



**CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL
RHONDDA CYNON TAF
COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

GWŶS I GYFARFOD O'R CYNGOR

C.Hanagan
Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth y Gwasanaethau Democrataidd a Chyfathrebu
Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Rhondda Cynon Taf
Y Pafiliynau
Parc Hen Lofa'r Cambrian
Cwm Clydach CF40 2XX

Dolen gyswllt: Claire Hendy - Senior Democratic Services Officer (01443 424081)

DYMA WŶS I CHI i gyfarfod o **PWYLLGOR CRAFFU - PLANT A PHOBL IFAINC** yn cael ei gynnal yn Rhithwir **DYDD MERCHER, 27AIN IONAWR, 2021** am **5.00 PM**.

Caiff Aelodau nad ydyn nhw'n aelodau o'r pwyllgor ac aelodau o'r cyhoedd gyfrannu yn y cyfarfod ar faterion y cyfarfod er bydd y cais yn ôl doethineb y Cadeirydd. Gofynnwn i chi roi gwybod i manylion cyswllt uchod, gan gynnwys rhoi gwybod a fyddwch chi'n siarad Cymraeg neu Saesneg.

AGENDA

Tudalennau

1. CROESO AC YMDDIHEURIADAU

Croesawu Aelodau a Swyddogion i'r Cyfarfod, a derbyn ymddiheuriadau am absenoldeb gan y Pwyllgor Craffu - Plant a Phobl Ifainc.

2. DATGANIAD O FUDDIANT

Derbyn datganiadau o fuddiannau personol gan Gynghorwyr, yn unol â gofynion Cod Ymddygiad y Cyngor.

Nodwch:

1. Mae gofyn i Aelodau ddatgan rhif a phwnc yr agendwm mae eu buddiant yn ymwneud ag ef a mynegi natur y buddiant personol hwnnw; a
2. Lle bo Aelodau'n ymneilltuo o'r cyfarfod o ganlyniad i ddatgelu buddiant sy'n rhagfarnu, rhaid iddyn nhw roi gwybod i'r Cadeirydd pan fyddan nhw'n gadael.

3. COFNODION

Derbyn cofnodion cyfarfod blaenorol y Pwyllgor Craffu – Plant a Phobl Ifainc a gynhaliwyd ar 18 Tachwedd 2020.

5 - 12

ADRODDIADAU'R CYFARWYDDWR GWASANAETH – GWASANAETHAU DEMOCRATAIDD A CHYFATHREBU

4. DOLENNI YMGYNGHORI

Gwybodaeth mewn perthynas ag [ymgyngoriadau](#) perthnasol i'w hystyried gan y Pwyllgor.

5. RHAGLEN WAITH Y PWYLLGOR CRAFFU – PLANT A PHOBL IFAINC 2020/2021 (IONAWR - EBRILL 2021)

Trafod y Rhaglen Waith ar gyfer 2020/2021 a chytuno arni.

13 - 22

ADRODDIADAU'R CYFARWYDDWR ADDYSG A GWASANAETHAU CYNHWYSIANT

6. Y DIWEDDARAF MEWN PERTHYNAS Â'R YMATEB I COVID

Derbyn diweddariad ar lafar gan y Cyfarwyddwr Addysg a Gwasanaethau Cynhwysiant mewn perthynas ag ymateb y Gyfarwyddiaeth Addysg i Covid ers mis Rhagfyr 2020.

23 - 34

7. CYNLLUN STRATEGOL Y GYMRAEG MEWN ADDYSG - DIWEDDARIAD BLYNYDDOL 2020

Derbyn yr wybodaeth ddiweddaraf am y camau sydd wedi'u nodi yng Nghynllun Strategol y Gymraeg mewn Addysg CBSRhCT.

35 - 74

8. GWASANAETH CWNSELA EYE TO EYE

Derbyn adroddiad gan Wasanaeth Cwnsela Eye to Eye mewn perthynas â Phlant a Phobl Ifainc yn RhCT.

75 - 90

9. ADOLYGIAD Y CADEIRYDD A DOD Â'R CYFARFOD I BEN

Adlewyrchu ar y cyfarfod a'r camau gweithredu i'w dwyn ymlaen.

10. MATERION BRYG

Trafod unrhyw faterion sydd, yn ôl doethineb y Cadeirydd, yn faterion bryg yng ngoleuni amgylchiadau arbennig

Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth y Gwasanaethau Democraidd a Chyfathrebu

Cylchreliad:-

(Y Cynghorwyr Bwrdeistref Sirol Y Cynghorydd S. Rees-Owen a
Y Cynghorydd J Edwards – Cadeirydd ac Is-gadeirydd, yn y drefn honno)

Y Cynghorwyr Bwrdeistref Sirol:

Y Cynghorydd S.Evans, Y Cynghorydd J Brencher, Y Cynghorydd H Fychan,
Y Cynghorydd A Calvert, Y Cynghorydd S Powell, Y Cynghorydd M Powell,
Y Cynghorydd M Griffiths, Y Cynghorydd Owen-Jones, Y Cynghorydd S Morgans,
Y Cynghorydd G Stacey, Y Cynghorydd L De Vet and Y Cynghorydd L Walker

Aelodau Cyfetholedig:

Mr M Cleverley, Cynrychiolydd Cymdeithas Genedlaethol yr Ysgolfeistri ac Undeb yr
Athrawesau a'r Panel Athrawon

Mr J Fish, Cynrychiolydd Rhiant-Lywodraethwr wedi'i ethol

Ms A Jones, Cynrychiolydd UNITE

Mr C Jones, Cynrychiolydd GMB

Mrs C Jones, Cynrychiolydd Undeb Cenedlaethol yr Athrawon a'r Panel Athrawon

Mr D Price, Cynrychiolydd UNSAIN/UNISON

Mr A Ricketts, Cynrychiolydd Awdurdodau Esgobaethol â'r hawl i bleidlais

Mrs R Nicholls, Cynrychiolydd Rhiant-Lywodraethwr wedi'i ethol

Mr L Patterson, Cynrychiolydd Rhiant-Lywodraethwr wedi'i ethol

Tudalen wag



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Minutes of the Virtual meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee meeting held
on Wednesday, 18 November 2020 at 5.00 pm.

County Borough Councillors - Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Members in attendance:-

Councillor J Edwards (Chair)

Councillor S Evans	Councillor J Brencher
Councillor H Fychan	Councillor A Calvert
Councillor S Powell	Councillor M Powell
Councillor M Griffiths	Councillor D Owen-Jones
Councillor S Morgans	Councillor L De Vet
Mr J Fish	Councillor L Walker

Co-Opted Members in attendance:-

Officers in attendance:-

Mr P Nicholls, Service Director, Legal Services
Ms G Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Ms C Edwards, Head of Service Transformation And Data Systems

County Borough Councillors in attendance:-

24 Apologies

Apologies were received from County Borough Councillors S. Rees- Owen, L De-Vet, J.Brencher and Voting Co-opted Member R Nicholls .

25 Declaration of Interest

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, there were no declarations made pertaining to the agenda.

26 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 22nd October 2020 as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

27 Consultation Links

The Chair referenced the consultation links, which were available through the 'RCT Scrutiny' website. The Chair reminded Members that Information is provided in respect of relevant consultations for consideration by the Committee, which are circulated on a monthly basis by the Graduate Scrutiny Research Officer

28 Movement of Pupils within Welsh & English medium Schools Data Report

The Head of Service Transformation and Data provided Members with a summary of the movement of pupils in Welsh medium schools as requested in a previous meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

It was explained that in January 2020 the Pupil Level Annual Census suggested that 4220 primary aged pupils and 3141 secondary aged pupils in Rhondda Cynon Taf received their education through the medium of Welsh.

Officers continued and highlighted that in 2019/20, 873 primary aged children moved school within RCT. Members were informed that of this cohort 83 pupils moved into a Welsh medium school (35 moved due to house moves) and 72 pupils left Welsh medium school (24 moved due to house moves), which equated to a net increase of 11 pupils. In relation to Secondary school aged pupils, it was explained that 213 moved school, 6 pupils moved into a Welsh medium school (4 due to house moves) and 15 pupils left (4 due to house moves) which equated to a net reduction of 9 pupils.

Members were also provided with data for the first half of the autumn term for both primary and secondary school movement. Officer also explained that the local authority will continue to monitor the number of learners attending Welsh medium schools and ensure that there are effective plans in place to promote the growth of Welsh medium education across the County Borough.

The Chair thanked the officer for the report and opened up the meeting for Members' questions and observations.

A Member thanked the officers for the report however raised concerns that the report did not highlight reasons why pupils were moving to English medium schools. The Member felt there needed to be greater understanding why pupils were leaving Welsh medium schools. Members asked if this was due to a confidence issue as some parents were unable to help with home learning due to the lack of Welsh speakers within the household especially due to home learning through this difficult time. Officers explained that the data shows that on balance that the net number of learners leaving Welsh medium education was very small in the secondary sector and that this trend was not evident at primary. This will be closely monitored over the coming months.

The Director went on to explain that the Council was committed to investing in Welsh Medium education and this will be reflected in the WESP Report which will be presented in the New Year.

Members raised questions in relation to transport and asked whether the authority had been able to draw any conclusion in respect of parents deciding which schools to send their children to and if Covid had influenced these decisions. Members asked if this could be monitored going forward.

The Director of Education and Inclusion continued to explain that as an authority we try and discourage parents from moving schools and maintain continuity where possible. Parents/carers are not required to provide a reasons for a change in school.

It was also explained that initially at the beginning of the pandemic there were issues with transport as there was a need to minimise the numbers of learners on school transport so as to minimise transmission risks. Purchase of seats on school transport was temporarily put on hold for a period.

Another Member asked if more work could be done to encourage parents to attend Welsh medium schools in early years' settings. The importance of marketing Welsh medium schools to parenting networks and anti-natal class attendants was also mooted to hopefully encourage parents to enrol their children before it is too late.

Officers explained that marketing is important as is working with health visitors, playgroups to ensure that decision making is informed.

Other Members questioned the issue of transport highlighted that there are areas where families have found catchment areas for Welsh medium schools have differed which caused difficulties in remaining in Welsh Medium education. All parents are notified of catchment areas at key intervals and are advised if they are not eligible for schools transport from the outset if they choose to attend an out of catchment school. Council policy is clear on this.

Further questions were put forward and after a long debate Members RESOLVED:

- Acknowledge the context of the report;
- Receive the WESP report at the Education in January 2021.

29 CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM BLENDED AND DISTANCE LEARNING OFFER

The Managing Director Central South Consortium thanked Members for the opportunity to present an overview on the procedures the Consortium has put in place to improve and support professional learning along with guidance developed to support blended and distance learning throughout the Pandemic and beyond.

The Managing Director Central South Consortium introduced Officers from the Consortium that were present and continued with her presentation.

It was explained that Covid -19 has dramatically changed education in Wales and the lockdown measures have impacted significantly on the capacity to deliver face to face learning. The Managing Director presented Members with some of the changes that have been provided to schools and the new procedure put in place.

Members were informed of the work carried out by the Improvement

Partners which include:

- Work with Headteachers to offer timely bespoke support in line with the needs and capacity of each school;
- School support visits and meetings have had as part of their focus monitoring standards through book looks, learning walks and identifying developmental needs across schools;
- Some IP's have taken part in Headteacher and other senior leadership appointments; and
- Regular wellbeing checks have been made with schools and support provided for schools that have had to manage Covid cases.

The Managing Director also informed the Committee of work carried out by the Strategic Team, it was explained that staff have been developing guidance and supporting schools in a number of ways some of which are detailed as follows:

- Guidance on distance, blended and hybrid learning which has evolved as practices and research has developed initially focusing on distance learning, moving into blended learning and then on to supporting schools to ensure continuity of learning. It was explained that the team provides a range of digital support for teachers and schools to ensure that staff and learners can access and use online learning systems.
- The Strategy for Equity and Excellence has now been published and is guiding school improvement and teaching and learning in schools.
- Our regional PL offer has been revised and adapted to ensure it is relevant and accessible for schools. This includes e-learning for all areas of PL. The programme is available on the CSC's website and attendance has been excellent. The team have also ensured that colleagues in the service and LAs have a common understanding of blended learning. This has been supported by our blended learning road map and the variety of webinars held.
- A repository of direct teaching resources in specific curriculum areas is being constructed and collated where schools and CSC officers can share their resources with practitioners across the region.
- We have ensured that there is a focus on well-being both in terms of staff and pupil well-being. This has included re-evaluating and reshaping and refocus of the professional learning (PL) offer related to vulnerable learners and well-being. We are also working with on directly with external providers to meet the evolving needs of schools in these high priority areas.
- The team is also continuing to work on national and cross-regional programmes to ensure that our schools have access to national programmes delivered locally. These include PDG, PL, leadership, CFW, ITE, TALP and induction.
- Our website is continually updated to ensure the most up-to-date information and guidance. This includes a wealth of collated and quality assured resources that are matched to the curriculum to support teachers and parents to support learning across all of the key stages.
- The Welsh in Education Officers have recommenced their direct support in schools. Support for the work in cluster and individual schools on the Welsh Charter, and assessments for Siarter Iaith and Cymraeg Campus

have been reinstated. The PL for Welsh Language development have been revised as e-learning.

- Guidance, PL and support for Curriculum for Wales has been further developed across the region. This has included: the cross regional programme developed as e-learning, AoLE network meetings, new resources and bespoke support for individual schools and clusters.
- The team continue to support specific local and national projects including the national Post 16 resource programme.
- School Improvement Groups (SIGs) and cluster collaborative school to school working has been restarted with schools. SLAs have been issued to release funding to support schools to have meaningful networks focussed on developing pedagogy and other shared improvement priorities.
- The CSC school's bulletin, social media platforms and the specific strategic area social media twitter feeds provide ongoing targeted information and guidance to leaders and practitioners across the region.
- National leadership programmes have been restarted in our region to continue to provide high quality professional learning and support for our middle leaders, senior leaders, aspiring headteachers, new and acting head teachers and experienced head teachers. A new assessment only NPQH is also ensuring our leaders are equipped for headships in the near future.
- CSC team members are now part of the National Head Teacher wellbeing group. CSC is providing a wide range of support for head teachers in the short and long term. Immediate emergency support has been provided to our headteachers through professional support and coaching sessions.
- The National Coaching and Mentoring Programme has started in the region, training supervisor coaches from both the CSC team and school leaders and practitioners to facilitate future training and support in the region.
- Guidance, PL and support for NQTs has been significantly revised to meet the present needs, this includes the increased numbers of supply teachers working in the region.
- Guidance, PL and support for Teaching Assistants has been revised including the creation of a Google classroom specifically to enable the PL and networking of TAs.
- Strong partnership working continues with the ALN Regional Transformation Lead and LA officers in ensuring schools have the knowledge, skills, school environment, PL and support. This has included guidance documents related to inclusion and ALN, and joint PL for schools and CSC staff.
- Bespoke guidance, advice and support offered to clusters and individual schools in relation to vulnerable learners, PDG CLA and PDG.
- Chairing of attendance, exclusion and EOTAS leads meetings from across the 5 local authorities.
- Ongoing partnership working with external organisations including the Service Children in Education, Young carers and the Child Poverty Action group. This has resulted in a Pilot project in RCT linked to poverty proofing commencing this term.
- Members of the strategic team are also working with colleagues in schools to develop the quality of teaching and learning working with leaders and class teachers.

The Managing Director Central South Consortium invited the Senior Lead Ms N Gould to take Members through a presentation and she informed the Committee of guidance that had been provided through the Hwb firstly. Guidance on distance learning for both schools and parents is continually updated. The officer continued to enlighten Members that as schools moved on to blended learning the consortium provided schools with various tools and procedures to enable them to deliver continuity of learning.

It was also highlighted to Members the partnership working that was happening across the region through focus groups and the sharing of best practice.

The Managing Director Central South Consortium explained the next steps and concluded her report by saying that early data shows that barriers are being overcome by schools which is a positive outcome.

The Chair thanked Officers for the information provided and open up the floor for Members questions.

A Member request clarity in relation to the aspect of blended learning and if it was mandatory for schools to provide this form of learning and if so where there any plan in place to provide training for governing bodies to deal with the new way of learning.

The Officer explained that all schools have to provide appropriate learning for pupils who are not in a school setting. With regards to training Governors, it was indicated that this will be added to CSC's our service if it has not already been done.

A Member put forward a number of questions firstly it was asked what measures are put in place by the CSC to evaluate the digital poverty within RCT. Welsh Government funding and resources have been made available to enable LA's to have access to digital learning and blended learning for all pupils as there was no evidence within the presentation.

The Member continued and asked about the impact of uptake levels on standards, how they are being monitored and maintained, and how this links to inspection arrangements.

Performance management of Head teachers how are they being supported as there is a great deal of pressures put on the headteacher and we could have a retention issue in the future if this isn't addressed.

In response to the questions officers explained regarding digital poverty there are still some issues around devices and feedback from schools shows that some families didn't identify as being in digital poverty as they had a device however the device may not be fit for purpose . There is still work to do to meet the expectations of Welsh Government, it was explained that lots of schools had given out kit pupils however there is still more work to do to replenish the schools supplies.

In respect of raising standards, the Managing Director Central South Consortium explained that all schools are monitoring the engagement that children have with online learning. It was also explained that we need to work on what the standards look like, more schools are moving to putting systems in place and the

consortium are working with school leaders to further develop this practice.

In response to the inspection arrangements, Officers explained that Estyn has paused inspection this year due to the curriculum reform arrangements and changes. It was highlighted that a thematic review into learning which should be published soon we are hoping Estyn will have to share the model for what they are going to do with schools that are a monitoring category.

Members raised concerns in relation to the reduction of teacher and pupil interest in transitioning to higher education and felt strongly that this should be monitored especially as RCT are championing the Gatsby project. The commitment to the SEREN Project is clear so that the gap doesn't become wider for more disadvantaged able learners.

The Director of Education and Inclusion Services highlighted the good work that had been done with schools and recommended that a report in respect of the GATSBY Project be brought to a future committee to inform Members of the great work carried out by the project.

Further questions were put forward and after a lengthy discussion Members REOLVED to:

- Acknowledge the content of the report ;
- Receive a Report at a future Meeting regarding the service provided by the GATSBY Project
- Continue to monitor the work of the Consortium at a future meeting.

(It was agreed that officer would discuss with the Chair outside of the meeting the request from Cllr Powell in respect of a report regarding Blended Learning)

30 Chair's Review and Close

The Chair thanked Officers and Members for their contribution and explained that the next meeting would take place on the 2nd December 2020 at 5:00pm

This meeting closed at 6.40 pm

**CLLR S REES-OWEN
CHAIR.**

Tudalen wag



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 27th JANUARY 2021

SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME: 2020- 2021 MUNICIPAL YEAR

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATIONS

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee with the opportunity to maintain its approach to scrutiny during Covid -19 and agree its forward Work Programme up until the end of April 2021.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:-

- 2.1 Acknowledge the contents of the proposed forward Children & Young People Scrutiny Work Programme for the 2020/21 Municipal Year (January – April 2021), attached as Appendix 1 to the report
- 2.2 Consider progress, achievements, and the effectiveness of the scrutiny work programme and scrutiny practice; and,
- 2.3 Consider and determine other matters it may wish to consider, challenge and scrutinise over this period.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is proposed that Members of the Scrutiny Committee have the opportunity to review the next phase of its work programme for the 2020/21 municipal year from January to April 2021 allowing for an element of flexibility (taking a 3 month view) and taking into account any additional consultative documents or legislative matters requiring attention

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 Members will recall that the [Local Authorities \(Coronavirus\) \(Meetings\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2020](#), published at the end of April, provided the opportunity for committee functions to operate virtually. At that time, Members supported the proposal for the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, as the Council's overarching Scrutiny Committee, to take a council-wide approach and consider those key matters that ordinarily would have been under review by the four themed scrutiny committees.

4.2 At its meeting on the 30th July 2020, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered the Council's Performance Report, 31st March 2020 year end, as part of the temporary arrangements set in place to progress and establish virtual committee arrangements. All members of the council were invited to attend and contribute to this matter.

4.3 Following the Council's Annual General meeting held on the 16th September 2020 Scrutiny is now able to present its forward work programmes for the 2020/21 Municipal Year, initially on a three month basis so as to provide members of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee with the opportunity to undertake a review of the work programme in December 2020.

4.4. In October 2020, Members of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee received a forward work programme covering the initial three-month period of the new Municipal Year 2020-2021, specifically from October to December 2020.

4.5 The Committee continues to acknowledge the current pressures on the Council as it focuses on the impact of the pandemic and its associated plans for response and recovery. Committee recognises the desire to resume a 'business as usual' approach in terms of the scrutiny work programme, however, Committee will need to be mindful of these ongoing pressures. Members are asked to acknowledge the balance required for a flexible and supportive scrutiny work programme that has clear objectives, expectations and lines of questioning. Importantly, this approach allows for business critical matters to be prioritised.

4.6 With this in mind the Children & Young People Scrutiny forward work programme, attached at Appendix 1, sets out a manageable and realistic scrutiny activity for the next four months allowing for the more pressing matters to be considered whilst having the flexibility to respond to emerging issues.

4.7 Members are reminded that given the current climate the forward work programme priorities are subject to change should other specific business need to be considered by the Committee on this date.

4.8 Members are encouraged to contribute to their forward Work Programme by suggesting areas of possible scrutiny.

5. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

5.1 The Children & Young People Scrutiny Work Programme has been developed in discussions with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Children & Young Scrutiny Committee and the relevant senior officers.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not required as the contents of the report are for information purposes only.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

8.1 The report has been prepared in accordance with paragraph 12.1 (Part 4) of the Council's Constitution.

9. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES.

9.1 This work programme takes consideration of the Council's Corporate Plan, the work programme of the Cabinet and the service response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

10. CONCLUSION

10.1 Members of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee are asked to identify any items they would like to review in greater detail and to agree the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme for the 2020/21 Municipal Year.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

27th January 2021

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES &

COMMUNICATION

SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMMES

Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee

‘Holding the Executive to account in respect of all three priorities within the Council’s Corporate Plan....Economy (Building a strong economy), People (Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone), Place (Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work).’

Each of the Council’s Scrutiny Committees is responsible for setting and agreeing its own work programme by identifying a list of themes and topics which fall under the remit of each individual Scrutiny Committee. Following discussion with the Chair, Vice Chair and Scrutiny Members a practical, realistic and timetabled programme can then be developed.

The scrutiny forward work programmes should provide a clear rationale as to why particular issues have been selected; be outcome focussed; ensure that the method of scrutiny is best suited to the topic area and the outcome desired; align scrutiny programmes with the council’s performance management, self-evaluation and improvement arrangements.

Throughout the year, there are a number of ways in which additional issues can be considered for inclusion in the Scrutiny Work Programme and ideas for inclusion may come from a number of sources such as:-

- Individual Councillors;
- Performance or budget monitoring information;
- Inspection reports;
- Referrals from Council (such as Notices of Motion), Cabinet/Audit or other scrutiny committees;
- Service users;
- Monitoring the implementation of recommendations previously made by the Committee; and
- Local Residents

The Cabinet is also required to produce forward work programmes and the Overview & Scrutiny Committee keeps abreast of forthcoming items or topics which may enable scrutiny to be involved in the development of Council policy prior to its formal consideration by Cabinet. It is important to bear in mind that an element of flexibility is applied to each individual work programme that provides Committees with the capacity to scrutinise new / urgent issues that arise during the year.

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE					
Date/Time	Overarching Item	Officer	Cabinet Member	Invited/ In attendance	Scrutiny Focus
13 th January 2021 CHILDREN'S SERVICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on the N.OM for Kinship Care • Annual Carers Report • Annual Corporate Parenting Report 	<p>Director of Children's Services</p> <p>Director of Children's Services</p> <p>Cabinet Member for Children's Services.</p>			<p>To consider and address the N.O.M in respect of Kinship Care and consider a way forward.</p> <p>To receive the Annual Carers Report and scrutinise and challenge the work done.</p> <p>Assess the work carried out by the Corporate Parenting Board</p>
27 th January 2021 EDUCATION SERVICES	<p>1. Verbal Update in respect of the Covid- 19</p> <p>2.WESP REPORT</p> <p>3. EYE TO EYE COUNSELLING SERVICE</p> <p>4. Children & Young People Scrutiny</p>	<p>Director of Education and Inclusion Services</p> <p>Director of Education and Inclusion Services</p> <p>Head of Access & Inclusion</p>			<p>To update Member on the current Covid 19 Position</p> <p>To Scrutiny& Challenge the Annual WESP Report</p> <p>To receive an update in respect of the Eye to Eye counselling Services.</p> <p>To agree the future work programme for 2020/2021</p>

	Committee Work programme 2020/2021 (From January 2021 to April 2021)	Service Director Democratic Services& Communications			
3RD FEBUARY 2021 CHILDREN'S SERVICES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Annual Young Carers report 2. Youth Offending Service Report 	<p>Director of Children's Services</p> <p>Head of Youth Offending Service.</p>			<p>To receive the report in respect of work carried out with Young Carers.</p> <p>To receive a report for the Head of the Youth Offending Service. Member scrutinise and Challenge the work carried out by the Service.</p>
24TH FEBRUARY 2021 EDUCATION	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CSC ANNUAL REPORT 2. Childcare Sufficiency Update (Pre Scrutiny) 	<p>Director of Education & Inclusion Managing Director CSC</p> <p>Director of Education and Inclusion Services</p>			<p>To scrutiny & Challenge the work carried out by the Central South Consortium in respect of Supporting schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf.</p> <p>Pre – Scrutiny of the Childcare Sufficiency Audit undertaken in line with Welsh Government Requirements</p>
3RD MARCH 2021	UPDATE REPORT FROM CAMHS IN RESPECT OF COVID 19	Director of Children's Services			To receive an update from CAMHS in relation to how

CHILDREN'S SERVICES		(Invite officer from Education)			the service has dealt with the Pandemic. Scrutiny & Challenge the work carried out and the actions for recovery.
24th MARCH EDUCATION	21ST Century Schools update School Attendance & 6th Form Attendance	Director of Education & Inclusion Services Head of 21st Century Schools. Head of Attendance & Wellbeing Service.			To Scrutinise & Challenge the 21st Century Schools programme. To receive an update on the activity so far. To consider the report and scrutiny & Challenge School attendance and 6th Form Attendance in RCT Schools. (referred from the Audit Committee)
21st APRIL JOINT COMMITTEE EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES	YEPS SERVICE REPORT. JOINT COVID UPDATE	Director of Children's Services Director Of Education			To consider the work carried out by the YEPS Service To receive an update on the current Covid 19 measure that connect both services.

Other Areas for exploration:-

FPN Working Group Report

Engaging Young People

Counselling Services (especially looking at the Children's mental health what work could be done to address the trauma that children have suffered during Covid 19)

Young Carers mental health and wellbeing

Play therapy for Children to address their worries going forward from the effect of Covid 19 on their Health & Wellbeing.

Santi

(N.O.M RE: Kinship Carers) will continue to monitor as part of our work programme going forward.

To consider the under-mentioned Notice of Motion standing in the names of County Borough Councillors J James and L Hooper. It is estimated that there are 200,000 children being brought up by family members or friends in the United Kingdom in what is termed as 'Kinship Care'. These kinship carers have stepped in to care for children whose parents are unable to look after them and keep their families together, and it represents three times the number of children in the national foster care system – and is a growing figure. Kinship care is one of the main ways to provide a sense of security, continuity and belonging for children who cannot live with their parents and it provides high levels of stability and enduring support well into young adulthood. However, the support that is offered to kinship carers throughout the country lacks consistency, and carers often feel isolated, abandoned and 'hung out to dry'. This is in marked contrast to the support that foster carers and adoptive parents can receive. This Council recognises the invaluable work that kinship carers do for their loved ones, often under the most trying of situations, and is committed to providing the help, engagement and support that they need. This Council requests that a report be considered by the Children & Young People's Scrutiny Committee to look further into the role of kinship care in the County Borough and to work closely with Grandparents Plus to identify ways in which it can meet the needs of kinship carers and those in kinship care.



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 20/21

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

27TH JANUARY 2021

UPDATE OF EDUCATION'S LATEST POSITION IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide members of the Children and Young People's Committee with some contextual information on the most recent changes in Education in response to the ever changing COVID-19 position. This will support the verbal update provided by the Director of Education and Inclusion Services in the meeting.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Consider the verbal update from the Director of Education and Inclusion Services on the Council's most recent responses to Ministerial announcements in relation to the escalating COVID-19 situation.
- 2.2 Consider whether they wish the Director of Education and Inclusion Services to report on further information in any future meetings.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To provide Members with an update on the critical actions taken by the Council as a result of recent announcements made by the Education Minister and the recent escalation in lockdown measures.
- 3.2 To update Members of the current COVID-19 processes and practices in Rhondda Cynon Taf schools and to ensure that they are kept abreast of all developments.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 On the 10th of December, the Chief Medical Officer for Wales recommended that all mainstream secondary schools (including years 7-13 in all-through settings) should be closed to all learners, with the exception of the most vulnerable, from Monday the 14th of December, with secondary learners, other than the most vulnerable, being able to access remote and distance learning between the 14th and 18th of December 2020.
- 4.2 The last day of physical attendance at Rhondda Cynon Taf's infant, junior, primary, special schools and pupil referral units was to be Tuesday 15th of December (with the exception of the most vulnerable learners).
- 4.3 On 11th of December, Welsh Government directed all local authorities to also make urgent provision for the children of critical workers of primary aged children (and secondary age for special schools) during the last week of term.
- 4.4 Wales entered Alert Level 4 on 20th of December 2020.
- 4.5 Following meetings between Directors of Education across Wales and Welsh Government Officials on the 30th and 31st of December 2020, further directions were issued to schools. Schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf were advised to allocate Monday 4th of January and Tuesday 5th of January as planning days to enable all schools to update risk assessments and prepare for the delivery of remote learning for the majority of pupils. Schools were also required to update their Business Continuity Plans to ensure that they were well-placed to deal with any eventuality from a COVID-19 emergency planning perspective. Schools were also advised to provide face to face learning for high priority vulnerable learners and the children of eligible critical workers from Wednesday 6th of January onwards.

5. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN RESPONSE TO THE ESCALATION IN NATIONAL RESTRICTIONS

- 5.1 On the 8th of January, Welsh Government announced that due to continuing increases in cases and the presence of a new coronavirus variant which is far more infectious, Wales was to remain in Alert Level 4 and the decision making on schools was to fall in line with the Welsh Government's three-week review timetable of 29th of January 2021. As a direct result of this change, schools were advised to continue with remote learning until at this date. The majority of learners continue to learn remotely with vulnerable children and children of critical workers having access to on-site provision along with learners undertaking essential exams and assessments.
- 5.2 Welsh Government are keen to emphasise that the closure of schools to the majority of learners is not because schools are now more unsafe or pose a higher risk for teachers and children, it is because the new variant is far more infectious and keeping schools open does encourage children and adults to mix – inside and

outside the school gates – at a time when cases of coronavirus are high across Wales and with evidence of a very infectious strain spreading quickly in key areas.

- 5.3 Welsh Government have stated that unless the rates of community transmission in Wales reduce significantly by the 29th of January, most learners in Wales will continue working remotely until the February half-term. The Council has regular communication with Welsh Government and awaits their further announcement in this regard.

6. EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

The Local Authority continues to work very closely with all of our schools and provide advice and guidance to school staff as well as regular updates to parents/carers (see section 7 below).

6.1 All Learners (Excluding the Children of High Priority Critical Workers/Vulnerable Learners)

Remote learning provision has been in place for the majority of learners from the 14th of December (for secondary schools) and the 16th of December for all other schools.

Remote learning allows pupils to continue accessing the curriculum beyond the classroom. It allows them to learn through a guided study programme set by their teachers. A remote learning task could be a combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities.

Schools across Rhondda Cynon Taf are implementing a variety of remote learning options with support from the local authority's school improvement officers and colleagues at the Central South Consortium. Welsh Government's Hwb digital platform for learning and teaching also provides a wealth of educational resources for schools, parents/carers and learners.

6.2 Critical Worker Provision

Provision for critical workers is available throughout the current Level 4 lockdown period for eligible children of all ages in primary, special school and pupil referral unit settings. In mainstream secondary schools, this provision is made available for mainstream learners in years 7 and 8 only, and for the children of critical workers attending key stage 3 and 4 learning support class provisions only.

Having paid due regard to Welsh Government information, critical workers within Rhondda Cynon Taf, includes:

- Health and social care workers;
- Public safety (emergency workers) and national security workers;
- Education and childcare workers;
- Food and other necessary goods workers (entitlement from the 18th of January).

In accordance with Welsh Government's advice, only **one** parent/carer needs to be a critical worker to access this provision. Where space allows and learners can be safely accommodated on school sites, schools must pay due regard to all the critical worker categories identified by Welsh Government.

6.3 **Vulnerable Learner Provision**

Education and Inclusion Services, Children's Services and schools worked in partnership to identify high priority vulnerable learners in mid-December. These learners can attend school sites throughout the current Level 4 lockdown period.

Priority vulnerable groups of learners include those:

- with additional learning needs;
- with child protection concerns;
- in need of care and support;
- identified as young carers; and
- that are looked after.

Schools are also asked to target for school-based education any child they feel is vulnerable and is not engaging with remote learning (if there is capacity to safely make provision on school sites).

Learners with statements of SEN are also carefully considered when prioritising children for school based educational provision, given their statutory entitlement to the provision outlined in their statement of SEN.

6.4 **Digitally Excluded Learners (DELs)**

From the start of the pandemic, digitally excluded learners who did not have access to an appropriate internet-connected device and/or internet connection have been supported to engage in online learning activities from home. The local authority frequently communicates with schools to identify families facing such difficulties and have sourced ICT equipment and Mifi devices to enable learners to access education.

The audit of digitally excluded learners was refreshed this academic year to identify any new families that had moved into the area or were experiencing challenges in accessing education remotely. The Council is currently in the process of redistributing further devices to the 115 educational settings in the County Borough.

A total of 2,868 devices were provided to DELs in the 2019/2020 academic year and a further 2,635 are to be provided for the newly identified DELs in January 2021.

6.5 **Examinations**

On the 10th of November, the Education Minister, Kirsty Williams, announced there will be no end of year exams for learners taking GCSEs, AS levels or A-Levels.

Having received proposals from a Design and Delivery Advisory Group set up to support 'wellbeing, fairness and progression' for learners in 2021, the Education Minister advised (on the 16th of December 2020) that her intention is for general qualifications in Wales to be supported by a three pillar approach made up of:

- non-examination assessments;
- internal assessments;
- assessments that are externally set and marked.

Further to the Welsh Government's announcement on the 8th January of 2021, that schools are to remain closed to the majority of learners until at least the 29th of January 2021, a decision has been made to cancel the spring term assessments (for GCSE, AS and A level learners) that were planned to take place between the 22nd of February and the 23rd of April. Revised assessment arrangements for the award of these qualifications in summer 2021 will be put in place shortly and further information is awaited.

The Minister's policy decision does not relate to vocational qualifications. Adaptations for vocational qualifications have been put in place and awarding bodies are considering whether any further adaptations are required in response to the continued impact of the pandemic. Awarding bodies' considerations will include whether any of the adaptations put in place for GCSEs, AS and A levels may be appropriate for their vocational qualifications.

Ofqual and the UK Government Department for Education have launched a consultation on arrangements for assessing and awarding vocational qualifications in 2021 accessible via: <http://bit.ly/2XKTz8c>. Qualifications Wales advise that most vocational qualifications taken by learners within Wales are within the scope of this consultation and encourage learners within Wales to respond to the consultation.

6.6 **Business Continuity Plans**

Business continuity planning is critical to ensuring that schools are able to quickly respond to any challenges and are able to maintain effective delivery of education to all learners throughout various stages of the impact of the pandemic at school, local and national level. Education and Inclusion Services have provided schools with detailed guidance and template documentation to assist with this planning.

All schools must have Business Continuity Plans in place that detail the school-based actions that will be taken to mitigate risks and to ensure that it is possible to ensure continuity in delivering education safely. These have been shared with the local authority and are in the process of being reviewed

6.7 **Health and Safety**

Education and Inclusion Services have provided schools with comprehensive guidance documentation ('Guidance for the Safe Re-Opening of Schools' version 7 December 2020) regarding the safe operation of schools during the current pandemic. This document contains information on numerous areas including –

hygiene; cleaning; transport; catering; health and safety; face coverings; dealing with suspected and confirmed cases, etc. The document is regularly updated to reflect changing advice and guidance from Welsh Government in light of the current national position.

All schools have undertaken a COVID-19 specific Health and Safety Risk Assessment in consultation with their governing bodies and staff. The above-mentioned guidance document contained template documentation to assist schools in writing their risk assessments and the risk assessments have been shared with and reviewed by Health and Safety Officers within the Council who also offer assistance and guidance, as requested.

6.8 Managing Confirmed Cases

Schools work very closely with the Test, Trace, Protect (TTP) Service and are key in identifying close contacts of confirmed cases, thereby enabling those contacts to isolate for a 10-day period and prevent the spread of the virus. The local authority has provided schools with template letters to issue to parents as part of this process. Schools have also been provided with flow charts and process maps to summarise the actions needing to be taken in various scenarios.

Any learners required to self-isolate as a result of being a close contact of a confirmed case are provided with remote learning to ensure continuation of their education.

Once schools reopen to all learners, lateral flow testing will be rolled out on a phased basis. Eleven of Rhondda Cynon Taf's secondary schools and special schools will be included in the first phase of the roll out. Where lateral flow testing is in place, learners identified as close contacts of a confirmed case would (subject to consent being provided) be able to continue to attend school providing that they undertake a lateral flow test at the start of the school day and the outcome of that test is negative. These processes will be informed by the Mass Testing Pilot that was undertaken in Mountain Ash Comprehensive School in November 2020.

There has been a significant and dramatic reduction in the number of cases of Covid in our schools during lockdown. In the last week of term prior to the Christmas break, there were 157 cases in 54 settings. More recently, between the 9th and 16th of January, there have been 14 confirmed cases in 10 school settings.

6.9 Attendance

Following consultation, the Welsh Government has revoked the School Performance and Absence Targets (Wales) Regulations 2011 (in force from the 7th of August 2020). As a result, schools are not required to set targets for future years or report on those previously set for 2019/20 onwards. However, the annual attendance data collections will continue.

Due to Welsh Government deciding not to reinstate Fixed Penalty Notices/Prosecutions, the Attendance and Wellbeing Service continue to operate

Wellbeing Response Visits for the rest of the spring term. The Attendance and Wellbeing Service liaise with schools on a daily basis and schools advise of pupils who have unauthorised absences from school and request a Wellbeing Response visit from the Attendance and Wellbeing team which aims to discover the reason for the absence and provide any support/assurances as required.

If a learner is unable to attend the physical setting of the school due to self-isolation, the school will continue to engage regularly with the learner remotely.

Attendance rates for the autumn term (from the 14th of September following the staggered start) are 89.8% in primary and 85.6% in secondary. Only 3.51% of the school population are currently accessing education on school sites (1362 learners for the week commencing the 11th of January 2021).

6.10 **Partnership Working**

Education and Inclusion Services work closely and meet regularly with Welsh Government, Central South Consortium and many departments within the Council (in particular, Public Health and Protection; Children's Services) as well as many other partners to share up to date information and facilitate opportunities for discussion, questions and problem solving:-

- The Senior Management Team of Education and Inclusion Services meet regularly with headteachers, this can include weekly or fortnightly meetings during periods of significant national change.
- Union meetings were held with senior officers on a fortnightly basis during the autumn term. During the current spring term, these are being held weekly.

The senior management team of Education and Inclusion Services hold termly meetings with Chairs of governing bodies and updates on the operational guidance for schools is circulated regularly to Chairs of Governors. Virtual governing body meetings were established in the autumn and these continue to be held virtually to ensure all governors are fully informed. Governor training is also offered virtually.

6.11 **Free School Meal Provision**

Free school meals are provided at school on days that an eligible learner attends the school setting. Where an eligible free school meals learner is unable to attend school due to them needing to shield or self-isolate due to COVID-19, BACS payments of £3.90 per day are made to their parent/carer.

For the periods that schools are open only for vulnerable learners and children of critical workers, BACS payments of £3.90 per day are made for all eligible free school meal learners due to schools being required to provide remote learning.

BACS payments of £3.90 per day also continue to be made to the parents/carers of eligible free school meals learners throughout all holiday periods. Welsh

Government have this provision in place up to and including Easter 2021.

7. SUPPORTING PAPERS AND INFORMATION

7.1 As general information for the committee, the following table reflects the key guidance documents sent to stakeholders with attached links to the Council website where appropriate:

Document		Date of issue/ circulation
1.	Childcare Settings Guidance: Issued to assist early years childcare providers with measures to be taken at their settings in relation to the pandemic	
	Protective Measures in Childcare Settings version 5	28/10/20
2.	Distance Learning Guidance for Schools	
	Safeguarding Considerations for Distance Learning v5 – 19.01.21	19/01/21
3.	Frequently Asked Questions – for parents/carers: Covering a number of issues including – school safety measures; cleaning; transport; catering and free school meals; uniform; confirmed cases of COVID-19. These FAQs are published on the Council’s website and updated regularly – www.rctcbc.gov.uk/schoolreturnfaqs	
	FAQs for parents/carers – versions 6, 7 and 8	27/11/20 - 23/12/20
4.	Parents/carers – messaging	
	- Message to parents/carers from Cllr. Andrew Morgan regarding social distancing etc.	16/10/20
	- Letter to parents/carers from the Director of Education and Inclusion Services – reminder re: face coverings; distancing; self-isolation; parking around schools etc. – PLUS FLOWCHART (suspected and confirmed cases)	16/10/20
	- Letter to parents/carers from the Director of Education and Inclusion Services – WG fire break lockdown from 23 rd October	19/10/20
	- Letter to parents/carers from the Director of Education and Inclusion Services – new Welsh Government guidance regarding face coverings	25/11/20

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Letter to parents/carers from the Director of Education and Inclusion Services - End of term arrangements - Letter to parents/carers from the Director of Education and Inclusion Services - End of term arrangements – updated - Letter to parents/carers from the Director of Education and Inclusion Services - Critical worker children – end of term arrangements - Letter to parents/carers from the Director of Education and Inclusion Services - Phased January 2021 return - Letter to parents/carers from the Director of Education and Inclusion Services - Phased January 2021 return - revised - Letter to parents/carers from the Director of Education and Inclusion Services - Remote learning until 18th January 2021 	<p>07/12/20</p> <p>11/12/20</p> <p>11/12/20</p> <p>17/12/20</p> <p>31/12/20</p> <p>05/01/21</p>
5.	Parents/carers guidance – ‘We are all learning and learners’	
	Blended learning guidance document for parents/carers	Release imminent
6.	Parents/carers – social media – autumn term. The below videos/captions have been published many times via the Council’s social media channels	
	<p>Walking to school https://twitter.com/RCTCouncil/status/1335860618050592769 https://twitter.com/RCTCouncil/status/1336222999595331584</p> <p>Buses https://twitter.com/RCTCouncil/status/1334143053599297536 https://twitter.com/RCTCouncil/status/1336679766628446213</p> <p>Illnesses https://twitter.com/RCTCouncil/status/1333372974574006273</p> <p>Spring term Breakfast Club https://twitter.com/RCTCouncil/status/1332217713352200195</p>	
7.	Reopening Schools - Guidance document issued to headteachers: Regularly updated to reflect changes in the local and national position and to reflect updated guidance from the Welsh Government	
	Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance for the safe re-opening of schools VERSION 7 – December 2020	23/12/20

8.	'Firebreak' lockdown guidance	
	Guidance for schools for the 'Firebreak' lockdown period of 23 rd October to 9 th November 2020	23/10/20
9.	Business Continuity Guidance	
	Business Continuity Planning – Guidance for Schools v.1 – to assist schools with business continuity planning at various stages of escalation of the coronavirus pandemic.	23/12/20
10.	Operational Guidance – Attendance and Wellbeing Service	
	Guidance for Schools - Wellbeing Response Visits – spring term 2021	18/12/20
11.	Management of on-site learning	
	Guidance for Schools for the effective management of the provision of on-site education for high priority vulnerable children and the children of critical workers (January 2021 lockdown period)	Release imminent

8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not currently required - the contents of the report are for information purposes only.

9. CONSULTATION

9.1 There is no requirement to undertake any consultation. The Director of Education and Inclusion Services provided a verbal update at the previous Scrutiny Committee meeting.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

10.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

11.1 There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

12. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN/OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/SIP

12.1 This is an information report presenting the Cabinet report which outlines how the Council is responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

13. CONCLUSION

- 13.1 Whilst it is proposed that Scrutiny is presented with a regular updates on the Education Directorate's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the situation relating to schools and Education is often very fluid and fast-moving. In view of this, every effort will be made to verbally update members of these changes, to effectively allow Scrutiny to consider these matters in a timely manner.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE COMMITTEE

27TH JANUARY 2021

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
AND INCLUSION SERVICES**

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2020/2021

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

27TH JANUARY 2021

WELSH IN EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN – ANNUAL UPDATE 2020

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES

AUTHOR: Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the actions outlined in Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's (RCTCBC's) Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) for the period between 2017 and 2020 as approved by the Welsh Government (WG) on the 15th of March 2018. The previous 2019 to 2020 annual update was due to be the last annual update for this WESP, however, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this WESP has been extended to cover the period between 2020 to 2021.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee:

- 2.1 Acknowledge the contents of this report.
- 2.2 Consider whether they wish to scrutinise any parts in greater depth.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To provide the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee with an update on the actions outlined in RCTCBC's WESP for the period between 2020 to 2021.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013¹ placed a duty on all Local Authorities in Wales to consult on, produce and review three year plans that provided the strategic direction for the planning and delivery of Welsh medium and Welsh language education in their locality. Since RCTCBC's 2017 to 2020 WESP was initially prepared and submitted to the WG in 2016, there have been significant changes in the Welsh medium education sector at local and national levels. Changes have been mainly influenced by WG legislation, in particular the new Welsh in Education Action Plan – 2017 to 2021 and further implementation of the 21st Century

¹ [The School Standards and Organisation \(Wales\) Act 2013](#)

Schools and Colleges Programme². The impact of these changes will not be fully evident in the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) until well beyond the duration of this WESP. In addition, the WG has updated the regulations regarding WESP's. The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (Wales) Regulations 2019³ and The Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020⁴ focus on four key proposals, the principal two being:

- Extending the duration of the WESP from its current three year implementation cycle to a ten year implementation cycle (2022 to 2032).
- Removal of the current duty on Local Authorities to plan their provision of Welsh medium education based on demand with the requirement that Local Authorities achieve targets set by the WG, which aim to increase the percentage of year one learners in Welsh medium education over the duration of the WESP.

- 4.2 RCTCBC welcomes these proposals, but it is mindful that in order to deliver on any agreed targets, various influences must be aligned and external challenges addressed.
- 4.3 Notwithstanding the significant changes in the Welsh medium education sector at local and national levels, along with the complexities of the global Covid-19 pandemic, RCTCBC has continued to support the agreed actions as outlined in its current WESP, with the aim of increasing and improving its Welsh medium education provision and speakers.
- 4.4 Integral to achieving these goals is ensuring there are good schools so all children and young people have equitable access to good English and Welsh medium and Welsh language education. RCTCBC will deliver this by supporting children to have the best start in life and be ready for learning through an improved early years' system and childcare offer and by investing in new and significantly improved 21st Century Schools.
- 4.5 RCTCBC remains committed to ensuring the availability of Welsh medium education, from the initial early years through to primary and secondary education then progressing through to higher and further education, for all learners whatever their learning need in line with achieving the vision of one million people in Wales being Welsh speakers by 2050 as set out in Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh Speakers⁵ (Cymraeg 2050).
- 4.6 This is evident in RCTCBC's ambitious Band B 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme, which comprises a range of projects to increase Welsh medium capacity in the County Borough of RCT.

5. CURRENT POSITION

² [21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme](#)

³ [The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan \(Wales\) Regulations 2019](#)

⁴ [The Welsh in Education Strategic Plans \(Wales\) \(Amendment\) \(Coronavirus\) Regulations 2020](#)

⁵ [Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh Speakers](#)

5.1 The WESP includes seven outcomes setting out how Local Authorities are expected to improve Welsh medium and Welsh language education in the locality. The priorities are:

- **Outcome 1:** More seven year old children being taught through the medium of Welsh.
- **Outcome 2:** More learners continuing to improve their language skills on transfer from primary to secondary school.
- **Outcome 3:** More learners aged 14 to 16 studying for qualifications through the medium of Welsh.
- **Outcome 4:** More learners aged 14 to 19 study subjects through the medium of Welsh, in schools, colleges and work based learning.
- **Outcome 5:** More learners with advanced skills in Welsh.
- **Outcome 6:** Welsh medium provision for learners with additional learning needs (ALN).
- **Outcome 7:** Workforce planning and continuing professional development.

STATUTORY SCHOOL AGED LEARNERS WHO ACCESS THEIR EDUCATION THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF WELSH ACROSS THE FIVE LOCAL AUTHORITY AREAS THAT COMPRISE THE CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM JOINT EDUCATION SERVICE

5.2 The table that follows outlines the total percentage of statutory school aged learners (aged five to fifteen) who access their learning through Welsh medium primary, middle and secondary schools across each of the five Local Authority areas that comprise the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service (CSC JES) for the previous three academic years and is derived from the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC):

Total Percentage of Statutory School Aged Learners who Access their Learning Through Welsh Medium Primary, Middle and Secondary Schools			
Local Authority	Total Percentage of Statutory School Aged Learners		
	2018	2019	2020
Bridgend County Borough Council	7.8%	7.5%	7.4%
Cardiff City Council	14.8%	15.0%	15.3%
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	7.3%	7.6%	7.72%
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	18.8%	18.0%	18.8%
Vale of Glamorgan Council	12.4%	12.7%	12.8%
CSC JES	13.9%	14.0%	14.2%

5.3 The data demonstrates stability in the total percentage of statutory school aged learners who access their learning through Welsh medium primary, middle and secondary schools across each of the five Local Authority areas that comprise the CSC JES for the previous three academic years.

- 5.4 RCTCBC has the highest percentage statutory school aged learners who access their learning through Welsh medium primary, middle and secondary schools across each of the five Local Authority areas that comprise the CSC JES for the previous three academic years.

SURPLUS CAPACITY

- 5.5 Each Local Authority in Wales has a statutory responsibility to ensure that there is a sufficient supply of suitable school places to meet statutory requirements for early years, primary, secondary and post 16 provision for parents/carers that choose to educate their children through the medium of English or Welsh. To meet this requirement, RCTCBC has responsibility for the pupil admissions of English medium schools and Welsh medium schools and funds a number of voluntary aided schools that manage their own admissions.
- 5.6 The capacities of all school provision is kept under regular, annual review by RCTCBC's Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services using data obtained from PLASC, school forecasts, annual admission requests and live birth information from Cwm Taf University Health Board. Any increase in learner populations, particularly within Welsh medium provision, is closely monitored and, if the increase is sustained and clear within the catchment area of a particular school, consideration is given to making the required increase in capacity, by whatever means is most appropriate and most suited to that particular school.
- 5.7 The majority of the Welsh medium primary schools in the County Borough of RCT currently have surplus places. There is currently 28.1% surplus capacity in Welsh medium primary schools. However, there are a number of primary schools where growth in capacity is needed. As such, action has or is currently being taken to address these issues. For example, RCTCBC:
- Has committed to invest £3.69 million at Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Aberdar to provide a further 48 places.
 - Has brought together the primary and secondary schools to form the new Ysgol Garth Olwg to become a 3 to 19 all through school, to enable the primary school to expand into the surplus space available in the secondary school.
 - Is currently expanding Dolau Primary School as a result of planned housing development in the area – this new provision will provide 540 Welsh medium primary places.
 - Is increasing the capacity at Penderyn Primary School to become a Welsh medium only primary school – the capacity of the school will increase in September 2021.
 - Committed to invest in building a new Welsh medium primary school in Greater Pontypridd area of RCT on the Heol Y Celyn Primary School site, increasing the number of Welsh medium places available in the area. (It should be noted that at the time the WESP Annual Update was submitted to the WG the decision by the Court of Appeal on this proposal was still pending. However, since this date, the Court of Appeal have

subsequently found in favour of RCTCBC on this and the other proposals that were subject to a Judicial Review).

5.8 Furthermore, RCTCBC has also committed to increasing the quality and availability of early years Welsh medium provision co-located on primary school sites by spending nearly £4 million on:

- Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Abercynon – Creation and establishment of a new childcare setting into dedicated premises on the school site to expand identified need in the community.
- Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Aberdar – Construction of a four classroom extension to increase capacity, car parking provision and the creation of a dedicated Cylch Meithrin, to expand identified need in the community delivering additional fee paying childcare services for the area.
- Ysgol Llanhari – Location of a modular building on the school site to provide dedicated, suitable premises for Flying Start and fee paying childcare services.
- YGG Evan James – Refurbish and remodel the interior layout to create dedicated, suitable premises for fee paying childcare services
- Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Ynyswen – Location of a modular building on the school site to provide dedicated, suitable premises for fee paying childcare services.
- Ysgol Gynradd Dolau/Dolau Primary School – Creation and establishment of a dedicated childcare facility on the school site to expand identified need in the community.
- Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Llantrisant – Location of a modular building on the school site to provide additional capacity for early years and childcare.

5.9 The majority of the Welsh medium secondary schools in the County Borough of RCT have sufficient surplus places. There is currently 23.1% surplus capacity in Welsh medium secondary schools. However, there is one secondary school where growth in capacity is needed. As such, the following action is currently being taken to address this issue:

- RCTCBC's 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme has bid for £12.16 million to increase the capacity of Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun from 1,040 learner places to 1,225 learner places. This will be achieved by adding additional teaching accommodation along with a new sports facilities to complement the recently completed 3G sports pitch. These additions will provide state of the art facilities for both Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun and the local community, increasing opportunities for wider participation. It is anticipated that the proposed new teaching accommodation will be completed in readiness for the 2022/2023 academic year.

SPEND ON WELSH MEDIUM EDUCATION IN RECENT YEARS

5.10 RCTCBC continues to deliver and support its long term strategic investment programme of modernisation to create school environments that meet the

needs of our communities and provide the best learning provision and outcomes for children and young people in the County Borough of RCT and the wider community. The programme of capital investment is supported with Local Authority funding, WG 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme Band B Capital Grant, WG Reducing Infant Class Sizes Capital Grant, WG Welsh Medium Capital Grant, WG Early Years Capital Grant, WG Childcare Grant, WG Community Hub Grant and Community Infrastructure Levy funding.

5.11 The table that follows outlines the key Welsh medium school projects were included in RCTCBC's Capital Programme for the previous three years and are included in the overall strategic programme and include a combination of refurbishments, remodelling, demolitions and new buildings:

RCTCBC's Capital Programme for the Previous Three Years		
RCTCBC's Capital Programme 2020/2021 to 2022/2021 which was agreed by RCTCBC's Cabinet on 15th February 2018⁶	RCTCBC's Capital Programme 2020/2021 to 2022/2021 which was agreed by RCTCBC's Cabinet on 14th February 2019⁷	RCTCBC's Capital Programme 2020/2021 to 2022/2021 which was agreed by RCTCBC's Cabinet on 20th February 2020⁸
Tonyrefail Primary School – Creation of improved accommodation for Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Tonyrefail due for completion in October 2018.		
Llwyncelyn Infants School and Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Llwwncelyn – Creation of improved and extended facilities to Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Llwwncelyn due for completion September 2018.		
	Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Abercynon – Relocation of the existing childcare setting into dedicated premises on the school site.	Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Abercynon – Creation and establishment of a new childcare setting into dedicated premises on the school site to expand identified need in the community.
	Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Aberdar – Construction of a four classroom extension to	Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Aberdar – Construction of a four classroom extension to

⁶ [Cabinet Report – 15th February 2018 – The Council's Capital Programme 2018/2019 to 2020/2021](#)

⁷ [Cabinet Report – 14th February 2019 – The Council's Capital Programme 2019/2020 to 2021/2022](#)

⁸ [Cabinet Report – 20th February 2020 – The Council's Capital Programme 2020/2021 to 2022/2023](#)

	increase capacity to include dedicated, suitable premises for fee paying childcare services.	increase capacity, car parking provision and the creation of a dedicated Cylch Meithrin, to expand identified need in the community delivering additional fee paying childcare services for the area.
	Ysgol Gynradd Gymunedol Gymraeg Llantrisant – Construct of a two classroom extension to increase capacity at the school.	Ysgol Gynradd Gymunedol Gymraeg Llantrisant – Construction of a two classroom extension to increase capacity at the school.
	Ysgol Llanhari – Location of a modular building on the school site to provide dedicated, suitable premises for Flying Start and fee paying childcare services.	
	YGG Evan James – Refurbish and remodel the interior layout to create dedicated, suitable premises for fee paying childcare services	
	Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Ynyswen – Location of a modular building on the school site to provide dedicated, suitable premises for fee paying childcare services.	
		Ysgol Gynradd Dolau/Dolau Primary School – Creation and establishment of a dedicated childcare facility on the school site to expand identified need in the community.
		Hirwaun Primary School – Construction of a brand new English medium primary school on the existing school site. Increasing the capacity of English medium primary school enabled growth in Penderyn Community Primary School, currently a dual language school, as the

		school will become Welsh medium primary school only in September 2021. Completion of the project, including all external works, will be summer 2021.
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PLANNED MINOR CAPITAL WORKS

5.12 The planned minor capital works programme allocation includes an on-going rolling programme for kitchen refurbishments/remodelling, window and door replacements, essential works, electrical rewiring, fire alarm upgrades, toilet refurbishments, Equalities Act/compliance works, access condition surveys, boiler replacement, roof renewal, improvements to schools, asbestos remediation works, schools investment programme and capitalisation of ICT hardware/software and licences.

5.13 The table that follows outlines the planned programme capital works spend over the previous three years in Welsh medium primary and secondary schools.

RCTCBC's Planned Programme Capital Works Spend			
School	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
Welsh Medium Primary Schools	£569,322.94	£293,626.84	£340,616.38
Welsh Medium Secondary Schools	£1,557,210.69	£897,938.48	£1,057,128.72
Total	£2,126,533.63	£1,191,565.32	£1,397,745.72

OUTCOME 1: MORE SEVEN YEAR OLD CHILDREN BEING TAUGHT THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF WELSH

PRIMARY SCHOOLS

5.14 RCTCBC has seventeen Welsh medium primary schools located throughout the County Borough. There are two all through schools for 3 to 19 year olds: Ysgol Garth Olwg and Ysgol Llanhari, three dual language primary schools for 3 to 11 year olds: Dolau Primary, Heolycelyn Primary and Penderyn Primary Schools and 12 primary schools for 3 to 11 year olds.

5.15 The table that follows outlines the total number of primary school aged learners attending schools in RCTCBC, split by English medium and Welsh medium for the previous three academic years and is derived from the PLASC:

Total Number of Primary School Aged Learners Attending Schools in RCTCBC Split by English Medium and Welsh Medium						
Category	Year					
	2017/2018		2018/2019		2019/2020	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%

Total Number of Learners Attending English Medium Primary Schools	18,241	80.9%	18,153	80.9%	18,078	81.0%
Total Number of Learners Attending Welsh Medium Primary Schools	4,291	19.0%	4,269	19.0%	4,220	18.9%
Total Number of Learners Attending Primary Schools	22,532		22,422		22,298	

5.16 The data demonstrates stability in the ratio split in primary school aged learners attending English and Welsh medium primary schools in RCTCBC for the previous three academic years.

YEAR TWO LEARNERS

5.17 The table that follows outlines the total number of primary school aged learners attending Welsh medium primary schools in RCTCBC, split by year group and Key Stage for the previous three academic years and is derived from the PLASC:

Total Number of Primary School Aged Learners Attending Welsh Medium Primary Schools in RCTCBC Split by Year Group and Key Stage				
Key Stage	Year Group	Year		
		2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
Foundation Phase	Pre Nursery	73	24	27
	Pre Nursery Part Time	0	19	29
	Nursery	519	421	406
	Nursery Part Time	0	140	130
	Reception	554	517	565
	Reception Part Time	0	1	0
	Year One	530	537	506
	Year Two	543	516	534
Foundation Phase Total		2,219	2,219	2,015
Foundation Phase Part Time Total		0	0	160
Key Stage Two	Year Three	512	533	507
	Year Four	532	499	521
	Year Five	539	528	486
	Year Six	489	534	509
Key Stage Two Total		2,072	2,072	2,094
Primary School Total		4,291	4,269	4,220

5.18 The data demonstrates a decrease in the total number of primary school learners between the academic years 2017/2018 (4,291) to 2018/2019

(4,269) of 22 learners and between the academic years 2018/2019 (4,269) to 2019/2020 (4,220) of 49 learners.

- 5.19 The data also shows the number of seven year old (Year Two) learners who receive their education through the medium of Welsh. Between the academic years 2017/2018 (543) and 2019/2020 (516), the number of learners decreased by 27 (4.97%). However, between the academic years 2018/2019 (516) and 2019/2020 (534), the number of learners increased by 18 (+3.48%).
- 5.20 This is below the target set in the 2017 to 2020 WESP of 630 seven year old (Year Two) learners who receive their education through the medium of Welsh for the academic year 2019/2020.

OUTCOME 2: MORE LEARNERS CONTINUING TO IMPROVE THEIR LANGUAGE SKILLS ON TRANSFER FROM PRIMARY TO SECONDARY SCHOOL

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

- 5.21 RCTCBC has four Welsh medium secondary schools located throughout the County Borough to ease access. There are two all through schools for 3 to 19 year olds: Ysgol Garth Olwg and Ysgol Llanhari and two secondary schools for 11 to 19 years olds: Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda and Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun. Learners residing in the County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil also access Welsh medium secondary school education at Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun. All learners who attend these schools study all of their education through the medium of Welsh.
- 5.22 The table that follows outlines the total number of secondary school aged learners attending schools in RCTCBC, split by English and Welsh medium for the previous three academic years and is derived from the PLASC:

Total Number of Secondary School Aged Learners Attending Schools in RCTCBC Split by English Medium and Welsh Medium						
Category	Year					
	2017/2018		2018/2019		2019/2020	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Total Number of Learners Attending English Medium Secondary Schools	12,550	80.7%	12,685	80.6%	12,868	80.4%
Total Number of Learners Attending Welsh Medium Secondary Schools	3,010	19.3%	3,058	19.4%	3,141	19.6%
Total Number of Learners Attending Secondary Schools	15,560		15,743		16,009	

5.23 The data demonstrates stability in the ratio split in secondary school aged learners attending English and Welsh medium secondary schools in RCTCBC for the previous three academic years.

YEAR NINE LEARNERS

5.24 The table that follows outlines the total number of secondary school aged learners attending Welsh medium secondary schools in RCTCBC, split by year group and Key Stage for the previous three academic years and is derived from the PLASC:

Total Number of Secondary School Aged Learners Attending Welsh Medium Secondary Schools in RCTCBC Split by Year Group and Key Stage				
Key Stage	Year Group	Year		
		2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
Key Stage Three	Year Seven	545	577	588
	Year Eight	533	538	554
	Year Nine	504	527	523
Key Stage Three Total		1,582	1,642	1,665
Key Stage Four	Year Ten	491	496	513
	Year Eleven	434	485	489
Key Stage Three Total		925	981	1,002
Key Stage Five/Sixth Form	Year Twelve	300	241	289
	Year Thirteen	203	213	184
	Year Fourteen	0	1	1
Key Stage Five/Sixth Form Total		503	455	474
Secondary School Total		3,010	3,058	3,141

5.25 The data demonstrates an increase in the total number of secondary school learners between the academic years 2017/2018 (3,010) to 2018/2019 (3,058) of 48 learners and between the academic years 2018/2019 (3,058) to 2019/2020 (3,141) of 83 learners.

5.26 The data also shows the number of fourteen year old (Year Nine) learners who receive their education through the medium of Welsh. Between the academic years 2017/2018 (504) and 2018/2019 (527), the number of learners increased by 23 (+4.56%). However, between the academic years 2018/2019 (527) and 2019/2020 (523), the number of learners decreased by 4 (0.75%).

5.27 This is above the target set in the 2017 to 2020 WESP of 520 fourteen year old (Year Nine) learners who receive their education through the medium of Welsh for the academic year 2019/2020.

TRANSITION RATES

5.28 The table that follows shows the transition rates from each Key Stage for the previous three years academic years in RCTCBC and is derived from the PLASC:

Transition From Each Key Stage for the Previous Three Years in RCTCBC	
Transition	Year

	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
Foundation Phase to Key Stage Two	97.7%	98.2%	98.3%
Key Stage Two to Key Stage Three	111.7%	113.9%	110.1%
Key Stage Three to Key Stage Four	95.5%	98.4%	97.3%
Key Stag Four to Key Stage Five	62.2%	55.5%	59.6%

- 5.29 An analysis of transition data indicates that transition of learners between Key Stages does not appear to be a significant problem in RCTCBC.
- 5.30 The growth in learners from Key Stage Two to Key Stage Three (primary school to secondary school transition) is due to out of county learners attending Welsh medium secondary schools in the County Borough of RCT. For example, Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun in the Cynon valley area of RCT is the only Welsh medium secondary school option for learners residing in the County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil due to there being no Welsh medium secondary school located in the County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil.

MOVEMENT OF LEARNERS IN WELSH MEDIUM SCHOOLS

- 5.31 On 18th November 2020, a report was presented to RCTCBC's Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee⁹ which outlined the movement of learners in Welsh medium schools in the County Borough of RCT.
- 5.32 The 2020 PLASC suggested that 4,220 primary aged learners in the County Borough of RCT were receiving their education through the medium of Welsh.
- 5.33 During the academic year 2019/2020, 873 primary aged learners moved school within the County Borough of RCT. Of this cohort, 83 learners moved into a Welsh medium school (35 learners moved due to house moves) and 72 learners left a Welsh medium school (24 learners moved due to house moves). This equates to a net increase of 11 learners.
- 5.34 The 2020 PLASC suggested that 3,141 secondary aged learners in the County Borough of RCT were receiving their education through the medium of Welsh.
- 5.35 During the academic year 2019/2020, 213 secondary aged learners moved school within in the County Borough of RCT. Of this cohort, 6 learners moved into a Welsh medium school (4 due to house moves) and 15 learners left (4 due to house moves). This equates to a net reduction of 9 learners.

⁹ [Children and Young People's Scrutiny Report – 18th November 2020 – Movement of Pupils in Welsh Medium Schools](#)

- 5.36 RCTCBC continues to monitor the numbers of learners attending Welsh medium schools.

OUTCOME 3: MORE LEARNERS AGED 14 TO 16 STUDYING FOR QUALIFICATIONS THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF WELSH

- 5.37 Please note that updated data is not provided on Outcome Three as the measures are no longer published by the WG. However, further updates can be seen in Appendix One – Update of Progress – December 2020.

OUTCOME 4: MORE LEARNERS AGED 14 TO 19 STUDY SUBJECTS THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF WELSH, IN SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND WORK BASED LEARNING

- 5.38 Please note that updated data is not provided on Outcome Three as the measures are no longer published by the WG. However, further updates can be seen in Appendix One – Update of Progress – December 2020.

OUTCOME 5: MORE LEARNERS WITH ADVANCED SKILLS IN WELSH

- 5.39 Please note that updated data is not provided on Outcome Three as the measures are no longer published by the WG. However, further updates can be seen in Appendix One – Update of Progress – December 2020.

OUTCOME 6: WELSH MEDIUM PROVISION FOR LEARNERS WITH ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS (ALN)

- 5.40 Considerable changes are planned in Wales in relation to the statutory provision required to meet the needs of learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Additional Learning Needs (ALN). The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018¹⁰ (The ALNET Act) was introduced in January 2018. The ALNET Act requires Local Authorities to keep the arrangements for supporting learners with SEN and ALN within their locality under review and consider whether these are sufficient. This includes a statutory requirement to take all reasonable steps to create a bilingual system of support for learners with SEN and ALN. The ALNET Act will be supported by new regulations, including secondary legislation and a new statutory ALN Code (The New Code). The Draft ALN Code for Wales – December 2018¹¹ (The Draft Code) is based on the following principles:

- Meeting the needs of learners with SEN and ALN should be part of a whole school approach to school improvement.
- Learners must be supported to participate in mainstream education and in the National Curriculum as fully as possible wherever this is feasible.

- 5.41 Until the anticipated implementation of The New Code in September 2021, Local Authorities are required to comply with the existing SEN Code of Practice for Wales 2002¹² (The 2002 Code) to fulfil their statutory duties towards children and young people with SEN and ALN.

¹⁰ [The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal \(Wales\) Act 2018](#)

¹¹ [The Draft ALN Code for Wales – December 2018](#)

¹² [SEN Code of Practice for Wales 2002](#)

- 5.42 In RCTCBC, a total of £3.4 million Additional Needs Funding (ANF) is available to mainstream primary and secondary schools to ensure statutory mainstream provision for learners is robust and to support mainstream inclusion for learners with severe and persistent needs.
- 5.43 For learners with more significant needs, who experience difficulties with mainstream education, more specialist placements are required. RCTCBC has a range of specialist provisions which includes:
- 44 Learning Support Classes (LSC's).
 - 2 Pupil Referral Units (PRU's).
 - 4 Special Schools.
- 5.44 Placements within these specialist provisions are agreed by RCTCBC's Access and Inclusion Service Panels.
- 5.45 RCTCBC provides an excellent range of LSC provisions attached to mainstream primary and secondary schools. However, in light of the requirements of The ALNET Act, concerns regarding rising exclusions and an increase in requests for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) placements, a report was presented to RCTCBC's Cabinet on 17th December 2019¹³ where it was recommended to enhance the current LSC provision to address the aforementioned issues. Additionally, schools are reporting increasing levels of learners with mental health and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties in mainstream contexts.
- 5.46 An analysis of data within the report (Cabinet – 17th December 2019) confirmed that:
- There is currently insufficient SEBD provision in the secondary sector.
 - There is currently no discreet specialist provision for Welsh medium learners with significant ALN.
- 5.47 RCTCBC currently spends in the region of £4.1 million annually on the provision of LSC's. There are currently approximately 362 learners accessing the 44 LSC provisions within the County Borough of RCT.
- 5.48 Currently Welsh medium learners with significant SEN and ALN who would meet the criteria for LSC provision are supported by a specialist peripatetic team – The Welsh Complex Needs Team. The Welsh Complex Needs Team, which includes a Welsh medium specialist teacher and two Learning Support Assistants, provides support through an inclusive delivery model whereby learners are provided with specialist support within their mainstream settings.

¹³ [Cabinet Report – 17th December 2019 – Review of Learning Support Class Provision for Learners with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties \(SEBD\) Significant Additional Learning Needs \(ALN\)](#)

- 5.49 During the academic year 2019/2020, The Welsh Complex Needs Team supported 14 learners with an age range between eight (Year Three) and fourteen (Year Nine) of which:
- Eight attended Key Stage Two.
 - Six attended Key Stage Three.
- 5.50 Data analysis suggests that learners accessing support from The Welsh Complex Needs Team are making progress that is comparable to that of their peers in English medium LSC's. An evaluation of the provision was undertaken in the Autumn Term of 2019 and showed that this inclusive model adopted in Welsh medium settings has been very positive.
- 5.51 In response to the aforementioned data analysis contained within the report (Cabinet – 17th December 2019), RCTCBC's Cabinet approved proposals for change and sought to:
- Enhance the continuum of provision that effectively addresses the need for specialist SEBD provision within Key Stage Three and Key Stage Four.
 - Create a specialist LSC provision for Welsh medium Key Stage Three and Key Stage Four learners with significant SEN and ALN.
 - The commencement of a consultation on proposals to enhance LSC provision for Welsh medium Key Stage Three and Key Stage Four learners with SEBD by establishing a LSC at Ysgol Garth Olwg.
- 5.52 Due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the proposals to enhance LSC provision for Welsh medium Key Stage Three and Key Stage Four learners with SEBD by establishing a LSC at Ysgol Garth Olwg were lapsed and, as such, on 25th June 2020, RCTCBC's Cabinet¹⁴ agreed to progress with an amended proposal to extend an earlier pilot to fund mainstream secondary schools to establish their own alternative curriculum for learners with significant SEBD. As a result, in September 2020, funding was provided to Ysgol Garth Olwg to establish an in house, school based alternative provision that ensures learners presenting with SEBD can have their needs meet within their local Welsh medium mainstream school.

OUTCOME 7: WORKFORCE PLANNING AND CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 5.53 The Welsh Language Commissioner's Briefing Note: The Welsh Language and the Statutory Education Workforce in Wales¹⁵ published in August 2020, outlined the importance of ensuring sufficient numbers of Welsh medium teachers in reaching the vision of one million people in Wales being Welsh speakers by 2050 as set out in Cymraeg 2050. As such, the briefing note outlines a number of recommendations.

¹⁴ [Cabinet Report – 25th June 2020 – Review of Learning Support Class Provision for Learners with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties \(SEBD\) Significant Additional Learning Needs \(ALN\)](#)

¹⁵ [Welsh Language Commissioner – Briefing Note – The Welsh Language and the Statutory Education Workforce in Wales – 6th August 2020](#)

5.54 In order to create more Welsh speakers, our education system is dependent on its workforce and we must work to ensure we create a workforce with robust linguistic skills, able to inspire and motivate learners in Welsh medium education. In the year 2020, RCTCBC employed 12,457 people, of which 5,290 (42.4%) were school based staff. The data in the table that follows illustrates the number and percentage of staff who identified themselves as fluent or fairly fluent in Welsh and was correct as at 17th August 2020:

Number of Staff who Identify Themselves as Fluent or Fairly Fluent in Welsh							
Number of Employees with Welsh Language Skills		Fluent (Welsh Language Level Four and Five)		Fairly Fluent (Welsh Language Level Three)		Total (Welsh Language Level Three, Four and Five)	
Category	Total Number of Staff	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
All Staff	12,457	1,317	10.5%	318	2.5%	1,635	13.1%
School Based Staff	5,290	742	14.0%	175	3.3%	917	17.3%
Non-School Based Staff	7,167	575	8.0%	143	1.9%	718	10.0%

5.55 The table demonstrates that 1,635 (13.1%) of school based staff have fluent or fairly fluent Welsh language skills (Welsh Language Levels Three, Four and Five).

5.56 RCTCBC has demonstrated its commitment to Welsh medium education workforce planning for schools in the County Borough of RCT by working in collaboration with other Local Authorities and the CSC JES. In continuing this commitment, RCTCBC and the CSC JES will continue to:

- Provide clear leadership progression opportunities for the Welsh medium sector through leadership development programmes at various levels including the Aspiring Headteacher Programme with subsequent NPQH assessment.
- Provide Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) with Welsh language skills courses at different levels.
- Continue to develop and support secondary school teachers who are not subject specialists.
- Provide Welsh language skills courses at different levels for school learning support workers.
- Provide school learning support workers who have attended the Welsh Language Sabbatical with continued professional learning, networking and opportunities to share of best practice.

- Provide continued professional learning to support learning support workers in the Welsh medium sector in order to meet identified needs.
- Provide Welsh Language Sabbatical Scheme participants with continued professional learning, networking and opportunities to share best practice within and across schools.
- Ensure that professional learning opportunities are in place to take account of the language progression of staff.
- Ensure that the CSC JES Welsh in Education Officers supports school leaders to accurately complete the Welsh language element of the School Workforce Census.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no negative or adverse equality or diversity implications associated with this report.

7. CONSULTATION

7.1 There are no consultation implications aligned to this report.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICTIONS

8.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

9.1 The following legislation is aligned to this report:

- The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013¹⁶.
- Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (Wales) Regulations 2019¹⁷.
- The Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020¹⁸.

10. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN/FUTURE GENERATIONS (WALES) ACT 2015

10.1 There are links to RCTCBC's Corporate Plan for the period between 2020 to 2024, specifically the priority:

- Prosperity – Creating the opportunity for people and businesses to be innovative, entrepreneurial and fulfil their potential and prosper.
 - Ensuring we have good schools so all children have access to a great education.

¹⁶ [The School Standards and Organisation \(Wales\) Act 2013](#)

¹⁷ [Welsh in Education Strategic Plan \(Wales\) Regulations 2019](#)

¹⁸ [The Welsh in Education Strategic Plans \(Wales\) \(Amendment\) \(Coronavirus\) Regulations 2020](#)

- 10.2 The delivery of the WESP will contribute to all seven well-being goals within the Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015 and due regard has been made to the Five Ways of Working, as contained within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 RCTCBC has the highest percentage statutory school aged learners who access their learning through Welsh medium primary, middle and secondary schools across each of the five Local Authority areas that comprise the CSC JES for the previous three academic years.
- 11.2 The majority of the Welsh medium primary and secondary schools in the County Borough of RCT currently have surplus places. However, there are a number of primary and secondary schools where growth in capacity is needed. As such, action has or is currently being taken to address these issues.
- 11.3 Furthermore, RCTCBC has also committed to increasing the quality and availability of early years Welsh medium provision co-located on primary school sites by spending £4 million on a number of projects.
- 11.4 Data demonstrates stability in the ratio split in primary school aged learners attending English and Welsh medium primary schools in RCTCBC for the previous three academic years. The data also shows the number of seven year old (Year Two) learners who receive their education through the medium of Welsh. Between the academic years 2017/2018 (543) and 2019/2020 (516), the number of learners decreased by 27 (4.97%). However, between the academic years 2018/2019 (516) and 2019/2020 (534), the number of learners increased by 18 (+3.48%). This is below the target set in the 2017 to 2020 WESP of 630 seven year old (Year Two) learners who receive their education through the medium of Welsh for the academic year 2019/2020.
- 11.5 Similarly, data demonstrates stability in the ratio split in secondary school aged learners attending English and Welsh medium secondary schools in RCTCBC for the previous three academic years. The data also shows the number of fourteen year old (Year Nine) learners who receive their education through the medium of Welsh. Between the academic years 2017/2018 (504) and 2018/2019 (527), the number of learners increased by 23 (+4.56%). However, between the academic years 2018/2019 (527) and 2019/2020 (523), the number of learners decreased by 4 (0.75%). This is above the target set in the 2017 to 2020 WESP of 520 fourteen year old (Year Nine) learners who receive their education through the medium of Welsh for the academic year 2019/2020.
- 11.6 Alongside this, an analysis of transition data indicates that transition of learners between Key Stages does not appear to be a significant problem in RCTCBC.

- 11.7 During the academic year 2019/2020, 873 primary aged learners moved school within the County Borough of RCT. Of this cohort, 83 learners moved into a Welsh medium school (35 learners moved due to house moves) and 72 learners left a Welsh medium school (24 learners moved due to house moves). This equates to a net increase of 11 learners.
- 11.8 Similarly, during the academic year 2019/2020, 213 secondary aged learners moved school within in the County Borough of RCT. Of this cohort, 6 learners moved into a Welsh medium school (4 due to house moves) and 15 learners left (4 due to house moves). This equates to a net reduction of 9 learners.
- 11.9 RCTCBC continues to monitor the numbers of learners attending Welsh medium schools.
- 11.10 During the academic year 2019/2020, The Welsh Complex Needs Team supported 14 learners with an age range between eight (Year Three) and fourteen (Year Nine) of which:
- Eight attended Key Stage Two.
 - Six attended Key Stage Three.
- 11.11 Data analysis suggests that learners accessing support from The Welsh Complex Needs Team are making progress that is comparable to that of their peers in English medium LSC's. An evaluation of the provision was undertaken in the Autumn Term of 2019 and showed that this inclusive model adopted in Welsh medium settings has been very positive.
- 11.12 In September 2020, funding was provided to Ysgol Garth Olwg to establish an in house, school based alternative provision that ensures learners presenting with SEBD can have their needs meet within their local Welsh medium mainstream school.
- 11.13 In order to create more Welsh speakers, our education system is dependent on its workforce and we must ensure we create a workforce with robust linguistic skills, able to inspire and motivate learners in Welsh medium and Welsh language education. RCTCBC recognises that our education system is dependent on its workforce and we must work to ensure we create a workforce with robust linguistic skills, able to inspire and motivate learners in Welsh medium education. RCTCBC is committed to Welsh medium and Welsh language education workforce planning for schools in the County Borough of RCT, and has and will continue to work in collaboration with other Local Authorities and the CSC JES in order to create more Welsh speakers.
- 11.14 Looking ahead to the new WESP, which will be consulted upon later this year, in addition to the initiatives, actions, and commitments that will be included to facilitate and support the growth of the Welsh language, there are a number of 21st Century Schools projects that will be delivered in tandem to support the agreed outcomes. These projects include, but are not

limited to, constructing a new school for YGG Llyn Y Forwyn, and continuing to work on the feasibility to provide a new school for YG Cwm Rhondda. Both of these projects were included within the 'Planning for Welsh Medium School Places' report brought before Cabinet in April 2019, and both of these projects continue to be progressed.

- 11.15 RCTCBC remains committed to ensuring the availability of Welsh medium education, from the initial early years through to primary and secondary education then progressing through to higher and further education, for all learners whatever their learning need in line with achieving the vision of one million people in Wales being Welsh speakers by 2050 as set out in Cymraeg 2050.

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

Welsh in Education Strategic Plan – 2017 to 2020

Appendix One – Update of Progress – December 2020

School Organisation				
Success Criteria	Milestones/Sub Actions	Progress 2018	Progress 2019	Progress 2020
<p>Outcome 1:</p> <p>More seven year old learners being taught through the medium of Welsh.</p> <p>Achieve target of 21.0% (550) in the academic year 2016/2017 and achieve target of 23.0% (560) in the academic year 2017/2018.</p> <p>Outcome 2:</p> <p>More learners continuing to improve their language skills on transfer from primary to secondary school.</p>	<p>New and improved school buildings with appropriate capacity levels to fully meet forecasted demand for Welsh medium provision in their catchment areas.</p>	<p>A report was presented to Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's (RCTCBC's) Cabinet on the 20th September 2018 with proposals to enhance Welsh medium provision in the Cynon Valley, Pontypridd area and Taff Ely.</p>	<p>Cabinet approval for the proposal was granted in July 2019.</p> <p>This project will increase the Welsh medium numbers in the Pontypridd area of Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) by 93 places and provide learners with facilities that are fit for the 21st Century.</p> <p>The first stage of the Business Case funding procedure has been submitted to the Welsh Government (WG).</p>	<p>These proposals are currently subject to a legal challenge. A further update on this in due course.</p>
	<p>Extend school buildings to meet forecasted demand for Welsh medium provision in their catchment area.</p>	<p>A report was presented to RCTCBC's Cabinet on 20th September 2018 to obtain approval to commence projects to extend Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Aberdar</p>	<p>Design work on both projects is underway. The first stage of the funding application process has been approved by the WG.</p>	<p>21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme funding via the WG has been secured for Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Aberdar which will see the existing school benefit from a four classroom</p>

		and Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydywaun.		<p>extension incorporating a new on site Cylch Meithrin providing an extra 48 learner places. A contractor will be appointed before the new year and works are expected to commence in the spring of 2021.</p> <p>The Outline Business Case for Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydywaun has been approved by the WG. This project will increase the capacity of the school by 192 learner places. A contractor has been appointed and the detailed designs are nearing completion. RCTCBC are working towards submitting a Full Business Case to the WG in the New Year with an anticipated construction start date of April 2021.</p> <p>Progress of both projects are currently on programme.</p>
	Revisions to catchment areas of some Welsh medium primary schools, to better align supply and demand for Welsh medium	A report was presented to the RCTCBC's Cabinet on 20 th September 2018 to obtain approval to commence consultation on proposals	Cabinet approval for these proposals was granted in April 2019.	Excellent progress has been made and the new school building in Hirwaun has been completed.

<p>school places (to utilise spare capacity that currently exists). As at January 2017, there were a total of 550 spare learner places across all Welsh medium primary schools and 1,146 spare learner places in all Welsh medium secondary schools in RCT. The WG guidance states that we must first utilise spare capacity that exists within a reasonable distance before any new provision can be made.</p>	<p>which include making Penderyn Primary School a full Welsh medium primary school, with alterations to its catchment area.</p>	<p>WG funding was secured and works to build the new English medium school are underway. This will allow the English medium learners to relocate.</p> <p>The project programme is on target to make Penderyn Community Primary School a Welsh only primary school by September 2021.</p>	<p>Following completion of the externals it is expected that this school site will be fully complete by the summer of 2021 to allow the English medium learners currently attending Penderyn Community Primary to relocate in September 2021.</p> <p>Penderyn Community Primary will become Welsh medium in September 2021 and as consulted upon, will have an increased catchment area.</p>
<p>Consider making dual language primary schools into full Welsh medium primary schools.</p>	<p>Work is progressing under Band B of RCTCBC's 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme.</p> <p>In addition, a report was presented to RCTCBC's Cabinet on the 20th September 2018 to consider a proposal in the south of the County Borough and to enhance available capacity at Dolau Primary School (dual language school).</p>	<p>As reported above, the project programme is on target to make Penderyn Community Primary School a Welsh medium only primary school by September 2021.</p> <p>RCTCBC's Cabinet approval to extend Dolau Primary School with the longer term goal to create two separate Welsh medium and English medium provisions was granted in April 2019. Thus doubling the Welsh medium learner provision.</p>	<p>Information on Penderyn Community Primary school is above.</p> <p>Officers from RCTCBC are in the process of finalising the design of this new extension for Dolau Primary School with the housing developer Persimmon. Planning consent is due to be submitted to RCTCBC's Planning department imminently.</p>

	<p>RCTCBC will continue to work to secure appropriate funding to deliver full Welsh medium schools removing dual language status.</p> <p>Proposals are also under consideration to amend the language category of Penderyn Community Primary School from its current dual language status to a 3 to 11 Welsh medium community primary school with a capacity of 231 learners (plus nursery) all of which will be Welsh medium provision.</p>	<p>Planning for this extension has been submitted and RCTCBC will continue to work with its delivery partners to deliver this project as soon as possible.</p>	<p>As is mentioned above, as well as the plans to make Penderyn Primary School and Dolau Primary School Welsh Medium primary provisions, RCTCBC recently consulted upon opening a new Welsh medium primary school in Pontypridd as part of wider school organisation proposals. These proposals are currently subject to a legal challenge and so we will provide a further update on this in due course.</p>
<p>Relocation of pre-school provision, such as Cylch Meithrin, to school sites whenever opportunities arise.</p> <p>This has recently been successfully achieved, with the relocation of Cylchoedd Meithrin from community venues to Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Tonyrefail and Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Llwynceilyn.</p>	<p>This model of co-location of community facilities on school sites will also be considered as part of RCTCBC's Band B 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme.</p> <p>In addition, Business Cases have been submitted to the WG for funding to provide additional provision in areas where demand has been</p>	<p>The Welsh Medium Capital Grant bid was successful and six projects have had funding approved, the projects are progressing well.</p> <p>In addition, the Childcare Offer Capital Grant bid was successful. Work to enhance the Welsh medium wrap-around provision at Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Evan James is complete. An improved and extended</p>	<p>A new childcare facility at Ysgol Llanhari opened in January 2020. This increased capacity from 19 Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) registered places to 69. The provider has also been able to extend the facility to include after school and holiday care, as well as full day care for children under two years of age.</p>

Co-location of this kind of provision on school sites will greatly assist the process of transition into statutory schooling.

recognised by the Child Care Sufficiency Assessment.

RCTCBC has been successful in securing £3.5 million of Welsh Medium Capital Grant funding for six projects aimed at enhancing pre-school provision on various school sites in the County Borough of RCT.

A bid has also been submitted to access the Childcare Offer Capital Grant. This includes bids to enhance Welsh medium wrap-around care for nursery aged children in three settings.

Meithrin and wrap around provision at Ysgol Gymraeg Llanhari will be open in January 2020.

Design development is ongoing on the other projects.

A new childcare facility next to Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Ynyswen opened in September 2020. This has increased CIW registered places from 24 to 30. The provider plans to extend their facility to offer an afternoon session and holiday care, thus increasing the number of Welsh medium places available further.

Plans are progressing for new Welsh medium childcare facilities on the sites of Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Abercynon, Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Aberdar and Dolau Primary School. It is hoped the new facilities at Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Abercynon and Dolau Primary School will be completed by September 2021, with the facility at Ysgol Gymraeg Aberdar being completed by September 2022.

All projects will greatly assist the process of transition into

				statutory schooling and ensure a language continuum for children.
	Appropriate business cases prepared with evidence to support bids for monies to provide additional school capacity from housing developers where opportunities arise.	<p>A report was presented to RCTCBC's Cabinet on 20th September 2018 to obtain approval to commence consultation on a proposal to create a new school provision, with 540 places in total for the new Llanilid housing development in Llanharan. This consultation phase will end on 31st December 2018.</p> <p>This provision will open, in the first instance, as an extension to Dolau Primary School, which is a dual language primary school. This will enable the new provision to be established as part of a recognised, successful school and will also give parents/carers purchasing homes on the development the option of choosing a Welsh medium education for their children.</p>	<p>Cabinet approval to extend Dolau Primary School with the longer term goal to create two separate Welsh medium and English medium provisions was granted in April 2019. Thus doubling the Welsh medium learner provision.</p> <p>Planning for this extension has been submitted and RCTCBC will continue to work with its delivery partners to deliver this project as soon as possible.</p> <p>In May 2019 a report was presented to RCTCBC's Cabinet which outlined plans to provide a new Welsh medium primary school for the Taf Ely area should a number of housing development sites come to fruition. This will be developed in more detail should planning consent be secured. We will continue to</p>	<p>An update on this project is above.</p> <p>This work is continuous and is undertaken as part of RCTCBC's statutory school planning duties. Education Officers work closely with Planning Officers to ensure that the increase for demand for Welsh medium education that arises from housing developments are appropriately managed and financial interventions are covered under the developers planning obligations.</p> <p>Funding opportunities are being constantly reviewed as part of the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme to support and enhance financial contributions from housing developers.</p> <p>This work is ongoing.</p>

			work with the land owners to ensure that the educational needs of Welsh medium learners are met.	
	<p>Increase the number of parents/carers choosing Welsh medium provision for their children by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing annual training for front-line staff on the benefits of being bilingual and positive messaging for parents/carers. • Building on the 'Being Bilingual' booklet, to promote the advantages of Welsh medium education and the benefits of bilingualism. <p>Improve language progression from Flying Start settings to Welsh medium primary education to 90.0% by 2021 by providing training and fostering closer links between provisions and neighbouring Welsh medium primary schools.</p>	<p>'Being Bilingual' booklet is circulated within all Flying Start commissioned and RCTCBC childcare settings for staff to share with parents/carers. This to be part of an awareness raising campaign.</p> <p>Commissioned Welsh medium Flying Start childcare places have increased over the last 18 months and continue to grow through the approved supplier scheme. Flying Start Welsh medium childcare places are now 25.0% of the commissioned placements.</p>	<p>Rhondda South Delivery area, delivered awareness session for parents in Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Llwyncelyn.</p> <p>Twenty Flying Start practitioners have completed 'Croesi'r Bont' Courses.</p> <p>Twelve Flying Start practitioners have enrolled to start training from September 2019 in Open Learning Welsh and Cymraeg Babi courses at the University of South Wales.</p> <p>Mudiad Meithrin have delivered Croesi'r Bont course within Ynishir and Wattstown setting.</p>	<p>Flying Start and Children and Family Centres distribute over 200 'Being Bilingual' booklets annually.</p> <p>The eight Flying Start commissioned providers (bilingual) accessed the Clebran workshop delivered by Mudiad Meithrin.</p>

	Increasing opportunities for parents/carers to choose Welsh medium education for their children by increasing the number of Flying Start Welsh medium places.			
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<p>Increase use of Welsh language in service delivery</p> <p>Flying Start:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include the 'Being Bilingual' booklet in Flying Start birth registration packs. <p>Childcare:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase childcare practitioner use and promotion of the Welsh language within all Flying Start commissioned child care settings through training and bespoke packages. • Use Flying Start Childcare Observational Assessment Monitoring Tool to gain baseline of Welsh medium provision. (Baseline 71.0% on use and promotion of Welsh language – aim for 10.0% increase). <p>Parent and Family Support:</p>	<p>Funding secured to provide Welsh language training in the Autumn Term. Intend to extend to commissioned Flying Start childcare settings.</p> <p>Re-administration of assessment suggests increase of 7.0% to 78.0%.</p>	<p>Flying Start and Children and Family Centres distribute over 200 'Being Bilingual' booklets annually.</p> <p>Percentage of Flying Start places delivered through the medium of Welsh increased from 12.0% in 2016/2017 to 24.0% in 2018/2019.</p> <p>Six Flying Start settings – 36 practitioners, have undertaken the relevant training provided by our in-house Welsh language tutor over a six week period.</p>	<p>Flying Start and Children and Family Centres distribute over 200 'Being Bilingual' booklets annually.</p> <p>The percentage of Flying Start places delivered through the medium of Welsh has increased from 12.0% in 2016/2017 to 24.0% in 2019/2020. This is a 100.0% increase between 2016/2017 and 2019/2020.</p> <p>The eight Flying Start commissioned providers (bilingual) accessed the Clebran workshop delivered by Mudiad Meithrin.</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Include Welsh language awareness and taster sessions as part of parent/carer workshops.			
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Talk and Play:

- Increase use of basic Welsh phrases in Talk and Play Playgroups.
- Increase use of Welsh reading books and songs.
- Explore use of Welsh version of the 'WellComm' Assessment.

Children's Centres:

- Encourage Welsh language course providers to deliver from Children's Centres.
- Deliver themed family open days and Welsh language taster sessions.

Increase number of Welsh medium Flying Start placements by 10.0% (total 25.0% Welsh medium placements).

Increase spot purchasing of childcare contracts to include an additional three Welsh medium providers.

Enhanced use and introduction of phrase of the week. Bilingual story books now used and these are loaned to parents/carers. Weekly singing of Welsh songs and nursery rhymes. Assessment offered in Welsh but literature is not in Welsh

Free usage of facilities provided to encourage course delivery. Taster sessions held and included clog dancing, silent Welsh disco, Welsh for beginners. 200 attendees over three days. In addition, Welsh themed singing and dancing Teddy Bears Picnic (3,500 in attendance).

25.0% of Flying Start placements are now Welsh medium.

Welsh Language Services have provided RCTCBC's Communications and Public Relations Team with a number of resources and content to promote via our social media channels, including the Welsh Government's Cymraeg i Blant videos.

The percentage of Flying Start places delivered through the medium of Welsh has increased from 12.0% in 2016/2017 to 24.0% in 2019/2020. This is a 100.0% increase between 2016/2017 and 2019/2020.

As the nearest commissioned Welsh medium Flying Start provider may be some distance from a family, Welsh medium approved suppliers (spot purchasers) are used to provide Welsh medium nursery provision to families in their locality. This process is being reviewed in preparation for the next round of tendering of Flying Start places, to ensure a more proactive offer of Welsh medium nursery places.

<p>Outcome 3:</p> <p>More 14 to 16 year old learners studying qualifications through the Welsh medium.</p> <p>Outcome 4:</p> <p>More 16 to 19 year old learners studying through the Welsh medium in schools, colleges or work based learning.</p>	<p>Research and create an information tool for young people stating the benefits and options of Welsh medium further education and employment. This will need to be produced with young people.</p>	<p>Following further research it was clear there are not enough Welsh medium further education opportunities to create a tool.</p>	<p>Menter Iaith are unable to progress the information tool due to lack of Welsh language further education opportunities.</p>	<p>Menter Iaith are unable to progress the information tool due to lack of Welsh language further education opportunities.</p>
	<p>Complete a summary report evidencing the research findings highlighting the appropriate tool to use to share this information with young people.</p> <p>Promote the information tool to young people.</p>	<p>Menter Iaith are now researching the creation of a video promoting the Welsh language.</p> <p>Information tool will not be viable.</p>	<p>Menter Iaith have not been able to complete the promotion video.</p>	<p>Menter Iaith have not been able to complete the promotion video. The Youth Engagement and Participation Service (YEPS) have supported Careers Wales in creating an educational video for learners at Welsh and English medium secondary schools to promote the career benefits of bilingualism.</p>
	<p>Identify partners/organisations that could deliver bespoke language awareness sessions for young people highlighting the value of having Welsh language as a skill.</p>	<p>Menter Iaith and the Urdd have completed these sessions.</p> <p>The Urdd delivered raising awareness sessions to 350 young people at Tonypany Community College, Aberdare Community School and Mountain Ash Comprehensive School.</p>	<p>The Urdd have delivered raising awareness sessions at the following schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St John's the Baptist Church in Wales High. • Mountain Ash Comprehensive School. • Aberdare Community School. • Ysgol Nant Gwyn. • Pontypridd High. 	<p>Youth Workers from the Urdd have been furloughed due to the current Covid-19 restrictions, therefore raising awareness sessions have not taken place.</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treorchy Comprehensive. 	
	Coordinate and monitor the delivery of these sessions in schools/colleges and community settings.	Aberdare Community School, Mountain Ash Comprehensive School, Pontypridd High and Ysgol Nant Gwyn have been successful with their application for 2019.	<p>The Urdd have delivered raising awareness sessions at the following schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St John's the Baptist Church in Wales High. • Mountain Ash Comprehensive School. • Aberdare Community School. • Ysgol Nant Gwyn. • Pontypridd High. • Treorchy Comprehensive. 	Youth Workers from the Urdd have been furloughed due to the current Covid-19 restrictions, therefore raising awareness sessions have not taken place.
	Evaluate the effectiveness of these sessions through questionnaires/surveys and generate a report.	Applications for 2019 will be sent to RCTCBC's Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services Senior Management Team and Welsh departments in schools.	Sessions are still on-going, but will be evaluated when finished.	Youth Workers from Urdd have been furloughed due to the current Covid-19 restrictions, therefore raising awareness sessions have not taken place.
	Coordinate a timetable of events to target Sixth Form and college learners to meet and use the Welsh language by providing social opportunities for them.	Menter Iaith and the Urdd offer provision for post-16 young people by organising concerts and other events including senior Youth Clubs at Treorchy Comprehensive and Pontypridd High for 30+ young people.	The Urdd and Menter Iaith hold Youth Forums at Ysgol Llanhari, Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun and Ysgol Garth Olwg. These Youth Forums arrange social opportunities for young people to have further opportunities to	<p>The Youth Forums at all four Welsh medium secondary schools did not meet between March and September due to the Covid-19 restrictions.</p> <p>Menter Iaith are promoting the Youth Forums with the</p>

		<p>Menter Iaith support Welsh speaking young people to present a weekly radio show on GTFM every Sunday (with over 1,000 listeners).</p> <p>The Urdd offer Sixth Form learners volunteering opportunities at various events including sports competitions and residential weekends.</p>	<p>socialise through the Welsh language.</p> <p>The Urdd have 70 Volunteers aged between 16 and 25 who support and promote Welsh language provision.</p>	<p>YEPS support at all four Welsh medium secondary schools, to the new cohort of Year Twelve learners.</p>
<p>Promote the events.</p> <p>Record the number of young people attending and evaluate through questionnaires and surveys.</p>	<p>Events promoted through the schools/colleges, Wicid website, the YEPS and social media:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Menter Iaith – 25+ young people. • Urdd – 40+ young people. • The YEPS – Volunteering opportunities only offered from September 2018. 	<p>Events promoted through the schools/colleges, Wicid website, the YEPS and social media:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urdd – 70 volunteers. • The YEPS – 6 volunteers. 	<p>Physical activities have not been arranged due to the current Covid-19 restrictions.</p> <p>The YEPS have developed a partnership to make Welsh medium music and drama more accessible to young people in the County Borough of RCT, young performers from across Wales are promoted through the WICID website.</p>	
<p>Deliver 'Cymraeg Bob Dydd' to encourage young people studying Welsh as a second language to take on further study to encourage the use of the language outside of school.</p>	<p>The Urdd delivered awareness raising sessions to 350 young people at Tonypany Community College, Aberdare Community School and</p>	<p>The Urdd have delivered language awareness raising sessions at the following schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St John's the Baptist Church in Wales High. 	<p>Youth Workers from Urdd have been furloughed due to the current Covid-19 restrictions, therefore language awareness sessions have not taken place.</p>	

<p>Record the number of young people attending and evaluate through questionnaires and surveys.</p>	<p>Mountain Ash Comprehensive School.</p> <p>The secondary schools have liaised with the Urdd Youth Worker on utilising the offer of £500 to promote the Welsh language, e.g. Tafwyl, Eisteddfod and bringing in external tutors to promote cultural activities.</p> <p>Applications for 2018/2019 will be sent to RCTCBC's Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services Senior Management Team and Welsh departments in schools.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mountain Ash Comprehensive School. • Aberdare Community School. • Ysgol Nant Gwyn. • Pontypridd High. • Treorchy Comprehensive. 	<p>The YEPS have supported Career Wales in creating an educational video for learners at Welsh and English medium secondary schools to promote the career benefits of bilingualism.</p>
<p>Deliver social Welsh medium events and activities for young people including residential opportunities, eisteddfodau, sport and accreditation.</p>	<p>The YEPS Welsh medium after school clubs offered at all four Welsh medium secondary schools during term times.</p> <p>Summer holiday activities offered through the medium of Welsh for both Welsh and English medium schools, included gorge walking, rafting and team building. In total, 241 activities were</p>	<p>The Urdd have 350 members between 16 and 25. These members participate in a range of activities including sport and culture, residential trips and accredited learning.</p> <p>The YEPS Welsh medium after school clubs offered at all four Welsh medium secondary schools during term times.</p>	<p>Prior to Covid-19 restrictions on average 40 young people, attend a weekly open access Youth Club on at Garth Olwg Youth Centre these young people have been offered the opportunity to engage in virtual provision due to the current Covid-19 restrictions.</p> <p>After school activities and holiday provision is offered for the learner's at all four</p>

		<p>offered through the medium of Welsh, with 269 participants and 41.0% of these were identified as being vulnerable young people.</p> <p>Accredited courses (Work Related Education and PSE) were delivered to 45 young people at three Welsh medium secondary schools.</p>	<p>Summer holiday activities offered through the medium of Welsh for both Welsh and English medium schools, included gorge walking, rafting and team building. In total, 666 sessions were offered through the medium of Welsh, with over 1000 participants and 44.0% of these were identified as vulnerable young people.</p>	<p>Welsh medium secondary schools.</p> <p>Meter Iaith support young people to deliver weekly Welsh language radio sessions.</p> <p>Menter Iaith plan, film and edit videos for young people through the medium of Welsh.</p>
	<p>Map out the current provision offered by Local Authorities and community organisations through the medium of Welsh, identifying gaps and highlight areas of need.</p> <p>Ensure that the provision that is offered is advertised on Dewis.</p>	<p>A Working Group share information on current provision and have identified evening provision and post-16 provision as significant gaps. The YEPS now offer a Welsh medium Youth Club at Ysgol Garth Olwg with 25+ attending and at Penderyn with 15+ attending. The Urdd, Menter Iaith and the YEPS offer evening provision at Talbot Green. These clubs are also open to Welsh learners.</p> <p>Menter Iaith and the Urdd offer post 16 provision at Treorchy and Pontypridd</p>	<p>The YEPS now offer Welsh medium Youth Clubs at Garth Olwg with 35+ attending and Penderyn with 15+ attending. The club at Talbot Green was not well attended and therefore did not continue.</p> <p>The Urdd and Menter Iaith hold Youth Forums at Llanahri, Rhydywaun and Garth Olwg. These Youth Forums arrange social opportunities for young people to have further opportunities to socialise through the medium of Welsh.</p>	<p>Due to current Covid-19 restrictions all provision is now virtual.</p> <p>Provision is promoted through Wicid website and the YEPS and Menter Iaith social media platforms.</p>

		<p>following the mapping exercise.</p> <p>The YEPS have updated information on Dewis and the Wicid website. The Working Group have identified that promoting the provisions to young people would also be effective using social media, therefore Twitter, Snapchat, Facebook and Instagram have been utilised.</p>	<p>The Urdd have 70 Volunteers aged between 16 and 25 who support.</p> <p>Information is shared by partners at the Youth Support Services Strategy Working Group, to ensure a comprehensive provision is offered to young people and a sufficient opportunity to participate through the Welsh language is provided. This will be promoted on the YEPS website and social media platforms.</p>	
	<p>Establish links with the RCTCBC Youth Forum and other Youth Forums regarding the promotion of Welsh language provision.</p>	<p>Menter Iaith support Youth Forums at all four Welsh medium secondary schools. Individuals from these Youth Forums attend the YEPS Youth Forum that is held quarterly.</p>	<p>Menter Iaith support Youth Forums at all four Welsh medium secondary schools. The young people from these Youth Forums organise provision for other learners to socialise through the medium of Welsh.</p>	<p>The Youth Forums did not meet between March and September this year due to Covid-19 restrictions. The YEPS are now meeting monthly and Menter Iaith are promoting their Forum at all four Welsh medium secondary schools.</p> <p>Once the Menter Iaith support for Youth Forums is re-established, they will participate in the YEPS Youth Forum.</p>

<p>Work in partnership to coordinate and deliver Holiday Programmes through the medium of Welsh.</p>	<p>This is developed each term, in line with the YEPS Programme. The YEPS, Urdd and Menter Iaith utilise each other's social media platforms along the Wicid website to promote opportunities to young people.</p>	<p>This is developed each term, in line with the YEPS Programme. The YEPS, Urdd and Menter Iaith utilise each other's social media platforms along with the Wicid website to promote opportunities to young people.</p> <p>Information is shared by partners at the Youth Support Services Strategy Working Group to ensure a comprehensive provision is offered to young people with a sufficient opportunity to participate through the medium of Welsh.</p>	<p>This year all holiday provision has been virtual. The demand for Welsh medium virtual provision has been far less than physical provision. Some virtual activities have been offered through the medium of Welsh or bilingually, including Garth Olwg Virtual Youth Club.</p>
<p>Promote activities delivered through the medium of Welsh through websites and social media platforms.</p>	<p>This is developed each term, in line with the YEPS Programme. The YEPS, the Urdd and Menter Iaith utilise each other's social media platforms along with the Wicid website to promote opportunities to young people.</p>	<p>This is developed each term, in line with the YEPS Programme. The YEPS, Urdd and Menter Iaith utilise each other's social media platforms along with the Wicid website to promote opportunities to young people.</p> <p>Over 100 young people participated in the YEPS</p>	<p>All provision has been promoted to young people through the YEPS, Urdd and Menter Iaith's social media platforms along with the Wicid website.</p>

Tudalen 73			<p>activities through the medium of Welsh.</p> <p>The Urdd and Menter Iaith hold annual events for young people.</p>	
	<p>Identify champions (both young people and adults) that can attend community events to engage with the public and promote activities on offer through the medium Welsh in the County Borough of RCT.</p>	<p>The Welsh Language Working Group has focused on promoting provision through the medium of Welsh.</p> <p>Young people from the Menter Iaith Youth Forums promote opportunities in the County Borough of RCT for young people at their schools.</p> <p>The YEPS staff attended several community events during the summer to promote opportunities for young people, including Welsh medium provision.</p>	<p>Young people from the Menter Iaith Youth Forums promote opportunities in the County Borough of RCT for young people at their Schools.</p> <p>The YEPS staff attended several community events during the summer to promote opportunities for young people, including Welsh medium provision.</p>	<p>The YEPS and Menter Iaith have not attended any community events this year due to the current Covid-19 restrictions.</p>
<p>Outcome 5: More Learners with higher skills in Welsh.</p>	<p>Establish a Welsh Language Working Group that will develop a joint Strategy by September 2017 that enables Welsh to become the language of social and leisure activities.</p>	<p>The Welsh Language Working Group was established with Youth Workers from the YEPS, the Urdd and Menter Iaith. As part of the Action Plan the Welsh Language Working</p>	<p>The Welsh Language Working Group has not met, however, the Urdd and Menter Iaith will be part of a Sport, Leisure, Arts and Culture Group, as part of the Youth Support Services</p>	<p>The Sport, Leisure, Arts and Culture Group has continued to meet, however, the Urdd have not been able to attend due staff being furloughed.</p>

Welsh Language Working Group meetings to take place quarterly, with set agenda and minutes.

Complete an Action Plan alongside the Strategy to be updated quarterly in line with the Strategy.

Group have worked in partnership to offer several social opportunities for young people in the County Borough of RCT to participate in sport, leisure and cultural opportunities through the medium of Welsh. This includes after school activities in all four Welsh medium secondary schools, holiday provision and two Welsh medium Youth Clubs (Talbot Green and Garth Olwg), offering evening provision for Welsh speaking young people and Welsh learners.

The Urdd and the YEPS supported Menter Iaith at Parti Ponty, which was an event held in Pontypridd to promote the Welsh language.

Strategy. This will ensure that the Welsh language is considered across all provisions. These meeting will take place termly.

An Action Plan will be created following the meeting to hold different organisations accountable for the Welsh provision they offer.

The Urdd and the YEPS supported Menter Iaith at Parti Ponty, which was an event held in Pontypridd to promote the Welsh language.

Co-ordinated Welsh language community provision has not been arranged for this year due to the current Covid-19 restrictions. Virtual support and provision has been offered to young people, including virtual youth club.



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 20/21

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

27TH JANUARY 2021

EYE TO EYE COUNSELLING

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES

Author: - Ceri Jones, Head of Inclusion Services (Tel No: 01443 744333)

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide Elected Members with an overview of the provision and effectiveness of counselling services for children and young people in Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) during the academic year 2019/20 and to inform Elected Members of current plans to ensure ongoing provision that meets the needs of service users

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Scrutinise and comment on the information contained within this report.
- 2.2 Consider if any further information is required.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 1st April 2013 the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 came into force. This Act places a statutory duty on local authorities (LAs) to provide an independent counselling service in respect of health, emotional and social needs for children and young people in their area.
- 3.2 At the same time that this new Act came into force, the specific grant funding for independent counselling services transferred to Local Authorities' Revenue Support Grants as part of the Local Government Settlement. LAs are consequently required

to make reasonable provision of counselling services for children and young people aged between 11 and 18 and for year 6 pupils. All children and young people residing in RCT are entitled to access counselling services, irrespective of whether they attend school or not.

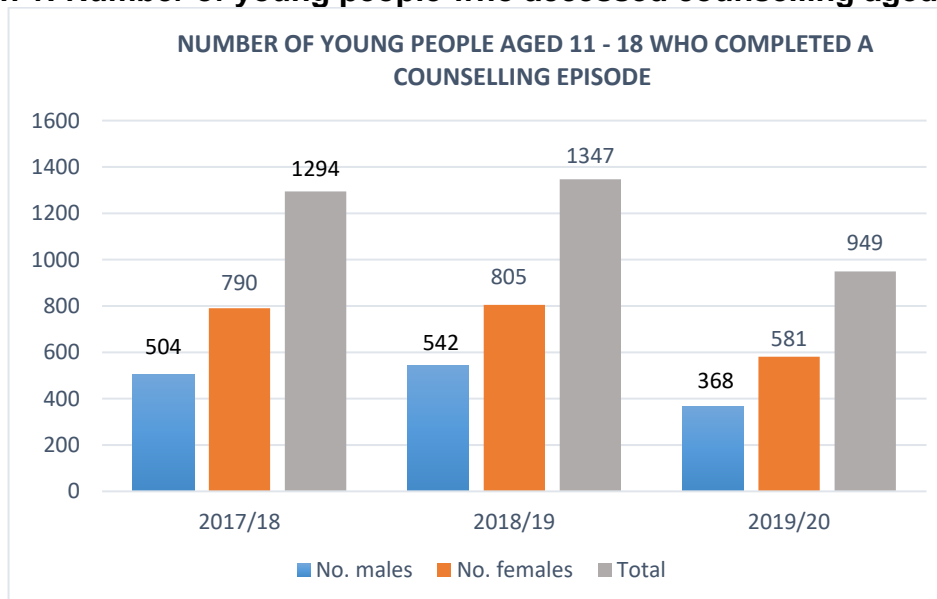
- 3.3 The 2013 Act requires the LA to provide an independent counselling service on the site of each secondary school that it maintains and also offer counselling services at other locations for young people who are not in school and/or wish to access counselling outside of a formal education setting.
- 3.4 Within schools, counselling is a specialist intervention that complements other approaches to support the health and wellbeing of learners, such as school based wellbeing interventions and pastoral support or more specialist interventions from LA central support teams such as the Educational Psychology Service or Behaviour Support Service, as well as services provided externally through Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).
- 3.5 The appointment of counselling services in each LA is carried out via a tendering process every three to five years. In RCT the Eye to Eye Young People's Counselling Service is currently contracted to provide the statutory service within schools and in the community. In addition, to the statutory requirements of the 2013 Act, the local authority commissions Eye to Eye to provide counselling services to primary aged pupils aged 7–10 years (academic years 3–5) and for young people from the ages of 19–25 years. The current contract has been in place since July 2019 and ends in August 2022.
- 3.6 Eye to Eye is a registered charity comprising of a professional team of fully qualified counsellors who are registered with the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and who practice in line with the BACP Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy. The organisation consists of 17 employed counsellors (10 fte) and a number of volunteer counsellors who work in the community setting in the evening. Volunteer counsellors may still be in training but their practice is supervised by a fully qualified and BACP certified counsellor. Community based counselling is provided in community buildings on the site of Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School and 4 outreach centres across the county borough.
- 3.7 During the academic year (2017/18) a Counselling Service Management Board was established, comprising representation from the Educational Psychology Service, Children Looked After (CLA) team, Attendance and Wellbeing Service (AWS), Youth Engagement service, a local Secondary Headteacher, LA data and procurement teams and the Eye to Eye Counselling Service. The purpose of the management board, is to ensure that the Eye to Eye Counselling Service is meeting the requirements set out in their contract, that the service provided meets the needs of children and young people in RCT and to consider the necessary requirements of an effective counselling service for children and young people, as we move towards the next tendering process.
- 3.8 For the financial year 2020/21 Welsh Government provided all local authorities across Wales with additional funding to enhance their school and community based

counselling provision due to the anticipated increased need to support the emotional and mental wellbeing of learners as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. RCT received additional funding of £102,664 which has been used to support priority areas specified by Welsh Government for the use of the funding: reducing waiting lists for counselling and increasing capacity; facilitating the delivery of support to young people in line with current requirements around social distancing; supporting work already underway to meet the needs of young people below the current year 6 statutory counselling threshold. References to the use of additional funding and impact will be linked to the appropriate sections of the report.

4. **UPDATE/CURRENT POSITION**

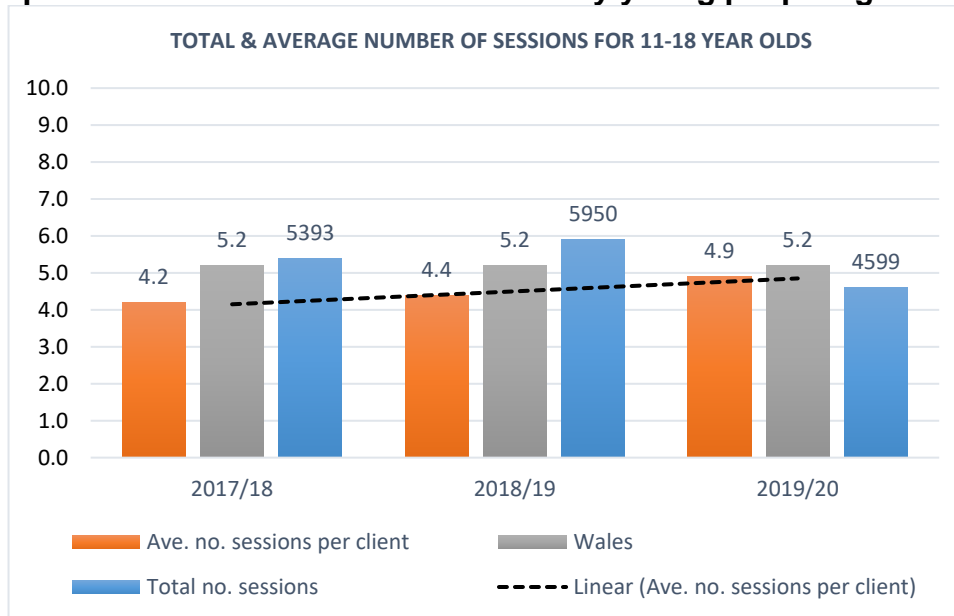
- 4.1 Graph 1 details the number of young people who completed counselling during the three year period from 2017/18 to 2019/20. The graph shows an increase in the number of young people aged 11-18 receiving counselling support in 2018/19 compared to 2017/18 but this decreased by 29.5% in 2019/20. An additional 46 young people received counselling and remained open going into academic year 2020/21. Analysis of the data suggests that the overall decrease is due to a reduction in the number of referrals received during summer term 2020.
- 4.2 In addition to providing formal counselling sessions, school counsellors also made 714 recorded contacts with school staff over the lockdown period and provided additional wellbeing and emotional support to families and young people.
- 4.3 When comparing males and females completing counselling during this three year period, significantly more females than males had counselling. This is a common trend across Wales and is an area that was identified for targeted intervention and development. This included the recruitment of 2 male counsellors, marketing strategies in the community, online and in schools such as featuring a male on the Eye to Eye website and a Facebook publicity campaign specifically targeted at young males. However, despite this, the number of males accessing counselling remains low at only 39% of the overall cohort.

Graph 1: Number of young people who accessed counselling aged 11–18



4.4 Graph 2 indicates the average number of counselling sessions attended by young people over the three year period has increased each year from 4.2 in 2017/18 to 4.9 in 2019/20. This is slightly lower than the national average of 5.2 in 2018/19. (National data is not yet published for 2019/20 and, therefore, until this is available, 2018/19 national data is used for comparison). The service is client led and, as such, clients can choose not to engage in the full counselling offer.

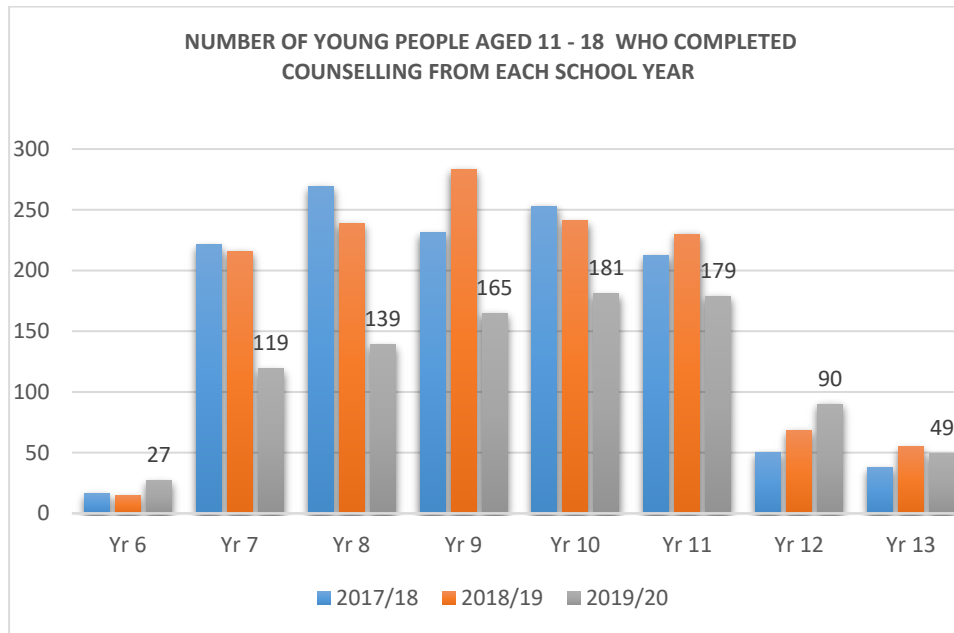
Graph 2: Number of sessions attended by young people aged 11–18



4.5 Graph 3 indicates that in 2019/20, year 10 (181) and year 11 (179)) pupils used the counselling service the most. In 2019/20 there was a notable increase (44%) in the number of year 12 pupils and year 6 pupils (40%) accessing the service. However, despite this increase, it is important to acknowledge that the number of year 6 pupils remains low overall in comparison to other year groups and remains an area for further development.

4.6 As part of this focus, Eye to Eye have accessed the additional funding made available by Welsh Government to provide training to six counsellors in online Lego Play Therapy for primary aged children from years 3–6. As a result, 6 counsellors were trained by August 2020 and, at the time of writing, have provided 67 sessions of Lego therapy to 15 children.

Graph 3: Number of young people aged 11-18 in each school year who had counselling



4.7 Under the current contract, Eye to Eye is commissioned to provide counselling services to primary aged children in school years 3–5. Since the introduction of the enhanced provision in September 2019, 38 children were referred to the service, of which 19 children completed an average of 4.8 sessions of counselling each. Despite the low numbers, it is encouraging to note that, of the 19 children who completed counselling sessions, 10 (52%) were males. 8 cases remain open for support in 2020/21.

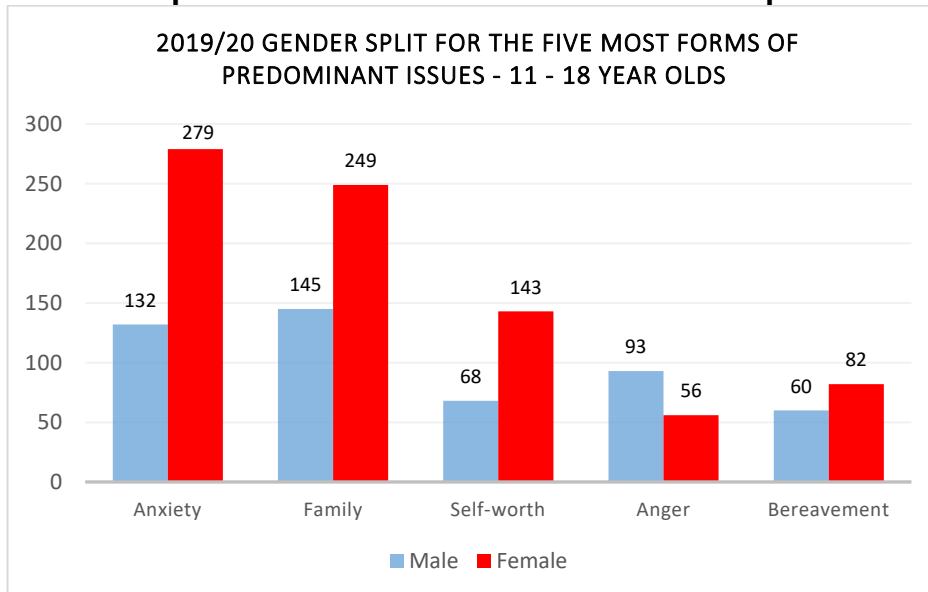
4.8 Table 1 demonstrates the percentage of young people with special characteristics receiving counselling, as a proportion of the total number of young people attending counselling. These special characteristics include Special Educational Needs (SEN), a registered disability or where a child who is looked after (CLA) by the LA. Concerns have been raised previously regarding the low number of CLA receiving counselling, due to this cohort of young people being a particularly vulnerable group. As a result, membership of the Counselling Management Board has included members of the CLA Education Team who have contributed to the development of a new counselling referral pathway. In 2019/20 a slight increase was evident in the number of CLA who received counselling, particularly in the number of males (47%) accessing the service. However, due to the low numbers involved, further analysis of data over time is needed to establish whether this increase will be sustained. In this context, it is important to note that the CLA Education Team has also developed a comprehensive range of evidence-based wellbeing approaches that are proven to be particularly effective in supporting the emotional and mental health wellbeing of children looked after and their carers. This includes a focus upon building the capacity of educational and residential settings to better equip staff to implement a range of tailored wellbeing approaches as part of a graduated response to meeting the needs of learners who are looked after without the need to refer to other specialist services.

Table 1: Percentage of young people with special characteristics attending counselling.

Table 1: PERCENTAGE OF YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS WHO COMPLETED COUNSELLING						
Year	Group	Males	Females	Total	Total No. C&YP who had counselling	%
2019/20	SEN	55	30	85	949	9%
	Disability	13	10	23		2%
	CLA	10	11	21		2%
2018/19	SEN	63	46	109	1,347	8%
	Disability	22	22	44		3%
	CLA	4	10	14		1%
2017/18	SEN	90	46	136	1,294	11%
	Disability	9	15	24		2%
	CLA	7	8	15		1%

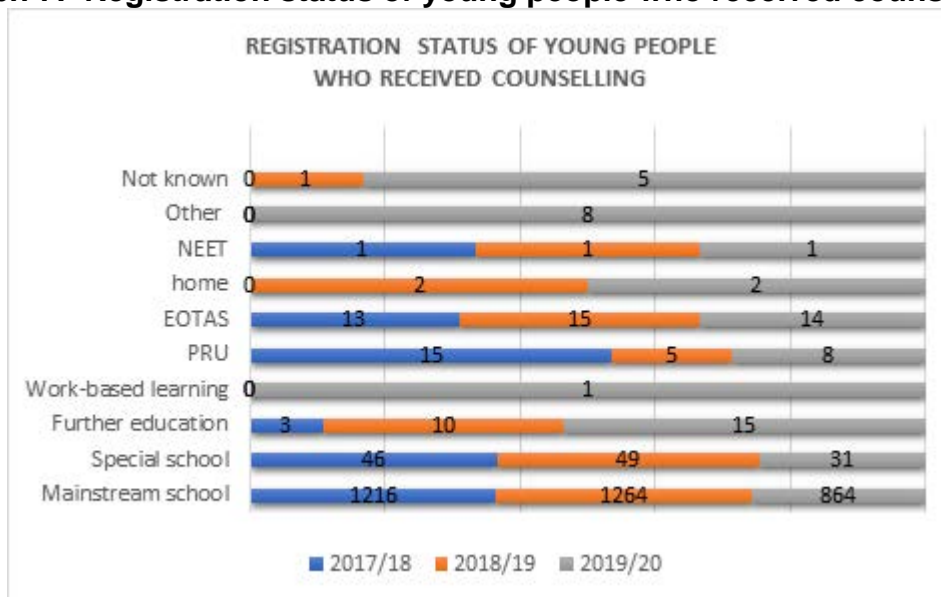
4.9 An analysis of the gender differences exhibited for the five most common forms of predominant issues for young people aged 11–18 years is highlighted in graph 6. Despite ‘family’ issues being the predominant issue for both males and females in this cohort over the past three years, this has been replaced by ‘anxiety’ issues amongst females in 2019/20. Anxiety and stress combined presented in 42% of the young people. Issues relating to Covid-19; isolation, exam stress and the potential loss of parents and grandparents to the virus, were the predominant reasons for seeking counselling. It is notable that this is the first year that ‘anxiety’ issues have replaced ‘family’ issues as the predominant issue overall for counselling from the Eye to Eye counselling service for the 11- 18 age cohort.

Graph 6: Gender split for the five most common forms of predominant issues



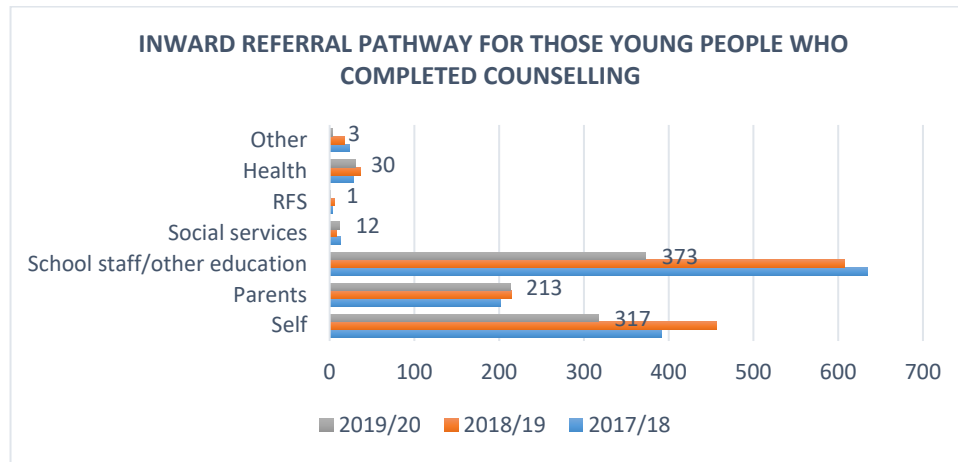
- 4.10 The predominant issue for primary aged children in years 3–5 in 2019/20 was ‘family’ issues for both males and females, followed by ‘anxiety’.
- 4.11 Graph 7 demonstrates the educational provision attended by the young people accessing counselling. Over the last three years, the majority of young people that received counselling were registered at mainstream schools. The lower figures from provisions other than mainstream school are reflective of the lower numbers of young people attending these different provisions.

Graph 7: Registration status of young people who received counselling



- 4.12 Over the last three years, the majority of referrals made to the counselling service continue to be made by school staff although there was a notable reduction in school referrals during the last academic year, primarily during summer term 2020. In 2019/20, 39% of referrals were made by schools or other educational establishments, 33% through self-referral and 22% made by parents. The other 6% were made by Health, Social Services and ‘other’.
- 4.13 Those referrals categorised as ‘other’ include those from the Resilient Families Team and college and voluntary organisations such as Valleys Kids. It is considered positive that, in addition to school staff and parental referrals, a significant number of referrals for counselling are self-referrals, demonstrating the young people themselves are aware of the counselling service and are choosing to seek help and engage in counselling in order to manage their difficulties.

Graph 8: Inward referral pathway



- 4.14 Information has been gathered in relation to young people who did not receive counselling following a referral. Concerns relating to the high number of unsuitable referrals received by the service resulted in the development of an integrated referral pathway, outlining the graduated response that should be considered prior to making a referral to Eye to Eye with guidance on alternative support/interventions that may be deemed more appropriate. Since the implementation of the pathway, data indicates that the percentage of unsuitable referrals received in 2019/20 has dropped to 1.8% of the overall number of referrals compared to 4.1% in 2017/18. However, there has been an increase in the number of young people declining to take part in counselling following a referral from 6.1% of the overall number of referrals in 2017/18 to 10.5% in 2019/20. This will need further investigation.
- 4.15 Due to concerns regarding the length of time children and young people were waiting for counselling following referral, changes were made to the contract agreement with Eye to Eye in 2019 to introduce a triage system and referral pathway (as mentioned above).
- 4.16 In addition and with the aim of reducing waiting times for counselling and providing an alternative avenue for support for young people who may not wish to engage in formal counselling, an element of the Welsh Government additional funding was used to enhance the capacity of the Youth Engagement Service to deliver pre and post counselling support initiative. This has been designed specifically to support learner wellbeing during the COVID-19 period, particularly in relation to re-engagement with learning and attendance at school. Through this initiative, young people are able to access a range of support activities and interventions both on an individual and group basis and a combination of virtual and face to face activities. These include virtual youth clubs, individual support from a youth worker via chat sessions and virtual issue-based wellbeing group chat sessions. At the time of writing, 251 additional sessions have been provided to young people to support their wellbeing. Funding was also used to support the Educational Psychology Service to develop and deliver a series of wellbeing training packages for school staff to support them to meet the emotional and wellbeing needs of their pupils together with the successful the roll-out of wellbeing training for head teachers during summer term 2020.
- 4.17 Data analysis indicates that there has been a significant improvement in waiting times for counselling, with 89% of young people aged 11-18 commencing

counselling within 30 days of referral in 2019/20 compared to 65% in 2017/18 (last time of reporting) of which 70% commenced counselling within 10 days compared to 54% in 2017/18. However, this will be monitored closely to ensure that this improvement can be sustained.

- 4.18 Data relating to the waiting times for children in years 3–5 is less positive with only 54% commencing counselling within 10 days. (As this is a new provision, no comparative data is available).

Table 2: Counselling waiting times for young people aged 11-18 who completed counselling and those that remain open

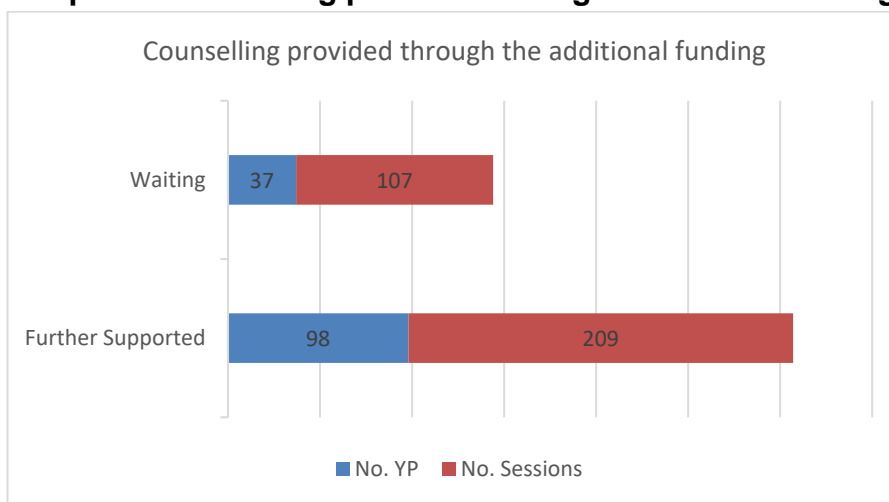
No. of Days	Same day	1 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 20	21 - 30	31 - 50	51- 70	71 - 99	100 - 112
No. YP	351	176	170	138	94	67	34	7	1
% YP	34%	17%	16%	13%	9%	6%	3%	1%	0%

Table 3: Counselling waiting times for children in Yr3 to Yr5 who completed counselling and those that remain open

No. of Days	Same day	1 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 20	21 - 30	31 - 49
No. YP	1	5	5	5	2	3
% YP	5%	24%	24%	24%	10%	13%

- 4.19 Due to the anticipated impact of COVID–19 on counselling services additional funding was provided to Eye to Eye to provide counselling services to young people during both the Easter and Summer holiday periods. Graph 9 illustrates that 316 sessions were provided during holiday periods to support 135 referrals. This consisted of 98 referrals (73%) where young people had received at least one session of counselling from the Service and 37 (27%) who were on or would have been placed on the waiting list.

Graph 9: Counselling provided through additional funding



4.20 Additional funding was also used to employ a part-time temporary support therapist to provide a number of additional services. This resulted in 162 initial contacts with young people in relation to the following:

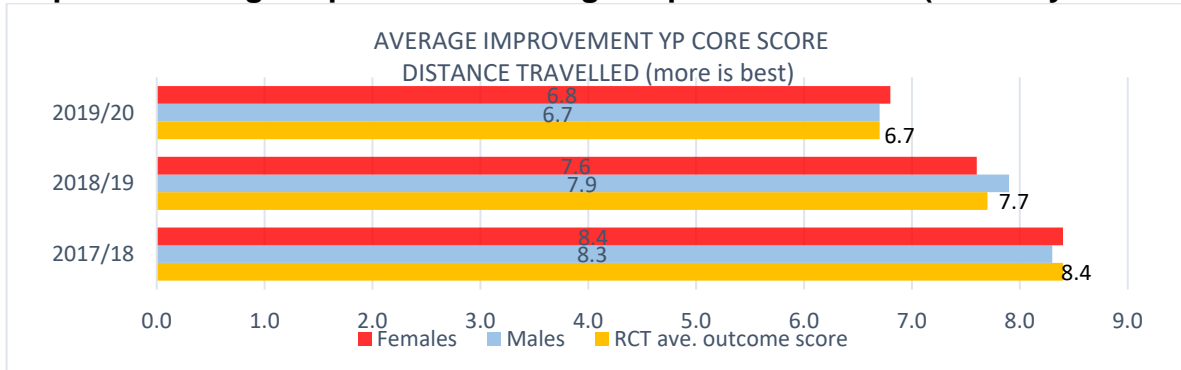
- Assessment using the YP CORE score in relation to anxiety, stress, self-worth and confidence with relationships and signposting to the most appropriate service or online help, including, where necessary, useful websites and Apps to support mental health.
- Assessment for issues relating to safeguarding.
- Weekly check-ins for the young people who were considered vulnerable and not yet in counselling.
- Additional support for the parents and extended family of the client, such as helping with concerns regarding school homework, anxieties about returning to school or even being at home and the effect of lockdown on the children and young people.

4.21 Other areas of expenditure for the Welsh Government additional funding include:

- Training for counsellors on delivering online counselling. This has enabled counsellors to develop the necessary additional skills and understanding of specific issues such as online transference and disinhibition identification, in order to provide high quality online counselling to clients.
- Additional resources for Eye to Eye and the Youth Engagement Participation Service to facilitate virtual delivery methods in line with new service and project requirements.
- Additional wellbeing support for counsellors.

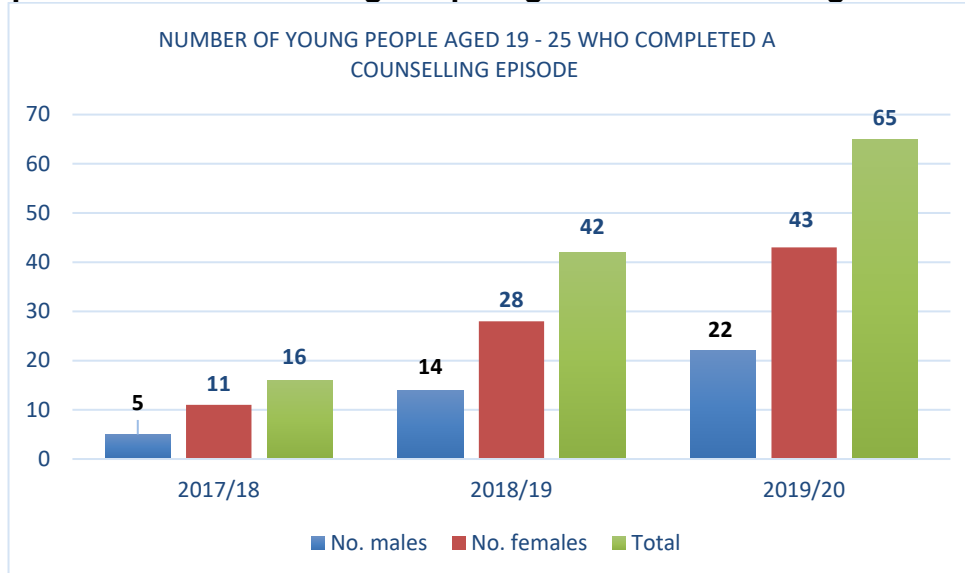
4.22 In order to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of counselling Eye to Eye uses the Young Person’s CORE assessment for young people aged 11-18 years old. This is a 10 item self-report measure of emotional wellbeing and is a useful tool for measuring progress. Scores from the first and last counselling sessions are measured to evaluate the impact of therapeutic intervention upon the young people’s emotional distress. In graph 10 it is evident that the average gain was lower in 2019/20 than in 2018/19. Reasons cited by Eye to Eye for this decline relate in the main to the reported increased level of need amongst the overall cohort in 2019/20 and the impact of COVID-19. However, this would not account for the year on year decline since 2017/18. Unfortunately, national data is not yet available for comparison for 2019/20 to determine whether a similar decline has been evident across Wales that could be attributed to factors relating to the pandemic.

Graph 10: Average Improvement Young People CORE Score (11 – 18 year olds)



- 4.23 The effectiveness and impact of counselling for the year 3 to year 5 cohort is measured by the CORS assessment. This is a simple, session by session four-item self-report measure designed to assess areas of life functioning known to change as a result of therapeutic input. The scores from the first session and last session are measured to provide the therapeutic movement of emotional distress during counselling sessions. The average improvement gain for year 3 to year 5 children is 8.2, with girls confirming a better outcome at 6.9 compared to boys at 10.4. No comparative data is available due to this being the first year of counselling support for this cohort.
- 4.24 Eye to Eye has seen a year on year increase in the number of young people aged 19-25 years receiving counselling with 60% of young people referred completing counselling sessions in 2019/20 compared to 53% in 2018/19 and 21% in 2017/18 as shown in Graph 11. Targeted interventions for encouraging more males to take up counselling have continued to be implemented during 2019/20 and has resulted in 34% males taking up counselling compared to 31% in 2017/18.

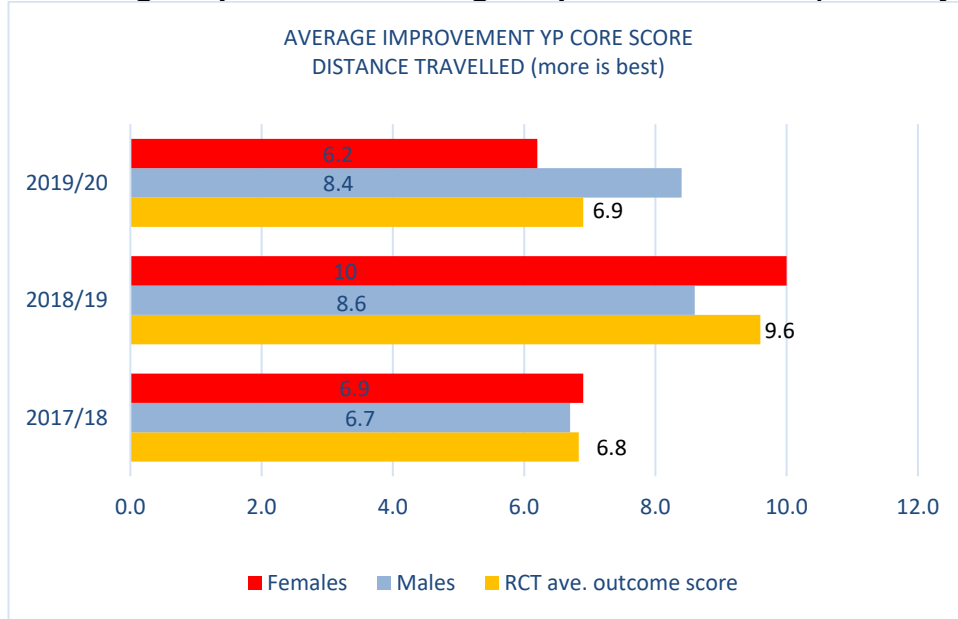
Graph 11: Number of Young People aged 19 – 25 receiving counselling



- 4.25 The number of counselling sessions attended by the 19-25 age cohort increased significantly from 53 sessions in 2018/19 to 314 sessions in 2019/20. Reasons reported by Eye to Eye for this increase relate to the young people not being able to access their usual mental health services during COVID.
- 4.26 Data indicates that 'anxiety' issues were the predominant issue for both males and females in this cohort, followed by 'family' issues in 2019/20. This is consistent with the predominant issues for the 11-18 age cohort.
- 4.27 The effectiveness and impact of counselling on young people aged 19-25 is measured using the Young Person's CORE Score. As illustrated in Graph 12, the average improvement gain for 19-25 year olds in 2019/20 is 6.9 which has declined from 9.6 in 2018/19. Eye to Eye report that this is due to the exceptionally high levels of distress initially presented by young people in crisis and the inability of

clients to access their normal support from peers and other mental health providers due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Graph 12: Average Improvement Young People CORE Score (19 – 25 year olds)



4.28 Service evaluations are carried out every year with the young people using the service. It is not mandatory for service users to complete an evaluation. 372 evaluations were completed for 2019/20. The outcomes are extremely positive with regards easy access to appointments and, also, in relation to their views of counselling as a way of dealing with problems and having a positive overall impression of the service provided. The number of service evaluations completed in 2019/20 is significantly lower than previous years and may not be considered to be as reliable a measure of service performance. However, it is important to note that service evaluation by service users has consistently been extremely positive in previous years and has not been raised as an area of concern.

Table 4: Service Evaluations (completed by service users)

	School	Community
No. evaluations completed	372 (36%)	58 (22%)
% easy to get an appointment	98%	98%
% good way of dealing with their problems	99%	98%
% 'good' or 'great' overall impression	96%	100%

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not required as the contents of this report are for information purposes only.

6. CONSULTATION

6.1 No consultation exercises have been undertaken.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

7.1 Under current arrangements the counselling service is grant funded by Welsh Government. As part of the negotiation for the current contract, funding for Eye to Eye Counselling Services increased from £376k annually to £400k.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

8.1 There are no legal implications aligned to this report.

9. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN/OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/SIP

9.1 One of the key priorities of the RCT Corporate Plan 2020-2024 Making a Difference is to 'encourage residents to lead active and healthy lifestyles and maintain their mental wellbeing'. It is considered that an effective counselling service is key to ensuring that the needs of vulnerable young people are met, in order for them to develop independent coping strategies, build good mental health and positive lives. The vision and working practices of the counselling service support the Council to implement the Wellbeing Goals of the Wellbeing for Future Generations Act (Wales).

10. CONCLUSION

10.1 Overall there has been a decrease in the number of children and young people referred for counselling during the 2019/20 academic year which resulted in fewer children and young people attending counselling sessions. The reduction in referrals was particularly evident in the summer term 2020, during the school closure period. However, it is important to note that, due to COVID-19, providing a range of enhanced support to support the wellbeing of children and young people has been a high priority for both Education and Children's Services. Protocols were put in place to ensure regular contact between schools and learners and their families with a focus upon supporting wellbeing and identifying at an early stage whether additional support, intervention or signposting to other support services would be beneficial. Significant resources were dedicated to developing a range of wellbeing support mechanisms for children, families/carers and school, including a comprehensive training offer for school-based staff to ensure that our education settings are better equipped to identify and address the wellbeing and emotional and mental health needs of learners within their school environment without the need for referrals to more specialist services.

10.2 Following previous concerns regarding the limited provision of counselling services for primary aged children the current service level of agreement with Eye to Eye now includes provision for primary children aged 7–10 years (years 3–5) in addition

to those aged 11 (year 6). As a new provision since September 2019, baseline data has now been established in 2019/20 and will form the basis for future monitoring of impact.

- 10.3 Despite the use of a range of targeted approaches such as online materials and social media platforms to encourage males to engage in counselling, the uptake of males remains low compared to females. However, despite low cohort numbers, it is encouraging to note that there has been an increase in the number of male CLA accessing counselling compared to females and the baseline data for the primary aged children in years 3–5 indicated that there was more or less an equal uptake in counselling of males (52%) and females (48%).
- 10.4 A slight increase in the number of CLA accessing counselling sessions was noted in 2019/20. However, it is important to acknowledge that the very individual and specialist needs of this vulnerable group of children may not always be best addressed via formal school-based counselling but through the broader range of differentiated evidence-based wellbeing approaches that the CLA Education Team have developed to support our children and young people who are looked after, their families/carers. Further work will be undertaken by the CLA Education Team in conjunction with the Counselling Management Board to ensure that there is a robust and collaborative approach to supporting our children who are looked after to access the most appropriate support to meet their individual needs either through counselling or through alternative approaches.
- 10.5 Issues relating to ‘anxiety’ is the predominant issue for the 11-18 and the 19-25 age cohorts in 2019/20, followed closely by family relationships. These areas are not unexpected, particularly so during a global pandemic and periods of school closure. Eye to Eye is working collaboratively with Education and Children’s Services to support children and young people to develop coping strategies and resilience to address these issues.
- 10.6 The number of young people self-referring for counselling is considered to be a positive reflection on young peoples’ awareness of the counselling service. Eye to Eye continues to use social media and a range of partner organisations to promote its services to young people.
- 10.7 Waiting times for counselling have shown improvement during 2019/20. However, due to the reduced number of referrals received by the service in 2019/20 compared to previous years, particularly in the summer term during the school closure period, this improvement should be monitored closely to ensure that it can be maintained should referrals increase when schools are fully operational following COVID-19 restrictions.
- 10.8 Data suggests that the development of the new integrated referral pathway has reduced the number of unsuitable referrals to the service whilst also providing guidance to schools on a range of alternative approaches to counselling that are available to schools to meet the wellbeing needs of learners. The implementation of an improved screening process and the introduction of an electronic referral enquiry form have further supported in the reduction of unsuitable referrals.

- 10.9 Data for 2019/20 indicates that there has been an increase in the number of young people who have declined to take part in counselling following a referral. Reasons for this increase will be explored by the Counselling Management Board.
- 10.10 Over the past three years there has been a decline in the average gain in the Young Person's CORE Score for the 11-18 age cohort, together with a significant dip in the average gain between 2018/19 and 2019/20 for the 19-25 age cohort. Reasons cited by Eye to Eye counselling to account for this decline relate in the main to the increased severity of need of the young people accessing counselling that have been exacerbated by factors relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, this does not fully explain the sustained decline over a three year period and, as the national data for 2019/20 is yet to be published, it is not possible to see whether this a common issue across other local authorities. It is therefore felt that this matter warrants further investigation by the Counselling Management Board.
- 10.11 Evaluations of young people using the existing counselling service continue to be overwhelmingly positive with regards their view of the service and how helpful they consider it to be in solving their issues and meeting their needs when referred.
- 10.12 Effective use has been made of the additional funding provided by Welsh Government to enhance counselling services during the COVID-19 pandemic. Funding has provided capacity for Eye to Eye to provide additional services to young people and their families and has supported the local authority to develop innovative and collaborative approaches to supporting the wellbeing of children and young people. However, it is not clear whether additional funding will be made available for the next financial year.
- 10.12 As the COVID-19 pandemic continues during academic year 2020/21, resulting in further periods of school closure and additional stresses and anxieties for our children, young people and their families, the need to provide effective, high quality, co-ordinated and evidence-based support for wellbeing continues to be one of the local authority's highest priorities.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE COMMITTEE

27TH JANUARY 2021

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
AND INCLUSION SERVICES**