

Education & Youth Portfolio

Self-Evaluation Report

2020-2021



**Connah's Quay
High School**



Ysgol Penyffordd

Flintshire County Council

Contextual Information

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 22nd February 2021 and the Council is currently planning for the return of Key Stage 2 learners and Years 10-13 from 15th 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.

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Inclusion & Progression Service

Self-Evaluation Report

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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, 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 underdevelopment 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 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 if 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**

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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 strategy for Welsh.

Section 2 – Review of 2020-2021

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 19th March until 22nd 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 3rd 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 17th 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

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- Section 2 Review of 2020-2021**
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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 23rd 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.

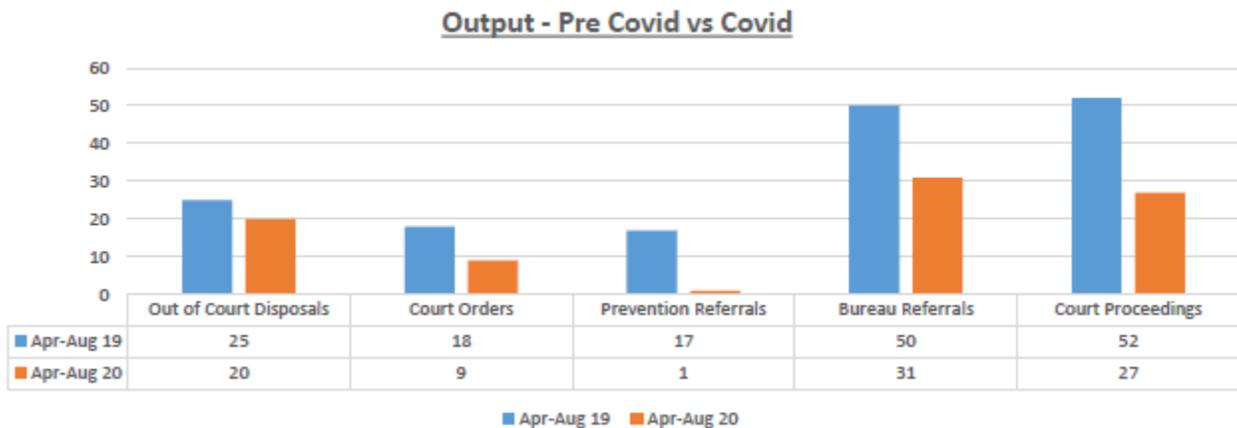


Figure 1: Comparison Referral rates between April-August 2019/2020

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.

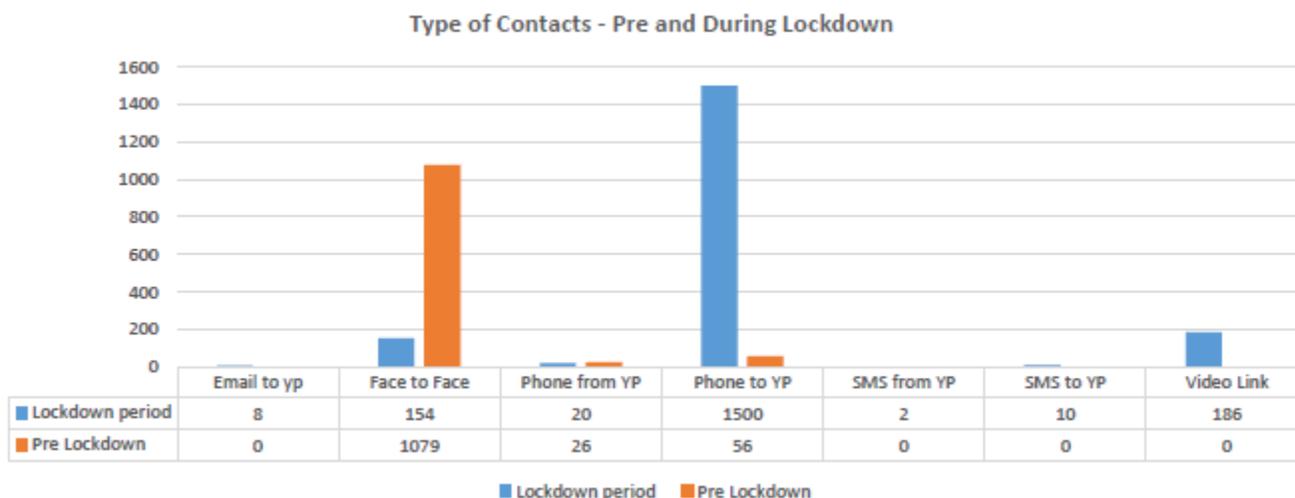


Figure 2: Comparison contact type (August 2020)

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

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- 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

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

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- 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 process 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 16th 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 21st 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



Leadership
Self-Evaluation Report

The Council benefits from strong leadership with an effective working relationship between professional officers and elected members, led by the Chief Executive and Leader. This is demonstrated through the portfolio structure within the Council where Cabinet Lead Members and Chief Officers work closely together to successfully achieve corporate priorities - as exemplified in key committee documents such as the Council Plan. Cabinet reports, Overview & Scrutiny reports, Performance Monitoring reports and Risk Registers are jointly owned. Programme Boards for each portfolio provide a purposeful platform for informing strategic direction and performance oversight. A robust and transparent Scrutiny process ensures that there is continuous challenge of performance and periodic evaluation of performance and impact. There is strong corporate and political support for Education and Youth Services across the Council. Political and officer leadership of Education is innovative and pragmatic. Education priorities are exemplified in corporate and portfolio level plans and commitments.

The leadership structure and hierarchy of accountability within the Council, both from an Elected Member and an Officer perspective is clearly articulated and understood. Roles and responsibilities are clearly documented. Professional and political leadership is used effectively to manage the Council's core business of providing quality and responsive public services and this has been clearly evident in the highly effective response of the Council to the Covid-19 health emergency.

Officers and elected members have a track record of working together constructively and this embedded, collaborative approach enabled the Council to respond swiftly and cohesively to the challenges brought about by the pandemic. Establishing a vision for a strategic approach to managing the health emergency which included clearly defined tactical groups led by Chief Officers, under the overall direction of the Chief Executive, ensured that the Council's response was well coordinated and focused on the right priorities at the right time.

Within the context of delivery of services to children and young people the Council prides itself on its moral commitment to deliver quality provision which supports learners to achieve their potential in an inclusive and nurturing way. A key driver is to reduce the impact of potential barriers to learner progress and the pandemic focused the Council's attention on particularly mitigating the impact of poverty. This was exemplified in the way the Council made provision for families entitled to free school meals from the start of the lockdown when the funding mechanism for claiming back expenditure was not fully established by Welsh Government – decisions were made based on the needs of 'people first, money second'.

It was also reflected in the speedy provision of digital devices to enable pupils to access the blended learning offer that was a significant feature of schools' delivery models following the return of pupils in September. This was instrumental in maintaining learning

through the Autumn and Spring Terms when the virus was at its peak in Flintshire, resulting in high numbers of pupils having to self-isolate and then a second period of face-to-face learning being suspended for most children, which has only just come to an end. The focus on developing the digital skills of staff and pupils to enable them to access learning remotely became one of the portfolio's key priorities and this was achieved very successfully through the close partnership working with the regional school improvement service, GwE, who delivered a massive programme of professional development. As noted by Estyn, the capacity of schools to provide distance learning developed at an 'impressive pace' during the autumn term and continues to evolve.

The onset of the pandemic, which resulted in the suspension of statutory education and the provision of emergency childcare hubs from March to July 2020, created an unprecedented change in the way schools and the Council operated. Many of the usual approaches to supporting school improvement and raising standards of pupil achievement were paused and the efforts of officers refocused on providing support and guidance on managing a Covid response within the context of national restrictions, emergency legislation and ever-changing operational guidance based on scientific and health advice in an atmosphere of extreme anxiety. Nevertheless, leaders have maintained a clear focus on supporting pupil learning and wellbeing.

The strength of the relationships between senior Council officers of the portfolio and its school leaders ensured that there was confidence in the decisions taken during the emergency response phase to repurpose education and to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of the school workforce and pupils. Effective joint working to support the safe operation of childcare hubs and the provision for vulnerable learners and the children of critical workers was a strength of the Council's response which has been acknowledged by Estyn in the thematic review it undertook of all local authorities on behalf of Welsh Government (see Appendix 2).

Another exemplification of the strong leadership within the Education portfolio was the manner in which it supported the reopening of schools for the 'check in/catch up' sessions at the end of the Summer Term and then a full reopening in September. All school provision and support services were in place to ensure a smooth start to the new academic year with all the necessary risk assessments and covid-secure measures in place, resulting in good levels of staff, pupil and parent confidence. These processes have been robustly tested as schools have needed to flex in response to the different stages of the national emergency where their face-to-face provision has had to step down and step up. This also reflects the strong leadership of Headteachers and their senior management teams in Flintshire schools.

The overall focus on the wellbeing of children and young people throughout the pandemic set the strategic vision for the education portfolio from the outset. The provision for the most vulnerable children in Flintshire schools during the pandemic has been highlighted by Estyn as a significant strength of the Council's response and demonstrated the effectiveness of its partnership approach across departments and with external agencies. Within the well-established leadership framework, officers had the space and the

autonomy to develop new ways of working to support children and families which resulted in needs being identified and met in a timely fashion. This has been confirmed by schools and families in their feedback to officers and also to external bodies such as Estyn.

Elected members played an important role in reviewing and challenging the response and the management of risks, but also provided support and encouragement to officers in their endeavours to continue to deliver services, often in new and innovative ways, to protect and support the residents of Flintshire. The Council's approach to strategic leadership is underpinned by public service values and this has certainly come to the fore over the last twelve months. It provides a secure platform for the next stage of recovery.



Flintshire Schools Contextual Data 2020-21	Number	% of FCC	Avg % Wales*
Total Number of Primary Schools overall	64		
Number of Welsh medium primary schools	5		
Number of Faith primary schools	13		
Number of Foundation primary schools	1		
Total Number of Secondary Schools overall	11		
Number of Welsh secondary schools	1		
Number of Faith secondary schools	1		
Number of Foundation secondary schools	0		
Total Number of Specialist Schools	2		
Number of Specialist primary schools	1		
Number of Specialist secondary schools	1		
Total Number of PRU	1		
Pupil Data (All Ages & excluding EOTAS)			
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%
EOTAS and Elective Home Educated Pupils			
Total EOTAS including PRU	159		
Total pupils Electively Home Educated (Jan 2020)	124		
Welsh National Index of Multiple Deprivation 2014			
Number of Lower Super Output Areas in Flintshire	92		

% LSOAs in most deprived 10%		2.20%	
% LSOAs in most deprived 20%		12.00%	
(see next page) Welsh National Index of Multiple Deprivation 2014 (continued)		% of FCC	Avg % Wales*
% 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