve reliability, resilience and capacity of school ICT networks to support schools administration, teaching and learning and wider

community initiatives outside of school hours (such as Digital Communities); and

- Help support the reduction of bureaucratic practices/processes in schools to provide more time for our head teachers and teachers to 'teach'.

## 7. GENERAL

7.1. No variation to this agreement shall be effective unless, and until, signed by authorised representatives of each party.

7.2. Nothing in this agreement shall be construed as establishing or implying a partnership or joint venture between the parties or shall be deemed to constitute either party as the agent of the other or allow either party to hold itself out as acting on behalf of the other.

**SIGNED BY** the parties acting by their authorised representatives to indicate their agreement to the terms set out above

# Signature Page

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Signed by:

\_\_\_\_\_

(Capitals)

\_\_\_\_\_

(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_

(Date)

Deputy Director of Digital Learning Division, Welsh Government

Signed by:

\_\_\_\_\_

(Capitals)

\_\_\_\_\_

(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_

(Date)

EdTech Delivery Authority Representative or Director of Education for Flintshire County Council

Signed by:

\_\_\_\_\_

(Capitals)

\_\_\_\_\_

(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_

(Date)

Section 151 or Chief Executive Officer of Flintshire County Council

## 1 Hwb Charter

The following outlines the key characteristics and responsibilities needed within local authorities to support the delivery of the Hwb programme and ensure the outcomes and benefits of a shared approach to ICT and Digital in Welsh schools can be realised by schools in your authority.

This has been created as an annexed document to support changes identified by the EdTech Delivery Authority in a flexible and agile manner.

The authority will:

- Act as the Strategic Digital Delivery Partner for all your maintained schools;
- Provide a nominated lead and dedicated team/function to streamline schools ICT support models and provide a centralised intelligent customer function to assist head teachers to understand and implement their ICT requirements;
- Champion the Hwb programme and ensure the key outcomes are supported within your organisation and across your maintained schools;
- Provide management responsibility for the delivery of the Hwb services and initiatives as outlined in the strategic overview of the Hwb programme;
- Facilitate procurement of ICT equipment to ensure the equipment is fit for purpose; provides value for money and is being purchased via a compliant route (supporting once for Wales principle);
- Undertake regular strategic school reviews to emphasise the importance of ICT as the fourth utility and ensure sustainability of equipment and services is strategically planned and managed in schools;
  
- Develop adequate local governance arrangements and ensure senior management maintain a strategic oversight of the programmes implementation to ensure your schools fully benefit from the significant opportunities it presents;
- Develop implementation plans in conjunction with your schools to streamline the process and manage expectations;
- Active engagement from appropriate local authority representatives in forums and groups;
- Engage with local education group forums, e.g. head teacher forums to ensure the needs of the schools are reflected in local authority strategies;
- Regular engagement with Hwb Programme Team to inform programme outcomes and drive adoption of digital education services;
- Maintain schools data and intelligence including local variances, to inform national strategic planning and future investment initiatives/opportunities;

- Provide oversight/management for all maintained schools for core service deliverables e.g. PSBA network; Hwb platform usage; etc.;
- Support collaboration opportunities across the region / Wales to help standardise schools ICT networks and ensure consistent experience for all learners/practitioners;
- Ensure escalations relating to digital issues at schools are tracked and resolved in appropriate timeframes;
- Ensure digital investment decisions are informed and spend is occurring in the right places; and
- Ensure appropriate engagement with Welsh Government officials as required.





## EDUCATION, YOUTH & CULTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Thursday 18 <sup>th</sup> March 2021
<b>Report Subject</b>	School Attendance and Exclusions
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Member for Education & Youth
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Education & Youth)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides information with regards to the levels of attendance and exclusion across Flintshire schools including an outline of the main reasons for pupil absence and exclusion.

The data reported has been impacted on by the COVID -19 pandemic. Schools have experienced extended periods of closure during the academic year 2019/20 and Welsh Government suspended data collection and publication during the year. This has prevented any meaning comparison with previous years' data for Flintshire and any consideration against national trends.

Attendance across Flintshire schools has shown a general trend of reduction, with illness accounting for the majority of absences. Levels of persistent absenteeism have been comparatively high too. However, this report is for the school year 2019/20 and it must be noted that the initial COVID -19 lockdown commenced in March 2020. It is therefore not possible to draw direct data comparisons between the school year 2019/20 and previous school years as a consequence.

The levels of permanent and fixed-term exclusion have been increasing, particularly in secondary schools. Once again the data for the school year 2019/20 has been directly affected by COVID-19 lockdowns. Welsh Government First Release data publications have not been published as a result of the pandemic which means that we are unable to draw any comparison with trends across Wales.

It is therefore essential that you review the report and the data with a degree of caution as the data utilised has been extracted solely from our local database. It is still possible to utilise this data to explain the strategic priorities that commenced in the school year 2019/20 to address the Estyn Recommendations. It must be stated that this data has not been compared with WG data streams as a consequence of the suspension of these processes.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Members consider the attendance data for Flintshire schools and the actions undertaken by officers to support engagement and safeguarding during the period of lockdown.
2	Members recognise that the data provided has been impacted by COVID-19 lockdown and school closures.

## REPORT DETAILS

<b>1.00</b>	<b>EXPLAINING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND EXCLUSIONS</b>
1.01	<p>School attendance and exclusion data is usually published by Welsh Government (WG) retrospectively and in a number of different formats. However, during 2019/20, Welsh Government suspended data publications and performance measurement processes as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. This report is therefore constructed utilising Flintshire County Council unverified data, extracted from local databases and covers both the primary and secondary sectors.</p> <p>The information provided in the appendices for 2019/20 relates to the period 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019 to the 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020 when schools closed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. With the exception of offering provision for the children of critical workers and vulnerable children, schools remained closed for the remainder of the academic year, with the exception of the three week Check In, Catch Up period. Attendance during this period was not mandatory and has therefore not been included in the datasets.</p>
1.02	<p>Table 1 in Appendix 1 provides the overview of pupil attendance across both primary and secondary schools (mainstream and special) for the last 3 academic years. Primary attendance had remained fairly static over the previous 3 years however, local data confirms a slight overall reduction for 19/20 up to and including 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020.</p> <p>Attendance in secondary schools dropped below the Welsh average in the years immediately prior to 19/20 and local data confirms a further reduction in actual attendance in the first two terms of 19/20. This was a small reduction and is in line with expectations given that early signs of the</p>

	impending pandemic were being seen at the start of the calendar year. The levels of unauthorised absence remain relatively low.
1.03	The high levels of authorised absence stated in Table 3 suggests that parents/carers are providing schools with acceptable reasons for absence and much of this absence reflects parents anxiety. It can be seen in Table 3 that for 2019/20 the “I” mark (Illness as an explanation) surpasses all other marks approved by Headteachers. This suggests that Headteachers worked with their parents taking account of their concerns about the impact the pandemic was having on their families. Holidays in the primary sector once again account for the second highest percentage of authorised absences, but this has diminished significantly. Once again this reflects the significant impact of the COVID-19 lockdown and the subsequent reopening in June 2020 during which holidays were not available to families on the usual terms.
1.04	Parents/carers are ultimately responsible for ensuring that their children attend school. Headteachers understand the importance of attendance on pupil engagement and attainment and have in the main, developed a range of systems to encourage attendance and also seek timely information regarding pupil absence. The Council employs a range of teams to support schools in their attempts to improve attendance. These include the Education Welfare Service (EWS) which has a statutory responsibility around attendance along with others teams such as Additional Learning Needs, Education Psychology, Young Person Counselling, Personal Support, TRAC, English as an Additional Language and Gypsy/Traveller services which offer specialist support to schools, families and individual pupils to improve their engagement levels. These services had significant roles to play during the lockdown period in particular. Officers adapted their delivery methods to support remote learning where relevant and also worked hard to maintain contact with pupils and families offering a range of welfare support. Services also had a key safeguarding role during this period, with the home visits being undertaken where concerns were evident.
1.05	The EWS implements the legal challenge to parents/carers on behalf of the Council in collaboration with the legal team where appropriate/necessary. However, the full range of legal powers that are usually available to support an improvement in attendance were suspended by Welsh Government during the lockdown period. Such challenges can usually only be applied in cases where there are levels of unauthorised absences. Given that levels of this are usually extremely low, future work will need to be undertaken with schools to review the levels of authorised absence to ensure that there is sufficient scrutiny and challenge of the information provided if we are to secure an improvement in attendance levels across our schools.
1.06	The main factor impacting on attendance continues to be illness. Across the secondary sector, there has been increasing levels of absence being attributed to mental illness. The sustained lockdown period has resulted in

	loss of routine as a consequence of school closure or due to restricted opening. This could further affect pupil wellbeing adversely until normal timetables are re-established. The Council has a number of services which support children and young people with mental health needs and further work needs to be undertaken with local health services to ensure that the range of support available can respond appropriately to this increasing need. Welsh Government have indicated that additional funding will be made available to local authorities in the next financial year to enhance their own provision to support this area of need.
1.07	The level of fixed term and permanent exclusion across our schools had generally been increasing, with the main reasons cited for exclusion being Physical assault against a pupil, Verbal/threatening behaviour against an adult, Persistent and disruptive behaviour and Other. As with attendance, central services work in partnership with individuals, schools and families to offer support and intervention to prevent exclusion. The increasing complexity of need and wider contributing factors such as County Lines continues to make this increasingly difficult. Levels of exclusion in 2019/20 have reduced overall but much of this can be attributed to the lengthy school closure as a result of the initial lockdown.
1.08	The need to support an improvement in attendance and a reduction in the level of exclusion had already been identified as a priority within the Education & Youth Improvement Plan. A new Senior Learning Advisor for Engagement (SLA) was appointed in January 2020 to lead and to address the Estyn Recommendations. A Headteacher conference took place in March 2020 to introduce the new SLA and to raise awareness of the situation. Progress on the actions will be outlined in subsequent reports however, the SLA has already undertaken an audit of the services and is implementing a range of changes to improve service consistency and accountability. A revised Mission Statement now underpins the EWS and working partnerships have been formed with targeted secondary schools to review and improve systems and practice. A revised approach to data analysis is also part of the new approach to enable resources to be targeted proactively, rather than in response to crisis situation. An internal audit is also taking place to ensure the LA meets the terms of the Estyn Recommendations.
1.09	The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has continued into 2020/21, with school closure featuring again. Services are continuing to engage closely with schools, pupils and families to try and maintain levels of engagement and also secure a broad range of interventions to re-engage those who have been adversely impacted by the pandemic.

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	The increasing levels of disengagement and exclusion continue to have a financial impact on schools and the Council. This is due to the additional

	resources required to engage those with more complex needs, such as officer capacity and bespoke provision programmes. This is currently being funded via a combination of school budgets, grant funding and Council service budgets. This is particularly evident in the increasing levels of expenditure around Home Tuition and for non-maintained placements referred to as 'Out of County', where the expenditure against education and social care is exceeding the allocated budget.
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<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT &amp; RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
3.01	There are a number of risks associated with increased levels of disengagement and pupil exclusion, including safeguarding, pupil wellbeing, pupil outcomes and financial expenditure. The regular monitoring of the Education & Youth Portfolio Business Plan along with the annual reports on attendance and exclusion to the Overview and Scrutiny committee will ensure that progress is checked and action taken to mitigate the identified risks.
3.02	Additional work to improve data analysis and to profile statutory services is also on going. Individual Risk Management strategies have also been put in place to identify and contact vulnerable pupils during lockdown. The lockdown period was used to identify a list of vulnerable pupils in collaboration with Senior Managers within Children's Services. These pupils and the children of Key Workers were placed in local Hubs for the duration of the initial lockdown. In addition, audit protocols were employed across support services to ensure that vulnerable pupils were identified and contacted regularly. Laptops and learning materials were also deployed to attempt to minimise the disruption to individual's education as much as was possible. Local Authority panels continued to meet regularly and to discuss pupils placed on EOTAS packages to ensure these pupils too were engaged or contacted.

<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT</b>
4.01	None undertaken as a result of this report.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Appendix 1 – FCC Attendance and Exclusion Data for 19/20 Appendix 2 - Attendance Codes

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	<a href="#">WG All Wales Attendance Toolkit</a> <a href="#">WG Guidance - Exclusion from schools and pupil referral units</a>

<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
7.01	<b>Contact Officer:</b> John Grant, Senior Learning Adviser - Engagement <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 704066 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:john.grant@flintshire.gov.uk">john.grant@flintshire.gov.uk</a>

<b>7.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
7.01	<p><b>Authorised absence</b> - an absence with permission from a teacher or other authorised representative of the school. This includes instances of absence for which a satisfactory explanation has been provided (e.g. illness, family bereavement or religious observance).</p> <p><b>Unauthorised absence</b> - an absence without permission from a teacher or other authorised representative of the school. This includes all unexplained or unjustified absences.</p> <p><b>Persistent absenteeism:</b> absent for at least 20 per cent of the sessions that schools were open to pupils.</p> <p><b>County Lines:</b> a term used when drug gangs from big cities expand their operations to smaller towns, often using violence to drive out local dealers and exploiting children and vulnerable people to sell drugs.</p> <p><b>Out of County Placements</b> – provision that is not maintained by Flintshire county Council. This is usually highly specialist and is commissioned where the Council is not able to meet the pupil’s needs through its own internal provision.</p>

## **Appendix 1**

### **1.1 Attendance in Flintshire Schools**

Pupil attendance is measured at local and national level using a number of different factors. The COVID – 19 pandemic has however resulted in the suspension of the regular Welsh Government statistical updates that would provide contextual information with regards to attendance trends across Wales.

The information below utilises preexisting WG statistical publications and is supplemented with data from within FCC for 2019/20. It is not possible to draw a direct comparison between 2019/20 and any of the previous years given the restricted reporting period for 19/20; the data is provided to allow Members to gain some insight into the local trends in 2019/20 prior to the impact of the pandemic.

Table 1 below contains information relating to the attendance of pupils within Flintshire’s mainstream and specialist schools. In the years preceding 2019/20, pupil attendance within the primary sector had remained fairly static. Attendance across secondary schools had seen a dip to below the Welsh average after 2016/17. Illness had been the main reason cited for absence in the years preceding 2019/20 and still accounts for the highest percentage of absence in both sectors.

Schools have generally maintained very low levels of unauthorised absence across Flintshire. There was a small rise in authorised absence for the monitoring period in 2019/20. The overall picture for the monitoring period up to and including 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020 suggests a similar pattern of attendance to the previous year.

**Table 1: Levels of attendance and unauthorised absence in Flintshire mainstream and specialist schools.**

	Attendance (%)			Unauthorised Absence (%)		
	2019/20*	2018/19	2017/18	2019/20*	2018/19	2017/18
<b>FCC Primary Schools</b>	<b>93.2</b>	<b>94.6</b>	<b>94.6</b>	<b>0.85</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.5</b>
<b>FCC Secondary Schools</b>	<b>91.6</b>	<b>93.3</b>	<b>93.7</b>	<b>1.87</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>1.6</b>

*\*Figures for 1/09/19 to 20/03/20 when lock down commenced*

Table 2 shows the spread of attendance figures across primary and secondary mainstream schools from 2017/18 onwards. This table demonstrates some movement across the range in 2019/20, more so across the primary sector. As with Table 1, the reporting period for 2019/20 has been restricted to the period before lockdown and cannot be used confidently for comparison purposes.

**Table 2: Spread of attendance figures**

Attendance %	Primary			Secondary		
	2019-20*	2018-19	2017-18	2019-20*	2018-19	2017-18
<90	3	1	1	0	0	0
90.0-90.9	0	0	0	0	0	0
91.0-91.9	4	1	0	1	2	2
92.0-92.9	5	4	6	3	3	1
93.0-93.9	12	9	7	3	2	2
94.0-94.9	19	21	21	3	4	5
95.0-95.9	15	20	23	1	0	1
96.0-96.9	4	7	5	0	0	0
97.0-97.9	1	1	1	0	0	0
98.0-98.9	0	0	0	0	0	0
99.0-100	0	0	0	0	0	0

\*Figures for 1/09/19 to 20/03/20 when lock down commenced

Table 3 provides a breakdown of all of the coding applied to authorise absence within Flintshire schools by percentages.

The data clearly demonstrates that illness has remained the predominant reason for pupil absence from Flintshire schools up to and including the period reported for 2019/20. There is a notable reduction in absence due to holidays in the primary sector which can be explained by the omission of the Summer Term in data where most holidays are likely to take place. The increase in the use of C codes across primary schools is likely to relate to the period prior to lockdown when the levels of anxiety around Covid-19 were increasing.

**Table 3: Reasons for authorised absence**

Reason for Absence	Primary (%)			Secondary (%)		
	2019-20*	2018-19	2017-18	2019-20*	2018-19	2017-18
C	11.8	5.99	5.59	17.05	15.45	11.38
F	0.03	0.00	0.02	0.02	0.00	0.00
H	15.75	28.53	27.89	4.81	6.75	7.13
I	62.02	55.21	57.76	66.29	65.84	70.35
M	5.23	6.59	6.72	7.92	8.68	7.09
S	0	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.18	0.40
E	0.41	0.52	0.53	3.21	2.91	3.39
R	0.02	0.12	0.10	0	0.01	0.00
T	4.73	3.12	1.38	0.68	0.10	0.25

\*Figures for 1/09/19 to 20/03/20 when lock down commenced

<b>Key:</b>	C	Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/ description)
	F	Agreed extended family holiday
	H	Agreed family holiday
	I	Illness
	M	Medical or dental appointment
	S	Study leave
	E	Excluded but no alternative provision made
	R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance
	T	Traveller absence

## 1.2 Exclusion of pupils from Flintshire schools



Welsh Government normally report annually on the national levels of fixed term and permanent exclusion. This is usually completed a year in arrears with a publication date in the month of October. As previously stated, WG data collection and publications have been suspended and internal data has been used to inform the report. On this occasion therefore, the data provided includes the academic year 2019/20.

The possible reasons for exclusion are recorded as follows:

- Physical assault against a pupil
- Physical assault against an adult
- Verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against a pupil
- Verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against an adult
- Bullying
- Racist abuse
- Sexual misconduct
- Drug and alcohol related
- Damage
- Theft
- Persistent disruptive behaviour
- Other

The level of exclusion across Flintshire schools started to rise noticeably from 2016 and mirrored a national trend across Wales. A reduction in the level of both permanent and fixed-term exclusion remains a priority for schools and the Education and Youth Portfolio and a number of strategic actions have been identified to support a reduction. These include awareness raising across the school sector of the impact of exclusion, investment in the training of school staff on the National Nurturing Schools Programme and a shift to a nurture/wellbeing emphasis for central services, e.g. Behaviour Support Team.

The data for 2019/20 on the face of it shows a reduction in the levels of exclusion but this is set against a reduced school year due to Covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

**Table 4: Number of Permanent Exclusions from Flintshire Schools**

	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18
<b>Primary</b>	1	3	5
<b>Secondary</b>	19	24	23

Table 5 shows the levels of fixed-term exclusion across primary and secondary schools. The figure within the brackets indicates the number of pupils who received one or more exclusion.

**Table 5: Fixed-Term Exclusions**

Type of Exclusion	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18
	Number of incidents (Number of pupils)	Number of incidents (Number of pupils)	Number of incidents (Number of pupils)
<b>Primary 5 Days or Less</b>	144 (70)	251 (102)	172 (80)
<b>Primary Over 5 days</b>	1 (1)	12 (10)	10 (7)
<b>Secondary 5 Days or Less</b>	879 (405)	1188 (533)	1059 (515)

<b>Secondary Over 5 days</b>	19 (18)	22 (19)	39 (34)
	<b>Rate of exclusion per 1000 pupils (Primary &amp; Secondary combined)</b>		
<b>5 Days or Less</b>	43.4	61.2	52.2
<b>Over 5 days</b>	0.8	1.4	2.1

**Reasons for exclusion.**

The primary reasons for exclusion are documented in Table 6. Whilst the number of incidents recorded for 2019/20 has reduced as a result of the pandemic, the spread across the various reasons mirrors that of previous years. As can be seen, the main reasons for exclusion remain Physical assault against a pupil, Verbal/threatening behaviour against an adult, Persistent disruptive behaviour and Other.

**Table 6: Reasons for exclusion (number of incidents)**

Reason for Exclusion	2019/20							2018/19							2017/18						
	Fixed ≤5 days		Fixed >5 days		Perm		T	Fixed ≤5 days		Fixed >5 days		Perm		T	Fixed ≤5 days		Fixed >5 days		Perm		T
	P	S	P	S	P	S		P	S	P	S	P	S		P	S	P	S	P	S	
Physical assault against a pupil	31	121	0	3	0	4	159	39	247	1	3	0	4	294	42	194	1	4	0	4	245
Physical assault against an adult	28	17	0	1	0	1	47	34	18	1	0	1	0	54	43	20	4	1	5	1	74
Verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against a pupil	9	38	0	1	0	0	48	11	50	0	0	0	1	62	9	42	0	3	0	0	54
Verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against an adult	23	166	0	4	0	1	194	34	243	1	4	2	1	285	15	244	0	9	0	3	271
Bullying	1	6	0	0	0	0	7	2	15	0	1	0	0	18	2	11	0	0	0	0	13
Racist abuse	0	10	0	0	0	0	10	3	13	0	0	0	0	16	1	10	0	0	0	0	11
Sexual misconduct	0	5	0	0	0	0	5	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
Drug and alcohol related	0	8	0	1	0	5	14	0	14	0	1	0	8	23	0	26	0	2	0	3	31
Damage	2	12	0	0	0	0	14	4	28	0	0	0	0	32	2	41	0	0	0	1	44
Theft	0	9	0	0	0	0	9	2	13	0	0	0	0	15	1	12	0	0	0	0	13
Persistent disruptive behaviour	49	284	0	5	1	1	340	111	200	4	3	0	3	321	47	157	4	6	0	1	215
Other	2	203	1	4	0	7	217	11	345	5	10	0	7	378	10	299	1	14	0	10	334

**Key:** Fixed ≤5 days – Fixed term exclusion, 5 days or less  
Fixed >5 days – Fixed term Exclusion, over 5 days  
Perm – Permanent exclusion  
P – Primary  
S – Secondary  
T – Total of primary and secondary

## Appendix 2

### Welsh Government Attendance Codes

Code	Meaning	Statistical category
\	Present at registration	present
L	Late but arrived before the register closed	present
B	Educated off-site (not dual registration)	approved educational activity
D	Dual registered (ie present at another school or at a PRU)	approved educational activity
P	Approved sporting activity	approved educational activity
V	Educational visit or trip	approved educational activity
J	Interview	approved educational activity
W	Work experience (not work based training)	approved educational activity
C	Other authorised circumstances	authorised absence
F	Agreed extended family holiday	authorised absence
H	Agreed family holiday	authorised absence
I	Illness	authorised absence
M	Medical or dental appointment	authorised absence
S	Study leave	authorised absence
E	Excluded but no alternative provision made	authorised absence
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance	authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	authorised absence
N	No reason for the absence provided yet	unauthorised absence
O	Other unauthorised (not covered by other codes or descriptions)	unauthorised absence
G	Family holiday (not agreed or sessions in excess of agreement)	unauthorised absence
U	Late and arrived after the register closed	unauthorised absence
X	Un-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	unauthorised absence
Y	Partial and forced closure	not required to attend
Z	Pupil not on roll yet	not required to attend
#	School closed to all pupils	not required to attend

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## EDUCATION, YOUTH & CULTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Thursday 18 <sup>th</sup> March, 2021
<b>Report Subject</b>	Recovery Strategy Update
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Education and Youth)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Strategic

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council has developed a corporate Recovery Strategy for the pandemic emergency situation which was endorsed at a special Cabinet meeting on 15 September.

Cabinet requested each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to support recovery in their respective portfolio areas, and specifically to have oversight of:-

1. The portfolio risk register(s) and the risk mitigation actions, both live and planned;
2. The objectives for recovery for the portfolio(s);
3. The immediate strategic priorities for recovery for the portfolio(s) extracted from the draft Council Plan for 2020/21; and
4. The set of revised performance indicator targets for the portfolio(s) for 2020/21.

The above were considered by the Committee at its meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> November, 2020.

This report provides the Committee with an update on the portfolio risk register and risk mitigation actions (shown at Appendix 1 and 2). The Portfolio is currently in a steady state with very little movement in the risks and mitigations since the November report.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That the Committee review the latest updated risk register and risk mitigation actions within the Education & Youth portfolio.
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## REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EMERGENCY RECOVERY
1.01	<p>The Council is developing a corporate Recovery Strategy for the pandemic emergency situation. The Strategy covers:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The chronology of the emergency response phase and transition to recovery</li> <li>2. The handover arrangements or recovery</li> <li>3. Organisational recovery of the corporate organisation</li> <li>4. Community recovery of the communities we serve</li> <li>5. Strategic priorities and performance for the remainder of 2020/21</li> <li>6. The roles the Council will play in regional recovery</li> <li>7. The democratic governance of recovery</li> </ol>
1.02	<p>The development of the Recovery Strategy has been led by the Chief Executive and Leader and overseen by a cross-party Member Recovery Board. The Board, which is an advisory sub-committee of Cabinet, has completed its work and has stood down. The Board has met seven times in quick succession and has received multiple reports and presentations. Cabinet endorsed the Recovery Strategy at a special meeting on 15 September.</p>
1.03	<p>Cabinet will be inviting each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to support recovery in their respective portfolio areas, and specifically to have oversight of:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The portfolio risk register(s) and the risk mitigation actions both live and planned;</li> <li>2. The objectives for recovery for the portfolio(s);</li> </ol>
1.04	<p>The latest version of the risk register (Appendix 1) and table of risk mitigations (Appendix 2) for the Corporate Services portfolio are attached.</p> <p>The portfolio is in a steady state with six risks reduced (EY4, EY13, EY14, EY16, EY20, EY33) . One risk has increased (EY07).</p>
1.05	<p>An update on the recovery objectives for the service portfolio for this Committee is shown below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>To repurpose schools including funded settings back to the provision of statutory education:</b> Schools continue to operate successfully within their Covid-19 secure arrangements. Where positive cases of Covid-19 are identified and cohorts required to isolate, schools continue to provide learning via a variety of digital platforms.</li> <li>• <b>To meet statutory requirements for Youth Service, Youth Justice and Youth Homelessness Prevention Services:</b> All statutory requirements for Youth Service, Youth Justice and Homelessness Prevention continue to be delivered as outlined in the</li> </ul>

Recovery Update Report from November 2020.

A recent report to Cabinet and Scrutiny on the further development of Flintshire's Youth Services has been approved and a period of consultation with service users and strategic partners will now begin. This will inform the development of a new delivery plan for Youth Services for 2021-24.

- **To meet statutory National Standards for Youth Justice**  
The National Standards for Youth Justice continue to be met and the work of the service is regularly reviewed and assured by the Youth Justice Executive Board.
- **To ensure young people reintegrate back into education, health and substance misuse services.**  
Officers from range of Education and Health Services continue to engage with schools to provide appropriate support for pupils and families who require assistance.
- **To deliver targeted interventions and support to children, families and schools.**  
The adaptations to the work of Inclusion & Progression services to allow them to work both remotely and directly within schools, e.g. Education Welfare, English as an Additional Language/Gypsy Traveller, Sensory, and Counselling are working well. This enables learners, families and schools to receive the support they need. Services continue to explore alternative and innovative approaches to secure engagement.
- **To comply with the statutory duties under the Special Education Needs (SEN) Code of Practice for Wales**  
There remain a number of challenges around the completion of detailed assessments for pupils with Additional Learning Needs in the current climate but services are working flexibly and creatively to try and address these and ensure that the Council's statutory duties under the Code continue to be met.
- **To re-open North East Wales Archives, Hawarden, to the public (formerly Flintshire Record Office)**  
The Archive will continue to open to the public for two days a week for the foreseeable future. This is sufficient to meet current demand and ensure the service can be delivered safely within its Covid-19 arrangements. Services users are responding positively to the improved website and greater access to more digital content.
- **To support staff to have a positive pathway to return to the work place**  
All staff within the Portfolio continue to have regular team meetings and 1-1 catch up with their Managers which supports their wellbeing as well as their work streams.

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	There are no specific resource implications from this report.

<b>3.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT</b>
3.01	None specific as this report is based on documented response and recovery work.

<b>4.00</b>	<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
4.01	This report specifically covers emergency situation risk management.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Appendix 1 – Updated Education & Youth Recovery Risk Register Appendix 2 – Updated Education & Youth Risk Mitigation Actions

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	None.

<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
7.01	<b>Contact Officer:</b> Claire Homard <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 704601 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:Claire.homard@flintshire.gov.uk">Claire.homard@flintshire.gov.uk</a>



## Education and Youth Portfolio Risk Register

Version 07

Published: 26.02.21

### Risk Register - Part 1 (Portfolio Management)

#### Finance

Risk Ref.	Risk Title	Risk Type	Lead Officer	Supporting Officers	Underlying Risk Rating	Current Risk Rating	Target Risk Rating	Risk Trend	Risk Status
EY01	Secondary schools are not financially viable due to insufficient base funding	Strategic	Claire Homard	David Bateman/Lucy Morris	R	R	A Open	NC ↔	Open
EY04 Updated	Increased financial costs to the Inclusion Service due to legal challenges Note: risk trend is reducing and risk rating has reduced to green due to current intelligence suggests that there are no additional appeals pending.	Strategic	Claire Homard	Jeanette Rock	R	G	A Q2 2021/22	G ↓	Open
EY05	Insufficient financial resources to support children and young people's emotional health	Strategic	Claire Homard	Jeanette Rock/Ann Roberts	A	Y	A Open	NC ↔	Open
EY06	Insufficient funding to deliver new archive premises	Strategic	Claire Harrington	Claire Homard	R	A	A Q4 2021/22	NC ↔	Open

#### Workforce

Risk Ref.	Risk Title	Risk Type	Lead Officer	Supporting Officers	Underlying Risk Rating	Current Risk Rating	Target Risk Rating	Risk Trend	Risk Status
EY07 Updated	Capacity on service delivery is impacted by portfolio workforce absence Note: risk trend is increasing and risk rating has increased to amber due to concerns regarding potential long term absence	Operational	Claire Homard	DMT	Y	A	G Q4 2021/22	↑ R	Open

#### Property & Assets

Risk Ref.	Risk Title	Risk Type	Lead Officer	Supporting Officers	Underlying Risk Rating	Current Risk Rating	Target Risk Rating	Risk Trend	Risk Status
EY11	Fluctuating pupil demography impacts on sufficiency of school places	Strategic	Damian Hughes	n/a	A	Y	Y Open	NC ↔	Open
EY12	Deteriorating school buildings adversely impacts on curriculum delivery	Strategic	Damian Hughes	n/a	A	Y	Y Open	NC ↔	Open

Key		
Underlying Risk Rating	The risk rating before any mitigating actions	
Current Risk Rating	This risk rating following the planned mitigation actions	
Target Risk Rating	The risk rating which is realistically achievable and by when	
Risk Trend	The trend of the risk since the last review date	
NC	No change in risk trend since last review	
Risk Status	Open denotes a live risk	Closed denotes a closed risk
*Denotes the risk is specific to the 'Recovery'		

Risk Ref.	Risk Title	Risk Type	Lead Officer	Supporting Officers	Underlying Risk Rating	Current Risk Rating	Target Risk Rating	Risk Trend	Risk Status
EY13 Updated	Inability to fully deliver on Welsh Government 21 <sup>st</sup> Century School Building Programme due to financial, workforce and contractor implications Note: risk trend is reducing and risk rating has reduced to yellow due to regular dialogue between the Council and the North Wales Construction Partnership contractors and supply chain, and also with Wales Government to mitigate against problems arising	Strategic	Claire Homard	Damian Hughes	A	Y	Y Open	G ↓	Open
EY14 Updated	Welsh Government Childcare Capital programme is not fully completed resulting in a reduction of childcare places Note: risk trend is reducing and risk rating has reduced to yellow as indications are that all but one of the projects in the proposed programme are possible within the agreed Wales Government funding envelope	Strategic	Gail Bennett	Byra Foulkes	A	Y	A Q4 2021/22	G ↓	Open

#### Governance/Legal

Risk Ref.	Risk Title	Risk Type	Lead Officer	Supporting Officers	Underlying Risk Rating	Current Risk Rating	Target Risk Rating	Risk Trend	Risk Status
EY15	Non-compliance with the Additional Learning Needs Education Tribunal (ALNET) Act 2018	Strategic	Jeanette Rock	Paula Roberts	Y	Y	G Q2 2021/22	NC ↔	Open
EY16	Failure to make statutory provision for learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN) due to resource availability	Operational	Jeanette Rock	Paula Roberts	R	A	Y Q2 2021/22	NC ↔	Open
EY17	Failure to meet the statutory targets in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan due to insufficient parental take up of Welsh medium education	Strategic	Claire Homard	Vicky Barlow	A	A	Y Q4 2030/31	NC ↔	Open
EY19	Insufficient local education provision to support learners with mental health needs	Operational	Jeanette Rock	Tim Ford / John Grant	R	A	Y Q2 2022/23	NC ↔	Open
EY20 Updated	Increased number of Special Educational Needs Tribunals due to an inability to meet the statutory assessment process requirements and accurately identify individual needs (link to EY 16) Note: risk trend is reducing and risk rating has reduced to green due to the revised ways of working introduced by health professionals and Education Psychologists. As a result of this and the other mitigating factors implemented, the level of appeal to tribunal is currently very low.	Operational	Jeanette Rock	Paula Roberts/Nigel Pattinson	A	G	Y Q2 2021/22	G ↓	Open

#### External Regulation

Risk Ref.	Risk Title	Risk Type	Lead Officer	Supporting Officers	Underlying Risk Rating	Current Risk Rating	Target Risk Rating	Risk Trend	Risk Status
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Risk Ref.	Risk Title	Risk Type	Lead Officer	Supporting Officers	Underlying Risk Rating	Current Risk Rating	Target Risk Rating	Risk Trend	Risk Status
EY31	Increase in young people subject to intervention by the Youth Justice Services due to the impact of school closures and revised service delivery models.	Operational	James Warr	James Warr	A	Y	G Q4 2021/22	NC ↔	Open
EY32	Young people in the Youth Justice Service not accessing minimum statutory education offer due to lack of pupil engagement	Strategic	James Warr	James Warr	A	A	G Q4 2021/22	NC ↔	Open

#### Previously Closed Risks

Risk Ref.	Risk Title	Risk Type	Lead Officer	Supporting Officers	Underlying Risk Rating	Current Risk Rating	Target Risk Rating	Risk Trend	Risk Status
EY02	Inability to delivery statutory Youth Services due to uncertainty about grant funding	Strategic	James Warr	James Warr	A	A	G Open	NC ↔	Open
EY03	Inability to deliver Inclusion & Progression Services due to uncertainty about grant funding	Strategic	Jeanette Rock	John Grant/ Lisa Davies	A	G	G Q3 2020/21	G ↓	Closed
*EY08	Inability to provide emergency childcare provision during school closure period due to workforce availability	Operational	Vicky Barlow	Jeanette Rock	A	G	G Q2 2020/21	G ↓	Closed
*EY09	Insufficient emergency childcare provision in summer holidays if school hubs directed to close by Welsh Government	Operational	Claire Homard	Vicky Barlow	A	Y	G Q2 2020/21	G ↓	Closed
*EY10	Inability of schools to reOpen safely to deliver statutory education due to reductions in workforce, availability of sufficient PPE and infrastructure (catering/transport)	Strategic	Claire Homard	Vicky Barlow	R	A	G Q3 2020/21	G ↓	Closed
EY18	Young people unable to access counselling services due to the closure of schools	Operational	Jeanette Rock	Nigel Pattinson	A	G	G Q4 2021/22	G ↓	Closed
*EY21	Reduced safeguarding referrals due to school closures	Strategic	Claire Homard	Vicky Barlow	R	Y	Y Q2 2020/21	G ↓	Closed

#### Risk Matrix

Impact Severity	Catastrophic	Y	A	R	R	B	B
	Critical	Y	A	A	R	R	R
	Significant	G	G	Y	A	A	R
	Marginal	G	G	G	Y	Y	A
		Unlikely	Very Low	Low	High	Very High	Extremely High

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Education & Youth Portfolio Risk Register

Version 08

Reviewed: 030321

Part 1 (Portfolio Management)

Financial

Mitigation Urgency Key	
IM – Immediate	Now
ST – Short Term	Within 1 month
MT – Medium Term	1 month plus
Upward arrow	Risk increasing
Downward arrow	Risk decreasing
Sideways arrow	No change in risk
*Denotes the risk is specific to ‘Recovery’	

Risk Ref.	Risk Title	Risk Trend	Mitigation Urgency	Mitigating Actions
EY01	Secondary schools are not financially viable due to insufficient base funding	↔	MT	Risk associated with insufficient base budgets for secondary schools is included in the MTFs. There is on-going work with secondary head teachers to review the secondary schools funding formula with eventual consultation with the Schools’ Budget Forum.
EY04	Increased financial costs to the Inclusion Service due to legal challenges	↓	MT	Officers across the Inclusion & Progression service have continued to work with parents/carers and schools to secure appropriate provision for children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) during the pandemic. The appeals to the SEN Tribunal (Wales) have remained very low, with 2 appeals having been lodged, one of which has been heard and the other paused. The risk of appeal remains in place but the current intelligence suggests that there are no additional appeals pending.
EY05	Insufficient financial resources to support children and young people’s emotional health	↔	ST	There are insufficient financial resources to support children and young people’s emotional health therefore the alternative approaches to securing resources are sought such as promoting free access to ‘Solihull’ approaches to parenting to support parents/carers in managing their children; Additional training provided to schools on strategies/programmes to support emotional health and wellbeing via Wales Government grant; Schools promoting online materials to support emotional health and wellbeing during school closure; use of the Integrated Youth Provision social media platform.
EY06	Insufficient funding to deliver new archive premises	↔	MT	The Archive Project Board of senior officers and political leaders meets regularly to monitor progress of the bid. There is Cabinet and Executive support for the bid to National lottery Heritage Fund with formal commitment to provide capital funding to top up the scheme from both Flintshire and Denbighshire. There is effective project management in place ensuring project is progressing within budget and timescales. There is a project action plan in place to complete Stage 1 bid by deadline of February 2021. There is

Risk Ref.	Risk Title	Risk Trend	Mitigation Urgency	Mitigating Actions
				effective working with the Museums and Libraries Division of Welsh Government who are supportive of the bid and providing expert advice and gives the bid credence. There is support from The National Archive for the bid and partnership working in place. An expert consultant has been procured with significant expertise in developing heritage funding bids to increase likelihood of success.

Workforce

Risk Ref.	Risk Title	Risk Trend	Mitigation Urgency	Mitigating Actions
Page 107 dated 144	Capacity on service delivery is impacted by workforce absence	↑	ST	Managers are well versed in applying the corporate Attendance Management policy and processes and there is the availability of clear protocols for absences arising from the current emergency which are being applied when necessary within the portfolio. Sickness levels remain low in the main but there are concerns regarding potential long term absence in particular statutory services, e.g., Additional Learning Needs and Youth Justice. Managers are reviewing roles and reallocating work to remaining staff where possible. All options to increase capacity in identified areas are being explored.

Property & Assets

Risk Ref.	Risk Title	Risk Trend	Mitigation Urgency	Mitigating Actions
EY11	Fluctuating pupil demography impacts on sufficiency of school places	↔	MT	Pupil number projections are reviewed bi-annually. This data assists in developing priorities for the Council’s schools investment programme for schools and helps understand potential issues and possible mitigation measures associated with local development plan, to this end there are regular meetings with the Planning Team.
EY12	Deteriorating school buildings adversely impacts on curriculum delivery	↔	MT	All schools are subject to 5 year condition survey. Through the Council’s annual repairs and maintenance programme and the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Capital investment funding, the risk from deteriorating school buildings impacting on curriculum delivery is reducing. All schools continue to deliver an effective curriculum. The Council continues to bid for other external capital funding to be invested in the school estate.
EY13 Updated	Inability to fully deliver on Welsh Government 21 <sup>st</sup> Century School Building	↓	MT	There is regular dialogue between the Council and the North Wales Construction Partnership contractors and supply chain, and also with Wales Government to mitigate



Risk Ref.	Risk Title	Risk Trend	Mitigation Urgency	Mitigating Actions
	Programme due to financial, workforce and contractor implications			against problems arising from funding, the workforce or from the contractor. The risk continues to be managed.
EY14 Updated	Welsh Government Childcare Capital programme is not fully completed resulting in a reduction of childcare places	↓	MT	There is regular monitoring of risks at Portfolio Senior Management Team and quarterly reports to Welsh Government (WG). A contractor has been commissioned to work up actual costs and site risks for the individual projects, whilst not yet confirmed early indications are that all but one of the projects in the proposed programme are possible within the agreed WG funding envelope. All risks are escalated to the Capital Assets Board as necessary. Risk is reducing as indications are that all but one of the projects in the proposed programme are possible within the agreed Wales Government funding envelope

Governance/Legal

Risk Ref.	Risk Title	Risk Trend	Mitigation Urgency	Mitigating Actions
Page 145 EY15	Non-compliance with the Additional Learning Needs Education Tribunal (ALNET) Act 2018	↔	MT	Progress against the Council’s Transformation Plan in relation to the implementation of the new Act from September 2021 is monitored at service and senior management level. Potential financial risks are reported through portfolio finance meetings and the Mid Term Financial Strategy monitoring systems. Progress is also measured through regular stakeholder meetings and meetings of the regional leads which include the regional Additional Learning Needs Transformation Lead who meets regularly with WG. Current measures confirm the Council continues to be compliant. Wales Government have recently indicated that the Guidance Code will not be published until February 2021 as opposed to December 2020. Work will continue against the current Transformation Plan but changes may need to be implemented quickly in response to the published Code.

Risk Ref.	Risk Title	Risk Trend	Mitigation Urgency	Mitigating Actions
EY16	Failure to make statutory provision for learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN) due to resource availability	↔	ST	Education and Health professionals are developing ways in which they can complete their statutory responsibilities in relation to the statutory assessment process for children with SEN to ensure the Council is able to make specialist placement decisions. These include the use of video platforms and the establishment of clinical rooms where the child and the assessor are separated by a Perspex screen. Services are also engaging with their respective professional bodies who are in many cases providing advice and guidance on how to complete their roles whilst maintaining social distancing. Officers are working with schools and parents/carers to negotiate the continuation of existing additional provision in the interim period to offset the need for statutory assessment and change of educational placement.
Page 17 146	Failure to meet the statutory targets in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan due to insufficient parental take up of Welsh medium education	↔	MT	The annual update of the Welsh In Education Strategic Plan includes information from parental demand surveys. The Authority is on track to expand Welsh medium capacity at three school sites through its capital programme. Progress against statutory targets are monitored quarterly by the Forum with annual reports to Scrutiny Committee.
EY19	Insufficient local education provision to support learners with mental health needs	↔	MT	Specialist teams within the Inclusion & Progression Service are working regionally with other LAs and health colleagues to develop resources to support the transition from hubs back to school on the 29 June. There is a working group currently looking at how schools can offer increased targeted support to individuals with mental health difficulties. A review has been undertaken of the Council's current specialist provision with the findings having been collated into a report; this will form the basis of a business case application for further resource and investment. Capacity will be increased from September 2021 with the new build for Plas Derwen Portfolio Pupil Referral Unit.

Risk Ref.	Risk Title	Risk Trend	Mitigation Urgency	Mitigating Actions
EY20 Updated	Increased number of Special Educational Needs Tribunals due to an inability to meet the statutory assessment process requirements and accurately identify individual needs (link to EY 16)	↓	MT	The number of appeals made to the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Tribunal has remained very low at two, one of which has been heard and the other paused pending the outcome of an assessment period. Health colleagues have developed online methods of completing assessments alongside face to face meetings as have our Education Psychology service, both of whom have mandatory roles within the statutory assessment process. Professionals are working with parents/carers to address any delays in process brought about by the pandemic and identify the provision required by children and young people. Managers continue to monitor and review the situation.

External Regulation

Risk Ref.	Risk Title	Risk Trend	Mitigation Urgency	Mitigating Actions
Page 147 EY22	Inability to meet the recommendations arising from the Local Authority's Estyn Inspection 2019	↔	MT	The Post Inspection Action Plan has been incorporated into the Council Plan 20220/21 and the Portfolio's business Plan. Plans are monitored at senior management team meetings weekly and the Senior Team meet termly with Estyn's Local Registered Inspectors to monitor the delivery of actions to meet the targeted recommendations. The Plan is reported annually to Cabinet and Scrutiny. Current progression against the actions are on target.
EY23	Poor outcome of Ministry of Justice Inspection due to non-compliance with National Youth Justice Standards and ineffective governance from Youth Justice Board	↔	MT	Youth Justice Executive Management Board have agreed the recovery plan for the service and regularly review the associated risk assessment. At present YJS remain in phase 1 but following Executive Management Board on 24 <sup>th</sup> September it has been agreed the service can move to Phase 2 which includes increase face to face services in areas of the service.
EY24	Inability to meet national archive accreditation standards due to poor quality of the accommodation	↔	MT	The National Archive has agreed to a deferment of Flintshire's next accreditation against the standards to allow time for the outcome of the bid and potential solution to the accommodation issue to be found.

Part 2 (Portfolio Service & Performance)

School Improvement

Risk Ref.	Risk Title	Risk Trend	Mitigation Urgency	Mitigating Actions
<p>EY25</p> <p>Page 148</p>	<p>Schools insufficiently prepared to implement new curriculum which impacts adversely on learners</p>	<p>↔</p>	<p>MT</p>	<p>Regional and local Business Plans have been written identifying the required actions needed by schools to ensure they are prepared. Whilst preparations by schools was limited during the repurposing period, the regional school improvement service has continued to provide universal and bespoke support to schools as appropriate. Professional development and collaboration has continued virtually where possible. Cluster meetings for Flintshire schools have continued remotely. The fortnightly meetings between local authority and regional school improvement service continue, with a focus on developing distance and blended learning. The GwE Management Board attended by the Chief Officer receive and monitor update reports. Likewise, there are regular updates to the Joint Consultative Committee attended by the Lead member for Education and the Chief Education Officer. An appointment to the Interim Primary Phase Adviser post has been extended until 31.8.21 and this is providing effective additional capacity.</p>
<p>EY26</p>	<p>Ineffective school leadership results in poor pupil outcomes which increases risk of schools being placed in statutory Estyn categories</p>	<p>↔</p>	<p>MT</p>	<p>Local Business Plan has been written identifying targeted support needed. Progress against this is a standing item at the Standards Quality Board meeting with identified risks being flagged through DMT, Programme Board, Overview &amp; Scrutiny meetings. The portfolio Business Plan identifies targeted support for those schools in need with identified risks being flagged through Senior Management Team. Currently all inspection activity by Estyn is suspended until further notice. There will be no further inspections during 2020- 2021. National and local focus is on planning and preparation for implementation of the new curriculum. The appointment of a temporary Primary Phase Adviser provides additional support to primary school leaders.</p>

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<p>EY27</p> <p>Page 149</p>	<p>School leadership and governance is ineffective due to lack of engagement in professional development and support programmes</p>	<p>↔</p>	<p>MT</p>	<p>There is a comprehensive professional leadership development programme in place nationally and regionally for school leaders. Programmes that have been suspended due to the pandemic are being moved to online virtual arrangements with work underway nationally and locally. Schools continue to nominate staff to participate in national leadership programmes such as the National Qualification for Headship and the Existing Headteacher Programme and the Chief Officer has endorsed the next round of applicants. Bespoke support is still available for Flintshire Heads through LA officers and GwE advisers. There is a regional protocol in place for supporting schools with senior leadership appointments, including headteacher and deputy headteacher appointments. This is continuing to support appointments virtually. School Governors have dedicated officer support and the Council funds access to Governors Cymru advisory service for all schools. Governors have access to on-line statutory modules and professional development through the regional school improvement service.</p>
<p>EY28</p>	<p>Ineffective school leadership results in standards of Welsh in schools falling below the national average</p>	<p>↔</p>	<p>MT</p>	<p>Action Plans have been written identifying the required activity needed to meet the Authority’s Welsh in Education Strategic Plan targets. There are regular meetings between the senior manager for school improvement and the service manager for Welsh to monitor engagement and progress of schools. There are high levels of engagement between portfolio managers and the regional school improvement service to ensure resources are targeted appropriately. The regional plan includes support for improving outcomes in Welsh at key stages 3 and 4. The summer term meeting of the Welsh in Education Strategic Forum (WESP) was cancelled due to the pandemic. The forum meetings have been moved successfully online.</p>

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EY29	Reduced performance in Science, Technology , Engineering and Maths subjects at Post 16 could impact on access to local apprenticeships and progression into higher education	↔	MT	There is a regional lead for post 16 now in place. The Business plan for post 16 is incorporated into regional and local planning. Schools have access to subject advisers and regional subject forums. There are fortnightly meetings between the local authority and regional school improvement service to monitor engagement and progress of schools, and regular stakeholder meetings to ensure communication at all appropriate level. Schools are reporting after 2020 A Level results that nearly all learners were able to progress to their preferred choice of course, however, destination data is not yet available to verify this.
EY33 Updated	Inability of schools to operate safely and deliver statutory education due to reduction in staffing levels	↓	MT	Foundation Phase learners have returned successfully from 22 <sup>nd</sup> February. Key Stage 2 learners and examination groups (Yrs 10-13) will now return from 15 <sup>th</sup> March. All other learners will return after Easter with the opportunity for a 'check in' session for Yrs 7-9 before Easter to be organised by schools. Schools workforce availability is good with very low levels of sickness absence. Lateral flow tests now being used twice weekly by the schools' workforce to identify asymptomatic cases and ensure swift action taken to minimise impact on learners.

Inclusion & Progression

Risk Ref.	Risk Title	Risk Trend	Mitigation Urgency	Mitigating Actions
EY30	Increased numbers of young people not in Education, Training & Employment due to lack of pupil engagement	↔	MT	The Inclusion & Progression service continues to work in collaboration with a range of internal and external services to identify pupils at risk of disengagement via the range of data sources and tools available. There continues to be regular dialogue with pastoral leads in secondary schools and local further education institutes and training providers to ensure suitable transition arrangements are in place to support continued engagement for pupils leaving Year 11. Fortnightly education panels are conducted where targeted young people are monitored in terms of their engagement and transition arrangements to ensure alternative support and intervention is identified where required.

Integrated Youth Provision

Risk Ref.	Risk Title	Risk Trend	Mitigation Urgency	Mitigating Actions
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Risk Ref.	Risk Title	Risk Trend	Mitigation Urgency	Mitigating Actions
EY31	Increase in young people subject to intervention by the Youth Justice Services due to the impact of school closures and revised service delivery models	↔	ST	The new Education Officer within the Youth Justice Service is now in post and the reopening of schools the number of young people subject to intervention by the YJS remains stable.
EY32	Young people in the Youth Justice Service not accessing minimum statutory education offer due to lack of pupil engagement	↔	ST	The YJS has recommenced monthly Education Meetings internally to monitor the engagement with this cohort.

Previously Closed Risks

Risk Ref.	Risk Title	Risk Trend	Mitigation Urgency	Mitigating Actions
EY02	Inability to deliver statutory Youth Services due to uncertainty about grant funding	↓	MT	-
EY03	Inability to deliver Inclusion & Progression Services due to uncertainty about grant funding	↓	MT	-
*EY08	Inability to provide emergency childcare provision during school closure period due to workforce availability	↓	MT	-
*EY09	Insufficient emergency childcare provision in summer holidays if school hubs directed to close by Welsh Government	↓	MT	-

Risk Ref.	Risk Title	Risk Trend	Mitigation Urgency	Mitigating Actions
*EY10	Inability of schools to reopen safely to deliver statutory education due to reductions in workforce, availability of sufficient PPE and infrastructure (catering/transport)	↓	MT	-
EY18	Young people unable to access counselling services due to the closure of schools	↓	ST	-
*EY21	Reduced safeguarding referrals due to school closures	↓	MT	-