



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2023-24

EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

13TH MARCH 2024

OVERVIEW OF THE POST 16 OFFER

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES

Author: Kate Owen, 14-19 Future Pathways Officer

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Members with an overview of the Post 16 curriculum offer across RCT Secondary and Through Schools.
- 1.2 To provide an update on the The Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Act which became law on the 8th September 2022.

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. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To raise Members' awareness.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 In 2016, the Hazelkorn review identified several challenges to the Post Compulsory Education and Training (PCET) sector in Wales. These were the increasing competition from within Wales and internationally, insufficient collaboration and duplication of roles, a lack of coherent learning pathways and educational opportunities, and inadequate employment opportunities. In many cases these have been amplified by Brexit, climate change, Covid-19, an aging population, digital transformation, and economic and social inequality. It recommended that Welsh Government (WG) develop an overarching vision and create an arms-length body to regulate and have authority over the whole PCET sector. This body is the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (CTER) when it is created later this year.

4.2 The Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Act became law on 8th September 2022. It established the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research, a new WG sponsored body, which will dissolve the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) once operational.

4.3 An update on the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research from The Minister for Education in January 2024 stated:

“The Commission for Tertiary Education and Research was established in September 2023 following the appointment of the Board and Simon Pirotte as Chief Executive.

In April 2024, the Commission will commence work on the development of its first strategic plan and start preparations for the introduction of a new tertiary education regulatory system. The Commission will also move into their new headquarters in Capital Quarter; kickstart recruitment activity; **and assume responsibility for their financial and operating systems.**

A phased approach to legislative implementation with the transfer of powers to the Commission now taking place on **1st August 2024**. The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales will continue to exercise its full regulatory and funding functions until it is dissolved at this time.”

4.4 Updated factsheets [Commission for Tertiary Education and Research factsheets | GOV.WALES](#) give further guidance on maintained schools with sixth forms that includes:

- The Commission will have a statutory duty to secure, fund and plan the proper facilities for further education and training of learners aged 16 to 19, including those in maintained school sixth forms.
- This includes having regard to delivery through the medium of Welsh and to those learners with additional learning needs in mainstream settings.
- The Commission will have a role to play in assessing the sufficiency of facilities for ALN provision at a general population (not individual learner) level.
- Funding to support maintained school sixth form provision will be allocated by the Commission via local authorities.

4.5 Notably the updated factsheet also states:

- The Commission will be required to form a local curriculum offer and be involved in the planning and monitoring of post 16 provision across further education and training including school sixth forms.
- The post 16 reforms aim to build on and support the broader principles and key purposes of Curriculum for Wales and support integrity of the wider school system.

- The Commission will also have a role in providing a seamless and well-informed approach to transition and career pathways for learners entering post 16 education and training.
- As with the reforms to the school curriculum, the sector will be supported to help learners grow as engaged and enterprising citizens, contributing to national and individual prosperity and well-being.

4.6 Currently Qualifications Wales have not included A and AS Level qualification in their Made for Wales qualification changes, <https://qualificationswales.org/regulation-reform/reforming/qualified-for-the-future/the-full-14-16-offer/>, that align GCSE qualifications available to learners in Wales to the National Curriculum for Wales. They have however introduced The Advanced Skills Baccalaureate.

4.7 The Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales, a Level 3 qualification which supports learners to become effective, responsible, and active citizens ready to take their place in a sustainable global society and in the workplace. This new qualification began first teaching in September 2023, with first certification due in summer 2025. This new qualification is a direct replacement for the Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate.
<https://qualificationswales.org/information-support/qualifications-available-in-wales/advanced-skills-baccalaureate-wales/>

5. CURRENT CURRICULUM OFFER IN RCT UPDATE / CURRENT POSITION

5.1 There are currently 7 local area curricula operational in RCT. The consortia arrangements are as follows: the Cynon Valley consortium (Aberdare Community School, St. John Baptist CIW School and Mountain Ash Comprehensive), Bryncelynog and Y Pant, Ysgol Llanhari and Ysgol Llangynwyd (Bridgend). There are a small number of learners who study between Ysgol Garth Olwg and Ysgol Cwm Rhondda, but the remaining schools largely operate independently.

5.2 The current learner numbers on roll in comparison to 2023 remain static. A drop in numbers on roll at some schools will impact on school budgets (see Appendix 1).

5.3 Data for Hawthorn and Pontypridd High schools has not been included as they no longer accept new learners into their sixth form.

5.4 Data collated from the school census data in May 2023, shows subjects available and numbers of learners at that time. This shows that at AS Level mathematics and English literature continue to be the most popular, with over 200 learners studying these subjects during the last academic year. Biology, criminology and psychology were the most popular A Level choices (see Appendix 2).

5.5 The courses available at each school are summarised below. All schools report there is likely to be little change in their offer in 2024/25.

	Cynon Valley Consortium	Bryncelynog and Y Pant	Tonyrefail School	Teorchy Comprehensive	Ysgol Gyfun Garth Olwg	Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda	Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun	Ysgol Llanhari a Llangynrwyd
Physics	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y
Product Design							Y	Y
Psychology	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	Y
Public Services		Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Religion, Philosophy and Ethics								
Religious Studies	Y	Y	Y		Y		Y	Y
Skills Challenge Certificate (WBQA)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Sociology		Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y
Spanish		Y	Y	Y				
Sport Studies	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	
Supporting Teaching and Learning (WBL)	Y		Y	Y				
Textiles	Y				Y			
Travel and Tourism		Y		Y				
Total	27	33	33	34	26	25	25	19

6. A / AS RESULTS 2022/23

- 6.1 The A Level results for Wales show that 34% of students achieved A*-A grades – RCT is 8.2 percentage points (pp) below this. This gap is slightly larger than the gap between RCT and Wales in 2019 (7.9 pp) RCT (2019) = 19.1%; Wales (2019) = 27.0% - but the growth in RCT when compared to 2019 is strong.
- 6.2 The A Level results for Wales show that 78.9% of students achieved A*-C grades – RCT is 6.5 percentage points (pp) below this. This gap is larger than the gap between RCT and Wales in 2019 (6.0 pp) RCT (2019) = 70.3%; Wales (2019) = 76.3% - implying a larger growth in Wales.
- 6.3 The A Level results for Wales show that 97.5% of students achieved A*-E grades – RCT is 0.8 percentage points (pp) below this. However, this gap is smaller than the gap between RCT and Wales in 2019 (1.5 pp). RCT (2019) = 96.1%; Wales (2019) = 97.6% - implying a larger growth in RCT than across Wales.

It must be noted that HHS and PHS had closing cohorts in years 13 at their school during the examination session 2023.

- 6.4 The AS Level results for Wales show that 90.9% of students achieved A*-E grades – RCT is 1.8 percentage points (pp) below this. However, this gap is smaller than

the gap between RCT and Wales in 2019 (4.1 pp). RCT (2019) = 85.9%; Wales (2019) = 90.0% - implying a larger growth in RCT than across Wales.

6.5 The AS Level results for Wales show that 65.2% of students achieved A*-C grades – RCT is 4.9 percentage points (pp) below this. However, this gap is smaller than the gap between RCT and Wales in 2019 (7.7 pp). RCT (2019) = 54.3%; Wales (2019) = 62.0% - implying a larger growth in RCT than across Wales.

6.6 The AS Level results for Wales show that 25.5% of students achieved A grades – RCT is 5.3 percentage points (pp) below this. However, this gap is smaller than the gap between RCT and Wales in 2019 (6.6 pp). RCT (2019) = 13.7%; Wales (2019) = 20.3% - implying a larger growth in RCT than across Wales.

7. DESTINATIONS

7.1 As a result of the examination series in the summer of 2023, 63% of RCT school leavers in year 13 are now accessing higher education, 14% have continued their education through other means such as college and/or apprenticeship and 0.02% have been deemed to be NEET.

8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

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

9. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no Welsh language implications arising from this report.

10. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

10.1 There are no consultation implications aligned to this report.

11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. However, it should be noted that if numbers on roll fall in the post 16 provisions across the schools, this will affect the funding awarded by CTER.

12. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

12.1 There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report at this time.

13. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES / WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

13.1 This is an information report presenting the overview of the legislation changes to transition arrangements across schools in line with the development of the CfW. However, this report is clearly connected to two of the priorities in the Council's corporate plan 2020- 2024 that is:

- Ensuring **People**: are independent, healthy and successful.

- Within this priority, one of the Council's commitments is to ensure it has *"Improving services for children and young people and ensuring the needs of children are considered in everything we do."*

13.2 There are links to RCTCBC's Education and Inclusion Services Strategic Plan for 2022 to 2025 and its mission: *'To deliver equity and excellence in Education and enhanced well-being for all'*.

There is a connect to Strategic Priority 2 – Supporting educational settings to deliver a transformational curriculum, high quality teaching and learning and improved outcomes for all.

14. CONCLUSION

- 14.1 It is hoped that the Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee consider themselves to be well informed and have a clear understanding of the Post 16 curriculum offer across RCT Secondary and Through Schools. The 14-19 Future Pathways Officer is currently visiting all schools with 6th forms to review the provision on offer. This is including discussions with staff and learners and gaining information on extra curriculum opportunities.
- 14.2 Information on the Post 16 curriculum offer across RCT Secondary and Through schools is available to view on <https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/en/home> <https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Resident/SchoolsandLearning/Pathwaysatpost16/PathwaysatPost16.aspx>. This section of the website provides information on the application process and transport arrangements as well as links to individual schools.
- 14.3 The 14-19 Future Pathways Officer is collaborating with Qualifications Wales to stay up to date with the development of new Made for Wales qualifications and has contributed to the ongoing consultation meetings.
- 14.4 The 14-19 Pathways Officer has taken up post as a board member on the Governing Body of Coleg Y Cymoedd and also sits on their Curriculum and Quality Committee. This has afforded further insight into the development of the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research and will support transition to this model for 6th form provision in RCT.
- 14.5 The current curriculum offer for post 16 learners is broad with 112 subjects on offer, plus the Challenge Skills Certificates. The 14-19 Future Pathways Officer has begun work assessing information from The Careers Wales Labour Market annual bulletin to the RCT Post 16 curriculum offer. This will support decision making on future subject offer. [Careers Wales LMI Bulletin September 2023 \(gov.wales\)](#)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972
AS AMENDED BY
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985
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Appendix 1

	Numbers on roll 1st February 2023	Numbers on roll 1st February 2024
Aberdare Community	126	153
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive	178	182
Mountain Ash Comprehensive	80	82
St. John Baptist CiW	167	161
Tonyrefail Community	284	317
Treorchy Comprehensive	300	284
Y Pant Comprehensive	246	264
Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda	108	99
Ysgol Gyfun Garth Olwg	133	101
Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun	133	118
Ysgol Llanhari	67	73
Total	1822	1834

Appendix 2

	Subject	Number of learners across RCT studying this subject
1	Skills Challenge Cert (GCEAS)	1047
2	Skills Challenge Cert (GCEA)	917
3	Mathematics(GCEAS)	250
4	English Lit (GCEAS)	205
5	Biology (GCEA)	195
6	Biology (GCEAS)	195
7	Psychology (GCEAS)	184
8	Criminology (GCEA)	176
9	Criminology (GCEAS)	174
10	Chemistry (GCEAS)	168
11	Psychology (GCEA)	165
12	History (GCEAS)	159
13	Mathematics(GCEA)	156
14	History (GCEA)	142
15	Physics (GCEAS)	133
16	Business Studies (GCEAS)	119
17	Chemistry (GCEA)	119
18	English Lit (GCEA)	119
19	Art & Design (GCEAS)	104
20	Geography (GCEA)	101
21	Geography (GCEAS)	99
22	Physics (GCEA)	95
23	Medical Science (BTSd3)	93
24	Sociology (GCEAS)	89
25	Art & Design (GCEA)	88
26	Sport & Leisure (BTDi3)	87
27	Sociology (GCEA)	84
28	Business Studies (GCEA)	79
29	Physical Education (GCEA)	75
30	Public Services (BTSd3)	75
31	Religious Studies (GCEAS)	72
32	Health S.Care (BTDi3)	68
33	Media Studies (GCEA)	68
34	Physical Education (GCEAS)	68
35	Design Tech (GCEAS)	63
36	Media Studies (GCEAS)	60
37	Info Tech (GCEAS)	58
38	Business Studies (BTCe3)	54
39	Design Tech (GCEA)	52
40	Health & Social (GCEA)	51
41	Health & Social (GCEAS)	51
42	Religious Studies (GCEA)	49

	Subject	Number of learners across RCT studying this subject
43	Applied Science (BTSd3)	47
44	Drama (GCEAS)	76
45	Info Tech (GCEA)	43
46	Computing (BTSd3)	42
47	Computing (BTCe3)	41
48	Computing (GCEA)	41
49	Further Maths (GCEA)	41
50	Drama (GCEA)	38
51	Sports Studies (BTNEC)	38
52	Further Maths (GCEAS)	37
53	ICT (CTID3)	37
54	Criminology (BTSd3)	35
55	Sports Studies (GCEAS)	35
56	Computing(GCEAS)	31
57	Welsh (GCEAS)	31
58	Public Services (BTDi2)	29
59	Welsh (GCEA)	29
60	ICT (BTDi3)	28
62	ICT (BTSd3)	28
63	ICT (BTCe3)	27
64	Retail Business (BTSd3)	27
65	Music (GCEAS)	24
66	Photography (GCEA)	24
67	Photography (GCEAS)	24
68	Pure Maths. (GCEAS)	24
69	Engineering (BTDi3)	22
70	Supporting Teaching and Learning (BTDi3)	22
71	Media Film Studies (GCEAS)	21
72	Performing Arts (BTSd3)	21
73	Uniformed Protective Ser (BTNEC3)	20
74	English Lang/Lit (GCEA)	19
75	Health S.Care (BTCe3)	18
76	Digital Technology (GCEAS)	16
77	French AS/A2 (GCEAS)	16
78	Government and Politics (GCEAS)	16
79	Economics (GCEA)	15
80	Law (GCEA)	15
81	Pure Maths. (GCEA)	15
82	Supporting Teaching and Learning (BTCe2)	15
83	Economics (GCEAS)	14
84	Music Btec (SD3)	14
85	Music (GCEA)	14
86	Trav & Tour (BTSd3)	14
87	Business & Comm (BTDi3)	13

	Subject	Number of learners across RCT studying this subject
88	Law (GCEA)	13
89	Sports Studies (GCEA)	13
90	Public Services (GCEAS)	12
91	Engineering (GCEA)	11
92	Music Technology (BTDi3)	11
93	Health Studies (GCEA)	10
94	Sports Studies (BTXDi3)	9
95	Engineer (BTNEC)	8
96	H.Econ Food (GCEA)	8
97	Media Film Studies (GCEA)	8
98	Public Services (GCEA)	8
99	Dance (BTSd3)	7
100	Design 3D (GCEA)	7
101	Spanish (GCEA)	7
102	Engineering (GCEAS)	6
103	French AS/A2 (GCEA)	6
104	Textiles (GCEA)	6
105	Hospitality (BTSd3)	5
106	Science BTEC L3 (BTDi3)	5
107	German (GCEA)	4
108	Health S.Care (BTSd3)	4
109	Sport (BTSd3)	4
110	Accounting (GCEA)	3
111	Digital Technology (GCEA)	3
112	Spanish (GCEAS)	2
113	Textiles (GCEAS)	2
114	German (GCEAS)	1
115	English Lang and Lit (GCEAS)	0