

**Year End Chief Officer Report**

**Report Author:** Chief Officer – Education and Youth  
**Report Date:** April 2015  
**Report Period:** 1<sup>st</sup> October 2014 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015

**Introduction**

The Chief Officer report is produced on a half yearly basis and provided to Cabinet Members for review and assurance focusing on the 'business as usual'. The reports are provided for Overview and Scrutiny Committees as part of their Forward Work Programmes. Chief Officer Reports compliment the Improvement Plan monitoring reports.

Chief Officer Reports are exception reports which summarise the key information Members should be aware of, including both good and poor performance. Emerging issues / operational risks are also detailed. The reports are split into three distinct sections: -

**1. Performance Overview-** this section is used to give an overview of the progress being made towards delivery of key plans for the services which include those Improvement Priorities which do not have an in year focus i.e. these are not reported within the quarterly Improvement Plan monitoring. It is also used to highlight good news and key issues (including operational risks) arising. In addition, summary progress is given for key projects and collaborative areas of work.

**2. Internal and External Regulatory Reports-** this section summarises regulatory work reported in the half year and its outcomes and intended actions arising from recommendations.

**3. Corporate Reporting-** this section summarises the performance in relation to corporate issues i.e. Sickness absence, Complaints

**Plus supporting appendices: -**

**Appendix 1- Performance Indicators** - summary table of the key performance indicators used to manage the services. In addition, any NSI and PAM (statutory PIs) reported by the services are included.

**Appendix 2 - High level (red) operational risk detail-**completed full risk templates for those risks currently assessed as high (red).

## Section 1 - Performance Overview

This report covers the following functional areas:

- Education Commissioning
- Schools Services
- School Modernisation
- SEN and Inclusion
- Youth Service
- Youth Justice

### Areas of Positive Performance

- Performance at all key stages has improved in recent years.
- The percentage of learners leaving school without a qualification and the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) are low.
- Public confidence in local education is the highest in Wales. People in Flintshire gave the highest rating for the state of education in the 2014 National Survey for Wales.
- In 2013 secondary schools, 62.2 per cent of 16 year-olds gained five or more good GCSE grades that included Mathematics and English or Welsh (first language). This result was the highest of all councils in Wales and almost 10 percentage points above the average for Wales.
- Support for additional learning needs and social inclusion is good.
- Attendance in both primary and secondary schools is high and there are few permanent exclusions.
- The authority has made good progress in delivering its School Modernisation programme.
- Senior leaders understand clearly the impact of wellbeing, safeguarding and regeneration on educational outcomes.
- Key plans align well at all levels and senior leaders work in a positive way with a range of strategic partners across public services to set high level priorities together.
- The local authority and its partners have a clear commitment to learners and developing a learning culture in the County.
- The authority has a track record of identifying and intervening where hurdles to effective working hinder progress.
- Senior leaders have taken difficult decisions which are responded to proactively.
- The authority analyses data and first-hand evidence well to make accurate evaluations of the quality and impact of services.
- The authority has addressed all of the recommendations from previous Estyn inspections well.
- The authority has a good record of effectively managing its education budget and improving efficiency.
- Scrutiny has examined difficult aspects of the authority's work successfully, and has informed decision making by the Cabinet well.
- The collaborative arrangements for School Improvement in North Wales are maturing and are beginning to "add value" to local educational provision.
- Scrutiny has examined difficult aspects of the authority's work successfully,

and has informed decision making by the Cabinet well.

### Areas of Concern

- The proportion of schools requiring follow-up activity after an inspection is still too high in comparison with other authorities.
- Whilst committed to securing continuous improvement in all phases of education, learner outcomes in primary particularly need to improve.
- Schools need to focus on further developing Welsh 1st language and performance of pupils in National Tests (Language).
- The Authority still needs to take further key decisions in relation to school organisation to deliver efficient use of resources to benefit learners.
- The Authority needs to have successfully implemented major organisational and service change to meet budgetary constraints for forthcoming years.

### Improvement Plan (none in year priorities)

Education reform and investment has remained a priority for the Local Authority despite the challenging financial climate. The high strategic priority given to the education service is reflected in the authority's allocation of both revenue and capital resources. The schools' delegated budgets have been protected from efficiency reductions in recent years.

Business partner arrangements in human resources and finance have been strengthened. The method of distributing funding has been completely renewed following fundamental review with schools. Meanwhile, human resources policies have also been reviewed through collaborative working at local, regional and national level ahead of the implementation of the next phase of the national model for school improvement in 2015-16.

The Authority's spending decisions relate adequately to strategic priorities for improvement and benefits for schools and their learners. Recent work on medium term financial planning and the fundamental review of the school funding formula give further positive prospects as does completion of school workforce remodelling as part of the single status agreement.

Staffing, accommodation and financial resources are soundly managed and deployed to support learning and improvement. The authority reviews the outcomes of its financial plans to make sure that money is spent wisely and has a positive impact on standards.

Partnership activity provides good value for money because it contributes to extensive opportunities and improved outcomes for learners in aspects which the authority and its schools alone could not provide.

The authority has been successful in securing grant funding for both revenue and capital projects but is also committed to contributing half of the current £64m school modernisation investment in schools from its own resources.

School balances reduced significantly during 2013-14, in line with the proactive

strategy of the authority in providing schools with appropriate support and challenge in those schools where surpluses are too high and where there are deficits.

The authority has a good record of effectively managing its education budget and improving efficiency. Joint working with a range of partners has been effective in increasing the authority's capacity to support learners.

### **Key Projects**

The portfolio's key projects in relation to school improvement, inclusion and school modernisation are set out in the Local Authority's Improvement Plan.

### **Additional Learning Needs**

A fundamental review of Additional Learning Needs provision is underway to increase efficiency and effectiveness. However, the review commences from a position of strengths in practice.

There are clear and widely understood protocols and decision-making processes to assess and decide on support for pupils with additional learning needs. Nearly all pupils with additional learning needs have access to an appropriate range of support and make good progress.

Assessments are carried out at an early stage. Pupils placed by the authority in independent special schools have their learning and behavioural needs assessed before placement and monitored subsequently.

There is effective and co-ordinated advice and support for parents and carers of children and young people which has a positive impact on outcomes. There is good continuation of services and effective transition support to help children and young people move between different stages of learning.

Support for additional learning needs and inclusion is good. Many of the pupils with statements, and others identified as having additional learning needs, achieve well and are in mainstream schools. Well-developed consultation with schools enables the authority to delegate most of its resources for additional learning needs. It effectively monitors the impact of these resources on pupils' progress.

There is clear information about the comprehensive services available to support parents and carers, that is accessible on Amdro and through briefing papers on Inclusion issues e.g. Voice of the Child pilot. There is also signposting from other websites e.g. Mencap. Through regular meetings with the Director of SNAP and local SNAP representatives and through information sharing the authority now works more effectively with SNAP Cymru, the parent partnership service that helps parents of children with special educational needs and disability to understand and access services that may help their children (R3).

The authority has been successful in reducing the number of appeals to the SEN Tribunal for Wales. It is working to reduce the percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs, which is currently the third highest in Wales. This work includes piloting innovative work for the Welsh Government in assessing pupils' additional needs and providing for them without going through the current statutory process.

Individual development plans enable cohesive planning and monitoring. These are promptly prepared and monitored at least twice each year to make sure pupils are meeting the agreed targets. Early indicators suggest this work is highly effective in supporting the development of pupils' achievements. For pupils with complex needs, thorough multi-agency assessment leads to a comprehensive individual development plan, setting out provision from a range of agencies. The quality assurance processes for monitoring the impact of these plans are appropriate.

Schools receive good training to develop their expertise in meeting a range of needs. Appropriate training is helping staff to understand pupils' additional needs in order to support individual development planning.

Officers work together and share information well. They make good use of provision mapping to hold schools to account about pupils' achievements.

### **Promoting social inclusion and wellbeing**

School attendance rates for the local authority are at or above national benchmarks and improving. School attendance is a high priority both for the Welsh Government and local authorities in their aim to improve standards. Flintshire schools have in the main demonstrated a trend of improvement with figures for both the primary and secondary sector being above the national average for Wales. Unauthorised absence in secondary schools (0.4%) remains the lowest in Wales, whilst in primary schools (0.5%), this was the fourth lowest value in Wales with the lowest being 0.2% (2012/13).

A collective target for attendance was set at 94.6% for primary schools and 93.3% for secondary schools for 2012/13. Target setting for attendance has become an integral part of the GwE system leader visits to schools and forms part of the challenge to headteachers and governing bodies.

The Local Authority continues to target improvement in all educational settings. Training has been provided to Governors and targets for improvement have been set. Flintshire County Council is coordinating the regional programme for use of the Welsh Government grant. SIMs has been installed in the PPRU to support accurate monitoring within that setting.

Primary overall attendance has gone down by 0.4% following significant improvement in the previous year. This appears to correlate to the increase in fixed term exclusions within that sector which must also be addressed. Secondary attendance rates continue to rise with unauthorised absence standing at 0.4%, the lowest value in Wales.

Permanent exclusions are rare. Time lost through exclusions and providing excluded pupils swiftly with alternative high quality full-time education remain key development themes. The Local Authority has maintained its record of no permanent exclusions in the primary sector and had 1 in the secondary sector (2011-12) – a reduction from 4 in the previous year. Unvalidated data indicates no permanent exclusions for 2012/13 The Managed Moves protocol is used across the primary and secondary sector and has helped to support this.

Flintshire has the highest percentage of young people who are EOTAS, including the highest number of pupils registered solely at PPRUs. A decision was taken against dual registration with schools for some of the PRU settings but this may need to be revisited. Flintshire does not have a 'ghost' EOTAS register as exists in some other LAs. This may explain the reason for the high percentage. We are aware that WG are looking into establishing a system to capture all EOTAS learners and we feel that our figures would not significantly alter when this comes into place. A revised model for the PPRU has been drafted based on a Key Stage model with short term intervention facilities.

Clearly targeted support for groups of vulnerable pupils has resulted in significant improvement, for instance in performance, attendance, attitudes, behaviour, confidence, achievement or relationships. However, outcomes for children and young people who are Looked After are a concern. Wider points scores for KS4 learners in Flintshire have been ranked 21st for the last 4 years, despite showing an upward trend from 61 (2009-10) to 147 (2012-13). A cross-Council steering group has been established and an action plan drafted to identify the areas of concern and courses of action.

Different services work well together across the local authority to provide seamless and timely services and support for schools, pupils and parents. Youth support services and personal support is effective in ensuring children's and young people's wellbeing.

There is good provision of services around, for example, PSE, sports, the arts and healthy eating.

The Authority's arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements and give no current cause for concern.

The Authority works well to promote the social inclusion and well-being of children and young people. Arrangements for behaviour support are good. The authority gives strong support to schools and parents to increase their capacity and expertise to improve behaviour and secure good outcomes for children and young people.

The authority offers a wide range of provision outside of schools for pupils at key stage 4. This helps vulnerable learners, such as looked after children, young people at risk of dropping out of education and children from traveller families to achieve good outcomes by the end of their school careers. They gain a range of qualifications, improve their health and progress to further learning and employment. The authority's provision in this area has now been appropriately registered with the Welsh Government as a Pupil Referral Unit (R4).

The Authority has significantly improved arrangements for helping schools and staff from different agencies work together to help families improve children and young people's capacity to learn. This includes mentoring for parents, help with housing issues, advice regarding benefits, and improving children's health and self-esteem. In general, this is a strong element of the authority's work. However strategies to improve attendance have not yet had sufficient impact.

The authority has reorganised how it delivers its services to help schools take more responsibility for improving attendance and to work with persistent non-attendees with complex needs. As a result schools are improving overall attendance rates by reducing authorised absences.

The authority works well with a variety of partners to deliver a wide range of good quality services to help young people improve their achievement and wellbeing. These services include targeted interventions with young parents, school counselling, and projects to improve health and tackle racism. They also include work which raises young people's achievement such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award which is sector leading in respect of participation and results.

The authority has appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding. It has implemented arrangements for auditing safeguarding practices in all schools. Where the reviews identify shortcomings the authority deploys a team of staff to the school to secure improvements quickly. In one case the school was issued with a Warning Notice.

### **Access & School Places**

Overall there is enough capacity in all kinds of schools and relatively few schools are significantly overfilled or with significant surplus capacity. The Local Authority has completed its programme of infant and junior amalgamation decisions. It has also reached implementation phase of its 21st Century Schools and Post 16 Transformation programmes. The Outline Business Case for both of the latter programmes has received ministerial support.

Priorities for investment in the asset management and capital programme are clear, funded and agreed and based upon up-to-date information. The quality of school buildings and other settings is generally sound.

Admissions arrangements for schools are clear to schools and parents and children moving into the authority are accommodated without delay in schools that meet their needs. A high percentage of parental preferences are met.

In terms of the detailed work programme, Rhos y Cae school closed as of Sept 2013. Amalgamations of infant and junior schools reduce the number of schools and governing bodies from 14 infant/juniors to 7 primaries. The 21st Century Schools Outline Business Case was approved by WG in September and we are preparing the Full Business Case. Good progress has been made with the detailed plans for the £31m investment in the Holywell Community Campus, with submission for planning approval in January 2014. Good progress has been made with the detailed plan for the £14.7m post-16 Hub in Connah's Quay, with submission of detailed plans for approval in January 2014.

The £200m+ North Wales Capital Procurement Framework jointly led by Flintshire and Denbighshire is now in place. The Ministerial decision on the closure of the sixth form at the Elfed High School in Buckley has been confirmed in his recent letter, which also lends support to the Authority's agenda to transform post sixteen provision.

Croft Nursery School closed at 31st August 2014, with provision transferred to the neighbouring Queensferry and St. Ethelwolds primary schools. New Welsh medium provision in Shotton (old infants school) commenced in September 2014. The new Shotton Primary School also opened in September 2014.

Planning is advanced for the next phase of school modernisation, with a renewed framework scheduled for adoption in January, for implementation from September 2016. The modernisation of the school estate has been a key corporate priority for the authority for many years and remains so. The authority has made significant investment in its school buildings since 2001, removing surplus places and reducing the number of schools. The authority has developed a system to analyse the benefits arising from its investment in terms of improving the condition, suitability and efficiency of its schools, and is contributing to a Welsh Government task group in this area. Despite this significant investment, the authority's data shows that half of pupils are taught in buildings in need of further investment.

There is a good range of early years, play and youth support services provision which meets the needs and children, young people and their families. The authority regularly audits this provision and provides appropriate support to secure ongoing improvements in quality.

### **Youth Services & Play**

There is an appropriate range of early years Foundation Phase learning and play provision which meets the needs of children and their families. The authority works effectively in partnership with the voluntary sector to plan and deliver provision, using surplus capacity in primary schools where it is appropriate to do so. The authority monitors the standards within maintained and non-maintained settings well and provides well-targeted support to improve the quality of the learning provided.

The authority co-ordinates youth support services effectively, based on a thorough analysis of need. As a result, young people can access a range of appropriate support services. The new Youth Services Strategy consciously brings together the range of opportunities for young people in Flintshire,

### **Collaboration / Partnership Working**

Partnership activities make a strong contribution to widening the range of choices for learners and this has benefits for their standards and wellbeing. The authority takes a leading role in developing joint working practices and promotes trust and good communication between partners. For example through convening the Employment, Skills and Jobs Board on behalf of the Local Service Board.

The Portfolio's officers focus well on joint planning and resourcing as well as building capacity for continuous improvement. The Portfolio has strong links with the community, good liaison and communication with schools, parents/carers and works effectively with other agencies enabling officers to deliver joined-up programmes that improve outcomes and wellbeing for learners.

The Portfolio makes very good use of its partnerships to deliver services which improve outcomes and wellbeing for children and young people. These include



effective partnerships between the authority, the police, local health board, voluntary agencies, other local education authorities and youth support services. The authority monitors and co-ordinates the work of these partners well. Individual partners have a good understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses in the services they deliver.

Partnership working between the authority, further and higher education establishments, employers and secondary schools in developing the work of the 14-19 network is recognised as good. They successfully promote co-operation and remove unhelpful competition between providers. They also enable school governors, the college, employers and the authority to plan, monitor and resource an effective 14-19 curriculum that meets the needs of learners well. Collaboration in development and transition to the new post 16 hub at Connah's Quay has been recognised by the Welsh Government through publication of a national case study.

Partnership working between education, children's services and health are very good. Highly effective, integrated planning across partners supports the smooth transition of pupils with complex needs into education, across key stages and from school to adult services.

Partnership working between schools and the authority is good. There is a high level of trust and a common understanding of the need to work together to raise standards and to improve services for children and young people.

### Summary of Operational Risks (from the above sections)

Risk Type	Risk Ref. and Description	Net Risk Score	Risk Trend	Target Risk Score & Date
Operational	Lack of clarity about funding levels and arrangements for Grant funding following consolidation of 11 grant areas into one (Education Improvement Grant) by Welsh Government	A	↑	A Jan 15
Operational	Capacity to meet requirements of organisational change	A	↑	A
Operational	Maintaining performance and morale in face of reductions to staffing complement.	A	↑	A
Collaborative	Uncertainty on development of regional services, e.g. through National Model	A	→	A
Operational & Collaborative	Growing over-reliance on external providers, e.g. Community Asset Transfer Programme	A	↑	A

## Section 2 - Internal and External Regulatory Reports

None received.

## Section 3 - Corporate Reporting

### Complaints Handling (Source: Corporate Complaints Database)

Education and Youth	Full Year Outcome:			79.17%	20.83%
Q1	4	3	1	75.00%	25.00%
Q2	3	2	1	66.67%	33.33%
Q3	4	3	1	75.00%	25.00%
Q4	2	2	0	100.00%	0.00%

### Sickness Absence (Source: I-Trent)

The average absence rate for the year is 4.65% with the current trend from last quarter reducing.

### Employee Turnover (Source: I-Trent)

Employee turnover is low, with an average employee stability of 67%. 51 staff left the service mainly due to voluntary redundancy/retirement.

### Employee Appraisals (Source: I-Trent)

Appraisal information is based on employees who have had an appraisal between 01/04/2014 - 31/03/2015. The figure recorded on itrent is extremely low (18) which is indicative that records are not updated on the system rather than appraisals not carried out. All senior management appraisals have been completed.

### Data Protection Training (Source: I-Trent)

82 staff (30%) have completed the appropriate level of data protection training.

## Equality and Welsh Language

### List the Equalities and Welsh Language Impact Assessments during the period (1 April 2014 – 31 March 2015) : -

- (1) Started/Work in Progress
- (2) Completed (stating date completed)

Equalities scoping assessment completed as part of business planning process for 2014/15.

### Percentage of employees who have completed the Equalities Monitoring / Diversity Audit (Source: I-Trent)

Gender = 79%

Disability = 64%

Ethnicity = 72%

**List the work areas / functions where diversity of customers are monitored.**

Diversity monitoring is undertaken for Flintshire pupils via the ONE database.

**Describe any initiatives to increase the percentage of equality monitoring data held for customers.**

**Provide examples of initiatives to promote equality, eliminate discrimination and promote good community relations.**

**Percentage of employees who have completed the Welsh Language Skills Audit (Source: I-Trent)**

40.2% of employees.

**Describe any initiatives undertaken to ensure the provision of bilingual services.**

**Describe any initiatives undertaken to increase the use of the Welsh Language**

## Appendix 1 - Performance Indicators

### Key

<b>R</b>	Target significantly missed or likely to be missed by a significant margin
<b>A</b>	Target missed or likely to be missed but within an acceptable level
<b>G</b>	Target achieved / exceeded or on track to be achieved / exceeded

The RAG status of the indicators for the **year end position** are summarised as follows: -

<b>R</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>9</b>
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**Note 1** – NSI = National Statutory Indicator      PAM = Public Accountability Measure

**Note 2** – Change (Improved / Downturned) is based on comparison with the previous reporting period. Where it is more appropriate to compare performance with the same period in the previous year this should be stated in the commentary.

Indicator	NSI / PAM (Note 1)	Annual Outturn Summer 2013	Annual Target Summer 2014	Outturn Summer 2014/15	RAG	Change e.g. Improved / Downturned (Note 2)	Commentary
EDU/002(i): The percentage of all pupils (including those in local authority care), in any local authority maintained school, aged 15 as at the preceding 31 August that leave compulsory education, training or work based learning without an approved external qualification.	NSI / PAM	0.70%	0.3%	0.12%	<b>G</b>	Improved	
EDU/002(ii): The percentage of pupils in local authority care in any local authority maintained school, aged 15 as at the preceding 31	NSI	0.72%	0.3%	0.3%	<b>G</b>	Improved	

Indicator	NSI / PAM (Note 1)	Annual Outturn Summer 2013	Annual Target Summer 2014	Outturn Summer 2014/15	RAG	Change e.g. Improved / Downturned (Note 2)	Commentary
August that leave compulsory education, training or work based learning without an approved external qualification.							
EDU/003: The percentage of pupils assessed at the end of Key Stage 2, in schools maintained by the local authority, achieving the Core Subject Indicator, as determined by Teacher Assessment.	NSI / PAM	85%	86.2%	86.1%	A	Improved	As per Q2 Improvement Plan report
EDU/004: The percentage of pupils assessed at the end of Key Stage 3, in schools maintained by the local authority, achieving the Core Subject Indicator, as determined by Teacher Assessment	PAM	80%	82%	84.3%	G	Improved	As per Q2 Improvement Plan report
EDU/006(ii): The percentage of pupils assessed, in schools maintained by the local authority, receiving a Teacher Assessment in Welsh (first language) at the end of Key Stage 3	NSI	5.70%	Not Set	4.60%	N/A	N/A	This indicator was agreed as being surplus to requirement as it cannot be influenced by quality assurance procedures.
EDU/011: The average point score for pupils aged 15 at the preceding 31 Aug, in schools maintained by the local authority	NSI / PAM	526.73 Points	542.2 Points	548 Points	G	Improved	
EDU/015(a): The percentage of final	NSI	90.80%	90%+	92.30%	G	Improved	

Indicator	NSI / PAM (Note 1)	Annual Outturn Summer 2013	Annual Target Summer 2014	Outturn Summer 2014/15	RAG	Change e.g. Improved / Downturned (Note 2)	Commentary
statements of special education need issued within 26 weeks including exceptions							
EDU/015(b): The percentage of final statements of special education need issued within 26 weeks excluding exceptions	NSI	100%	100%	100%	G	Maintained	
EDU/016(a): The percentage of pupil attendance in primary schools	PAM	94.2%	94.6%	94.8%*	G	Improved	*This is provisional data. Validated data not yet available (Note: whilst Secondary figures are submitted to WG in June, Primary data is submitted to WG in September)
EDU/016(b): The percentage of pupil attendance in secondary schools	PAM	93.3%	93.3%	93.8%	G	Improved	Good performance in Flintshire reflected across Wales, with improved outcomes nationally.
EDU/017: The percentage of pupils aged 15 at the preceding 31st August, in schools maintained by the local authority who achieved the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE grade A*-C in English or Welsh first language and mathematics	NSI / PAM	62.2%	66.2%	61.9%	A	Downturned	
SCC/002: The percentage of	NSI	10.60%	10%	18%	A	Downturned	

Indicator	NSI / PAM (Note 1)	Annual Outturn Summer 2013	Annual Target Summer 2014	Outturn Summer 2014/15	RAG	Change e.g. Improved / Downturned (Note 2)	Commentary
children looked after at 31st March who have experienced one or more changes of school, during a period or periods of being looked after, which were not due to transitional arrangements, in the 12 months							
SCC/037: The average external qualifications point score for 16 year old looked after children, in any local authority maintained learning setting	NSI	199 Points	186 Points	358 Points	G	Improved	

## Appendix 2 – High Level (Red) Net Risks

None