

EDUCATION, YOUTH & CULTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday, 18th July 2024
Report Subject	Healthy Schools Scheme and Healthy & Sustainable Pre-School Scheme (HSPSS)
Cabinet Member	Leader of the Council Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language and Culture
Report Author	Chief Officer (Education & Youth)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Healthy and Sustainable Pre-School Scheme (HSPSS) and Welsh Network of Healthy Schools Scheme (WNHSS) are recognised by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as playing a key role in promoting and protecting the physical, emotional and social health and well-being of children and young people in Wales. In Flintshire, all 77 schools and 50 pre-school settings are supported to engage in WNHSS and HSPSS.

This report has been produced in response to members seeking an update on the national improvements made to the scheme. The report will also highlight key findings from the 2023 School Health Research Network Survey (SHRN) undertaken in Flintshire secondary schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Members of the Committee are briefed in regard to the planned improvements to the Healthy Schools programme in 23/24 and 24/25.
2.	That Members of the Committee formulate their conclusions and recommendations based on the information in the report and the discussion at the meeting.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes (WNHSS)
1.01	<p>The Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes (WNHSS) was launched by Welsh Government in 1999 with all 22 authorities in Wales integrating the national scheme as a true partnership between education and health.</p> <p>The Flintshire Healthy Schools Team works to support schools in ensuring that health education and promotion becomes an integrated part of the school curriculum, the ethos of the school and community. The team works in partnership with local and national organisations to support a coordinated and multi-faceted approach to health education in schools.</p> <p>The Healthy Schools National Quality Award (NQA) was introduced in 2009 with national criteria (indicators) over seven health themes which schools would be supported to achieve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• food and fitness,• mental and emotional health and wellbeing,• personal development and relationships,• substance use and misuse,• environment,• safety and• hygiene. <p>Schools are supported to deliver activities and programmes that reflect national priorities set within a framework of: Leadership and Communication, Curriculum, Ethos and Environment / and Family and Community Involvement.</p>
1.02	<p>In the past, schools made progress through the scheme by achieving 'Phases'. In Phases 1-3 a school would be required to plan and implement actions relating to different health themes that are identified on a school / local level. In Phases 4 - 6 a school was supported in order to evidence how they meet national criteria across the seven health themes. In Phase 6, a school did choose to work towards achieving the National Quality Award (NQA) for schools that can demonstrate the highest standards in health and wellbeing as part of a whole school approach.</p> <p>In Flintshire by 2020 16 schools had achieved the National Quality Award. 2 schools achieved local phase 6, 33 had achieved Phase 5 and were working towards NQA. 17 schools had achieved Phase 4, 8 schools had achieved Phase 3, and 2 schools had achieved Phase 2. Schools have been actively engaged in the scheme for over 20 years in the county.</p> <p>Since the pandemic, the accreditation and assessment aspect of the scheme has been paused unless a school has requested to undergo this process. The NQA officially came to an end in March 2024 and no further assessments will be carried out from March 2024.</p>

1.03	<p>Review and Reform</p> <p>PHW began the review of the WNHSS in 2019, however with a delay due to the pandemic, this was recommenced and by Autumn 2022, PHW proposed a reform to the architecture of the programme; to move away from 22 schemes towards a single all-Wales framework.</p> <p>PHW also proposed that local delivery and ownership would continue supported by a single benchmark and framework of what is considered 'effective practice', as part of a continuous improvement model.</p> <p>This change reflects a focus on continuous improvement, aligning with whole school approach principles and the integration of support to embed a Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Well-being.</p> <p>This process has been overseen by the Health Promoting Schools Programme Board and is currently awaiting Ministerial approval for a proposed set of Minimum Standards that describe the core components of a health and well-being promoting school.</p> <p>These Minimum Standards have been developed based on research evidence, international best practices, and input from a range of stakeholders across health, education, and the health promoting schools workforce. The standards will be shared with schools ahead of the national launch in April 2025.</p>
1.04	<p>Welsh Network of Health and Well-being Promoting Schools</p> <p>Following consultation, as part of the reforms, the new name for the scheme is the 'Welsh Network of Health and Well-being Promoting Schools' (WNHWPS).</p> <p>To reflect the name change, a new logo and branding has been developed by PHW. Healthy Schools colleagues across Wales were consulted as part of this process during December 2023 - January 2024.</p>
1.05	<p>The Flintshire Healthy Schools team has remained steadfastly focused on providing crucial support and resources to schools in the areas of learner and staff health and wellbeing, particularly through this time of transition.</p> <p>Aligned to the national strategic priorities determined by PHW, the following priorities have been agreed regionally across the six local authority areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Wellbeing Framework WSAEMWB • New Curriculum for Wales (Development and implementation of the Health and Wellbeing Area of Learning and Experience) (CFW) • Supporting Schools to prepare for and implement the Relationships and Sexuality Education Code (RSE) • Taking a Whole System Approach to Eating Well & Being Active in Schools • Continue to promote and support the best use of School Health Research Network (SHRN) data within primary and secondary schools, to inform priorities.

	<p>Alongside the national strategic priorities, Flintshire Local Priorities for 2023-24 were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Wellbeing (WSAEMWB) 2. Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) 3. Food and Nutrition.
1.06	<p>Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Wellbeing Framework (WSAEMWB)</p> <p>The Flintshire Healthy Schools team has been supporting schools to complete the WSAEMWB self-assessment tool. This has provided a current baseline of wellbeing provision for both learners and staff via a whole school consultation and review process, allowing schools to develop implementation plans accordingly.</p> <p>In Flintshire, 97.4% of schools are engaged in this process - notably higher than the Wales average of 82.6%. 2 schools have not yet engaged due to a changes in leadership.</p> <p>Furthermore, 94% of Flintshire schools have completed the self-assessment tool, compared to 71.9% across Wales. 4 schools have not yet completed the self-assessment audit tool. 1 school is on has undergone a change in leadership and is currently focusing on other pressing improvement priorities. 2 schools have requested an extension. 1 further school has not yet completed the tool, due to appointing a new headteacher.</p> <p>Schools are now in the process of finalising their implementation plans, with the view that they will be in place for the new academic year 2024 -2025.</p>
1.07	<p>Following a review of the key themes emerging from the completion of the WSAEMWB self-assessment tools, staff wellbeing was identified in secondary schools as a priority. In January 2024, funded by the Welsh Government Wellbeing grant, a pilot of 'Well-being with Cari' was launched with the 9 secondary schools. This was voluntary for school staff to participate in and required the completion of short online wellbeing surveys, assessing their levels of commitment, resilience, engagement, and well-being. Staff were subsequently signposted to appropriate support in order to improve their wellbeing scores.</p> <p>26 school staff completed the Advocate training in February 2024, and 10 staff completed additional First Responder Training in March 2024 to upskill and increase confidence in supporting staff at an individual level regarding their wellbeing.</p> <p>The Healthy Schools team promoted the completion of online surveys in schools and using the consultation data, the team generated customised school reports identifying average wellbeing scores and areas of strength and improvement for staff well-being for each school. The pilot will finish at the end of the summer term and will be evaluated accordingly. How school staff can continue to benefit from the training they have received will be explored going forward.</p>

1.08	<p>Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)</p> <p>The Flintshire Healthy Schools team have continued to support schools to meet the requirements of the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Code and Curriculum for Wales.</p> <p>In November 2023, an in-person RSE Cluster event brought together secondary RSE leads and their primary school counterparts. During the event, the secondary leads chaired cluster meetings in physical breakout rooms, facilitating discussions on progression and areas for improving the delivery of the RSE curriculum. The well-attended event received positive feedback.</p> <p>The RSE clusters have continued to convene since the initial event, with the Healthy Schools team providing support as required. Each RSE cluster was issued £3,000 to fund resources and training. Furthermore, Brooke RSE training was organized and delivered in March 2024 to aid secondary schools in implementing the RSE curriculum funded by the health board.</p> <p>Healthy Schools has overseen the coordination of the Welsh Government Period Dignity grant since it was first issued in 17/18. In the 23/24 fiscal year, the project continued through an online ordering and delivery system for home packs, provided in partnership with an external provider. Concurrently, the team implemented a range of community-based initiatives to distribute products, including through food banks, community hubs, youth services, and adult learning centres. Schools were provided funding to purchase products for distribution.</p>
1.09	<p>Food and Nutrition</p> <p>Taking a Whole System Approach to Eating Well & Being Active in Schools is a local and regional priority for the Healthy Schools team. Following a review of existing food provision in line with Welsh Government regulations, work has continued with secondary schools. In December 2023, a third learner voice event was held in collaboration with colleagues from Newydd to review the food and drink provision and to gather feedback on the new menu which launched in September 2023. 35 learners from 10 secondary schools were in attendance.</p> <p>During the workshop, water provision emerged as a common theme across a number of schools. To address this, a survey was conducted to identify schools that could benefit from additional water coolers. Subsequently 17 mains-operated water coolers at 8 secondary schools were installed and a water provision policy template for primary and secondary schools was developed, to reflect the importance of adequate water provision in schools.</p>
1.10	<p>Healthy & Sustainable Pre-school Scheme (HSPSS)</p> <p>The HSPSS has experienced a growth in the number of participating settings, now totalling 53. To earn accreditation, each setting must demonstrate that its policies, planning, and overall ethos promote health and well-being across 7 different themes. Upon meeting the required criteria for each theme, the setting undergoes a local assessment and is then accredited by PHW. The</p>

	<p>HSPSS assessment process has continued uninterrupted, even as the WNHSS undergoes review and reform.</p>
1.11	<p>Food and Fun</p> <p>The Healthy Schools team have coordinated the Food & Fun programme in Flintshire since it began in 2018 (previously known as the School Holiday Enrichment Programme SHEP). This has involved the initial recruitment of schools, facilitation of stakeholder group meetings, management of funding, and provision of direct support to schools before, during, and after the programme delivery.</p> <p>Over 300 primary and secondary age children took part between July 24 and August 10 2023 at the following schools: Ysgol Bryn Garth, Ysgol Bryn Gwalia, Ysgol Gronant, Ysgol Glan Aber, Queensferry Primary School, Ysgol Maesglas, Connah's Quay High School, Ysgol Treffynnon, St David's High school, Flint High School, Argoed High school, Ysgol Pen Coch, and Ysgol Maes Hyfryd.</p> <p>Over the 12 days of the programme, the children participated in a broad range of engaging activities focused on health, happiness, and wellbeing. Children attending enjoyed a healthy breakfast, snack and a hot lunch provided each day by NEWydd Catering.</p> <p>Aura Leisure delivered a wide variety of sporting activities and interactive games alongside a broad offer of enrichment activities coordinated by each school. In the feedback received from the children, dodgeball, circus skills and parachute games all proved popular this year.</p> <p>Children attending also learnt about nutrition and healthy diets, gained new cookery skills and enjoyed food tasting sessions. Harlech Foodservice in partnership with Newydd Catering supplied a food bag for each child during the third week of the programme with a range of ingredients to encourage families to get cooking over the holidays.</p> <p>Planning is underway for the 2024 programme which will commence on 22nd July 2024 at 10 schools: Flint High School, Ysgol Bryn Garth, Queensferry CP School, Golftyn CP School, Argoed High School, Ysgol Treffynnon, St David's High School, Ysgol Pen Coch, Ysgol Bryn Gwalia and Ysgol Maes Hyfryd.</p>
1.12	<p>School Health Research Network (SHRN)</p> <p>In the autumn term of 2023, the Healthy Schools team supported all Flintshire secondary schools in completing the bi-annual SHRN survey. The data from this survey became available in the spring term of 2024, at which point the team provided each school with a detailed summary and support as required.</p> <p>Subsequently, the team has worked closely with schools to inform the county SHRN action plan based on the survey's findings and for schools to prioritise areas for development going forward.</p>

	The SHRN survey has also been available to primary schools once and will be available again in the autumn term 2024. All primary schools are encouraged to undertake the survey.
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
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2.01	<p>Funding for WNHWPS and HSPSS is allocated as grants via the Public Health Wales Health Improvement Division. The majority of the funding in Flintshire is utilised on staff costs to employ 2 x whole time healthy schools and pre-schools officers and 1 x part time officer (0.2). The coordination and management of both schemes and associated projects is undertaken by the Learning Advisor for health, wellbeing and safeguarding (0.2).</p> <p>Current grant funding is confirmed until 31st March 2025.</p>
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3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
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3.01	None
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4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
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4.01	None
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5.00	APPENDICES
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5.01	None
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6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
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6.01	<p>Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes (WNHSS) https://phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/welsh-network-of-healthy-school-schemes/</p> <p>Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Wellbeing framework (WSAEMWB) https://gov.wales/framework-embedding-whole-school-approach-emotional-and-mental-wellbeing.</p> <p>Food and Fun https://www.wlga.wales/food-and-fun-school-holiday-enrichment-programme</p> <p>School Health Research Network (SHRN) https://www.shrn.org.uk/</p>
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7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	<p>Contact Officer: Claire Sinnott, Learning Advisor – Health, Wellbeing & Safeguarding</p> <p>Telephone: 01352 704054</p> <p>E-mail: Claire.h.sinnott@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	<p>Public Health Wales (PHW): Public Health Wales is the national public health agency in Wales and exists to protect and improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities for people in Wales.</p> <p>Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Wellbeing (WSAEMWB) Framework Guidance: Welsh Government Framework on embedding a whole-school approach to emotional and mental wellbeing Guidance to support the delivery and evaluation of the framework.</p> <p>School Health Research Network (SHRN): The School Health Research Network is a network of schools in Wales who have joined together with researchers, the Welsh Government and other organisations to support young people’s health.</p> <p>Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes (WNHSS): The Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes is part of the Schools for Health in Europe (SHE) Network and reflects the SHE approach. It also addresses the Welsh Assembly Government’s seven core aims and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.</p> <p>Healthy & Sustainable Pre-school Scheme (HSPSS): Launched nationally in 2011, the Healthy and Sustainable Pre-School Scheme was developed as an extension of the Welsh Network of Healthy Schools Scheme (WNHSS) and the criteria have clear parallels with the WNHSS National Quality Award.</p>