



Complete Agenda

Democracy Service
Swyddfa'r Cyngor
CAERNARFON
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH

Meeting

EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date and Time

10.30 am, THURSDAY, 10TH APRIL, 2025

**(NOTE: A BRIEFING SESSION WILL BE HELD FOR MEMBERS AT 10.00AM AND
A LUNCH BREAK IS PLANNED FOR 12.10PM – 1.00PM)**

Location

Siambr Hywel Dda, Council Offices, Caernarfon and virtually on Zoom

*** NOTE***

This meeting will be webcast

https://gwynedd.public-i.tv/core/l/en_GB/portal/home

Contact Point

Jasmine Jones

01286 679667

jasminejones@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

(DISTRIBUTED 02/04/25)

EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP (18)

Plaid Cymru (12)

Councillors

Beca Brown
Iwan Huws
Gareth Tudor Jones
Gwynfor Owen
Huw Rowlands
Rhys Tudur

Jina Gwyrfai
Dawn Lynne Jones
Olaf Cai Larsen
John Pughe
Dyfrig Siencyn
Sian Williams

Independent (6)

Councillors

Elwyn Jones
Beth Lawton
John Pughe Roberts

Gwilym Jones
Dewi Owen
Richard Glyn Roberts

Ex-officio Members

Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council

Other Invited Members

CO-OPTED MEMBERS:

With a vote on education matters only

[vacant seat]	Church in Wales
Colette Owen	The Catholic Church
[vacant seat]	Meirionnydd Parent/Governors Representative
Gweno Glyn Williams	Dwyfor Parent/Governors' Representative
Sharon Roberts	Arfon Parent/Governors' Representative

Without a Vote

Elise Poulter	NEU
Gwilym Jones	NASUWT

A G E N D A

1. APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

To receive any declarations of personal interest.

3. URGENT MATTERS

To note any items that are a matter of urgency in the view of the Chair for consideration.

4. MINUTES

5 - 21

The Chair shall propose that the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 13/02/25 be signed as a true record.

5. YOUTH SERVICE

22 - 78

To provide guidance on the direction of the Youth Service in the future to discuss whether or not it still meets the needs of Gwynedd's young people and delivers its objectives following the restructure in 2018.

6. ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS IN MAINSTREAM AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS

79 - 93

To scrutinise the Additional Learning Needs education provision and to secure the input and understanding of the Scrutiny Committee of the progress made to ensure that Gwynedd is ready for the new ALN and Inclusion Act.

A lunch break is planned for 12.10pm – 1.00pm

7. EDUCATION LANGUAGE POLICY

94 - 124

To present a draft of the amended policy.

EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 13/02/25

Attendance:

Councillors: Councillor Cai Larsen (Chair)
Councillor Rhys Tudur (Vice-chair)

Councillors:- Beca Brown, Jina Gwyrfai, Iwan Huws, Dawn Lynne Jones, Elwyn Jones, Gareth Tudor Jones, Gwilym Jones, Beth Lawton, Dewi Owen, John Pughe Roberts, Richard Glyn Roberts, Huw Llwyd Rowlands, Dyfrig Siencyn and Sian Williams.

Co-opted Members: Colette Owen (The Catholic Church), Sharon Roberts (Arfon Parent/Governor Representative) and Gwilym Jones (NASUWT).

Officers present: Bethan Adams (Scrutiny Advisor) and Eirian Roberts and Jasmine Jones (Democracy Services Officers).

Present for item 5 – Councillor Medwyn Hughes (Cabinet Member for Economy and Community), Sioned Williams (Head of Economy and Community Department), Dylan Griffiths (Economic Development Service Manager) and Osian Elis (Gwynedd Business Development Team Leader).

Present for item 6 – Councillor Dewi Jones (Cabinet Member for Education), Gwern ap Rhisiart (Head of Education), Rhys Glyn (Head of Gwynedd's Immersion Education System) and Meirion Prys Jones (Adviser). Also, observers from the Language Committee – Councillors Anne Lloyd Jones and Elfed Williams.

Present for item 7 – Councillor Dewi Jones (Cabinet Member for Education), Gwern ap Rhisiart (Head of Education) and Rhys Glyn (Head of Gwynedd's Immersion Education System).

Present for item 8 – Dylan Owen (Corporate Director and Statutory Director of Social Services).

The following were welcomed to the meeting:-

- New members of the committee, Councillors Beca Brown and Dyfrig Siencyn.
- Members of the Language Committee invited as observers for item 6.

Before making a start on the discussions, the Chair expressed his disappointment that none of the three main items on the agenda contained the information that had been expected when scheduling the items for this meeting. He added that although it was understandable that the workflow was sometimes slower than originally intended, it would have been much easier for the committee if a timely notice had been given of this.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Gwynfor Owen.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received.

3. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

4. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 12 December, 2024 as a true record.

5. THE GWYNEDD ECONOMY PLAN

The Cabinet Member for Economy and Community was welcomed to his first meeting of the scrutiny committee and was congratulated on his appointment. The Head of the Economy and Community Department and the officers were also welcomed to the meeting.

Submitted – a report by the Cabinet Member inviting input from the members on the contents and on further issues they believed should be considered in compiling the Gwynedd Economy Plan.

The Cabinet Member noted at the outset that this item followed on from the discussion at the scrutiny committee meeting on 25 January 2024 regarding the implementation of the Gwynedd Economy Development Project.

In response to the Chair's comments at the start of the meeting, the Head of Economy and Community Department explained:-

- That it was fair to say, when the report was presented last year, that they had expected to be in a considerably different position by now.
- The hope last autumn, when there had been a discussion in the Leadership Team, was that there would now be a completed document ready to be printed. This had not happened, although much work had taken place.
- They needed to go back to the Leadership Team, and she believed that it was beneficial to have this committee's input today to the principles and direction so that the document that would be submitted to the Leadership Team incorporated the scrutineers' observations.
- A draft of the finished document was not ready today since the Department had re-scheduled the work since the autumn. That had happened for several reasons, which included starting again on setting a new direction in the wake of appointing a new Cabinet Member, and re-planning work priorities to take account of an additional year's worth of

work in light of the UK Government's decision to extend the Levelling Up Fund for an extra year.

The Cabinet Member set out the context for the report, noting the following:-

- The UK Government's confirmation that the Levelling Up Fund would continue for a further year to 2025/26 was to be welcomed, but we could be certain that the financial landscape would change once again after April 2026. Consequently, the requirement for this Council to consider its economic priorities remained.
- Securing a document that clearly stated our aspirations would also be an important tool in influencing discussions by the two governments within the North Wales region.
- The purpose of the report to hand was to summarise the messages received and to obtain comments and feedback from the scrutineers before proceeding to finish compiling the Economic Development Strategic Plan and adopting it in the new financial year.

The members were given an opportunity to ask questions and offer observations.

A member expressed their opinion that it was difficult to scrutinise a progress report – the members had hoped to scrutinise a draft version of the Gwynedd Economy Plan at this meeting. They noted that there could be no certainty whether there would be another opportunity for this committee to scrutinise the plan before it went to the Cabinet in April. It was emphasised that it was incredibly important that Gwynedd had a high-level strategy given the likely changes in the funding programmes. Nevertheless, it was acknowledged that some very good work had been done in some areas. In response, it was noted:-

- That they agreed it was important to have a document that clearly identified Gwynedd's priorities as a county, so that it could be used to influence and target funding in the future.
- Everyone had expected the funding to end completely on 1 April, and that the document was needed this year. However, the extension of the funding for an additional year meant that staff had to cope with planning the preparation of the document alongside running a new funding programme for 2025/26.
- They hoped to be able to bring a draft document to the committee to be scrutinised in the coming months. They were aiming to have a document agreed during 2025/26 so that it was in place to influence the 2026/27 programmes.

A member enquired whether there would be an opportunity for this committee to scrutinise the draft Economy Plan before it was submitted to the Cabinet. In response, it was noted that this was considered essential. However, as it was intended to submit the draft document to the Cabinet on 8 April, and that this committee did not meet again until 10 April, it was suggested that the Cabinet item might have to be re-scheduled.

It was noted that the Plan would consider the implications of all the changes that were happening in agriculture at the moment and the importance of agriculture

to Gwynedd. The need for the Department to be in contact with the farming unions in Wales was expressed. It was emphasised that the implications of the changes were enormous for the Gwynedd countryside and were also far-reaching for rural businesses that relied on agriculture. In response, it was noted:-

- That the analysis of the economy showed the value and importance of agriculture and that the Economy Plan would need to address the changes and threats the sector were facing.
- There had been no discussions with the farming unions to date, but with regard to the wider agri-food sector, the Economy Plan would address priority projects that were being planned, such as the Glynllifon Rural Economy Hub.
- The initial document examined the economic profile and which parts of the economy were important, to be able to identify where were the risks in the economy and where economic growth was needed.
- In terms of wider engagement, discussions had been held with the Council's strategic partners, such as Bangor University and Grŵp Llandrillo Menai, and bodies representing businesses such as the Federation of Small Businesses, with regard to providing support to businesses in the county.
- The Business Survey referenced in part 5.1 of the report was an exercise that had been conducted last year to engage with businesses in the county, and 130 responses had been received to the survey.
- The purpose of the exercise had been to identify what were the businesses' aims and objectives over the period ahead, the challenges they faced and the opportunities they wished to take advantage of, in order to find whether they intended to grow, or whether they anticipated that the business would shrink.
- Recruitment challenges were one of the main challenges facing the businesses. This reflected wider trends in terms of the county's demography, and the Department was very alert to those in the report.
- Messages were also being conveyed not only about the businesses' viability and how we would be able to respond to that, but also about how we can support those businesses to increase the use of the Welsh language and its visibility.
- Officers intended to respond to the messages from the businesses in the Economy Plan in order to have a plan that suited the conditions that businesses faced in the county.

Concern was expressed regarding the timetable. In response, it was noted:-

- That it was not intended to take the final Plan to the Cabinet to be adopted at the beginning of April, and that the members would have an opportunity to scrutinise the draft document during the coming year.
- They wished to have the scrutineers' input to the discussions that would be happening during the year between the two Governments, and that the Department was also working closely with the Welsh Local Government Association to ensure that local authorities' voice formed part of that discussion.

A member emphasised the need to place particular focus in the Economy Plan on the construction industry, specifically in Dwyfor a Meirionnydd, given the effect of other Council policies, such as the Council Tax Premium, on the industry. It was also noted that it would be useful to know to what degree businesses in the different parts of Gwynedd relied on child labour (i.e. younger than 16), post-16 students and students aged 18-21, especially so in the hospitality and retail sectors, compared with other authorities - both nationally and at a state level. It was explained that this was part of a wider question, namely the shortage of workers in particular industries, as the situation would worsen over the next decades as birth rates reduced. The member questioned how viable some of these businesses were, and questioned how many more such businesses did we wish to have, given that the aim was to ensure fit-for-purpose growth, and not growth for the sake of growth. In response, the following was noted:-

- It was not believed that the data available distinguished between the ages of the workers.
- The situation reflected how tight the labour market was in Gwynedd, and that considerable effort was being made through the Gwaith Gwynedd scheme to ensure that everyone who was able to work did work, and also to encourage people to remain productive.

It was enquired whether the Department would listen to the scrutineers' wishes, and noted that the Economy Plan should address the following:-

- The over-reliance on tourism which could be very volatile.
- The need to encourage more people to take the leap to become self-employed.
- Plans to develop renewable energy.
- Promotion of high value industries. It was enquired, should the report to the committee not have referred to a report on this topic that was prepared around five years ago?
- The entire digital field, a field where people could be attracted to work from home self-employed.

It was further noted:-

- That it was felt we were losing opportunities and that we need an all-encompassing strategy, rather than a fragmented one.
- The attention given to the language in the report was welcomed, but members wished to know where tourism stood in terms of the effect on the Welsh language as it was not believed that the very low-value jobs in the tourism industry added to preserving our language and culture, and instead contributed to poverty and more Anglicisation.

In response to some of the observations, the following was noted:-

- Regarding the point about Welsh speakers within the industries, the findings of the Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities identified the three industries in Gwynedd that had the highest percentage of Welsh speakers where the percentage of speakers was higher than the overall Welsh-speaking percentage for Gwynedd. As such, it was suggested that there was still scope to increase the use and visibility of the Welsh language in the other industries, such as tourism.

- In terms of the observation regarding the range of different industries and which industries had a growth potential in Gwynedd, the report described the economy's situation as it was today. That included tourism and agriculture, and there was certainly scope to add further value from those.
- The report also recognised that there was still room for growth in new industries, such as the creative and digital industries, and to bring some diversity to the economy and create more opportunities for people to work and discover new jobs if they wished etc.

It was suggested that planning barriers may be a problem in trying to establish new businesses, and a member asked that consideration be given to this in the Economy Plan. It was also noted that we should look again at bringing high-value jobs to Llanbedr, together with Trawsfynydd, in light of the policy change by the UK Government. In response, the following was noted:-

- The aim was to secure prosperity and jobs in the county that would create opportunities for the next generation to be able to stay in their communities, and that it was essential to have a variety of jobs in the county that required a variety of different skills, so that we did not depend on any one sector.
- The planning issue was the subject of a discussion going back a while, and the Department would certainly work with officers in the Environment Department to discuss the details before returning.

It was noted that most young farmers in the rural parts of the county were involved with tourism, and without tourism, there would be no control of agriculture either. It was further noted that the Planning and Economy departments should work together more closely, and the member referred to the situation of a company that had decided to set up in Powys rather than South Meirionnydd because they received more support there. In response, it was noted:-

- That the company in question's decision to establish in Powys had been due to a shortage of suitable sites on the Gwynedd side of the boundary.
- The officers acknowledged that there were barriers, but the Plan would look at the spatial distribution across the county in order to ensure there were fair opportunities across Gwynedd, rather than the opportunities being concentrated in some areas only.

The member further noted that, although acknowledging that a shortage of land had been a factor in the case in question, the Planning Service needed to be more flexible, or otherwise more jobs would be lost to Powys.

It was noted that it would be useful if the Economy Plan provided some illustration of the more hidden contributions that people made in their communities who contribute to the economy in alternative ways to be productive in the labour market. In response, it was noted:-

- That this Plan had not addressed people's wider contribution to society, but we could look at how to incorporate this in terms of the bigger picture.
- This also raised the question of whether this was a plan for developing the economy, or a prosperous communities plan, and that we possibly needed to reconsider the purpose of the Plan.

It was noted that the economy field was crucial to the communities of Gwynedd, but as a non-statutory field, the Cabinet Member would have to fight hard for it in the Cabinet against other important areas of Council work.

Members welcomed the aim to place a focus on retaining the good jobs we already have in the county in making recruitment efforts because those jobs were often seen as more of a footnote in a report or economic strategy, rather than the main strategy of the economic plan.

RESOLVED

- 1. To accept the report and note the observations.**
- 2. That the Committee scrutinises the Draft Gwynedd Economy Plan when timely during 2025/26.**

6. EDUCATION LANGUAGE POLICY – THE ENGAGEMENT PROCEDURE

The Cabinet Member for Education reported that this report was being presented in response to a request by the members of the Committee to receive a report on the engagement process in the context of the new Education Language Policy. It was noted that the report summarised the engagement procedure in relation to the Education Language Policy.

The context was provided, noting that the Gwynedd local authority had the largest number of Welsh speakers in Wales, and also had the highest percentage of young people receiving their education through the medium of Welsh and bilingually. The officer stated that linguistic changes in the county, as well as the Welsh Government's influence on education in Wales, made it timely to review Cyngor Gwynedd's Education Language Policy and discuss which elements worked well and where any reforms or changes needed to be made.

It was explained that the Education Department had set out the procedure and the process in the report. It was noted that a number of engagement sessions had been held with primary, secondary and special schools in all parts of the county, and in areas with varying percentages of Welsh speakers. An engagement meeting had been held for representatives such as Cylch yr Iaith, Cymdeithas yr Iaith, Dyfodol i'r Iaith and RHAG (Parents for Welsh Medium Education). It was further noted that several members of this Committee, the Language Committee and the Gwynedd Governors Forum had also been involved in the process.

The aim was to create a robust Language Policy that was suitable to circumstances in Gwynedd, ensuring that it could be built upon and developed in the future. It was noted that the true situation showed a slippage in the use of the Welsh language by the county's young people. It was further noted that we needed to prevent this and increase the use of the Welsh language.

Meirion Prys Jones (Adviser) reported that 29 conversations had taken place during the engagement process in October, 2024 with a broad range of representatives from the education field and with parents. He noted that, essentially, they had asked 10

questions during the discussions, but participants had been free to express an opinion on any matter relating to the Gwynedd Education Language Policy and present recommendations for the future. He expressed that constructive and positive feedback had been received from all participants, especially from the pupils themselves.

It was noted that the main conclusions of the engagement were that the Language Policy was working well and led to success. He noted that everyone supported the Language Policy, although no-one had read it recently, leading to more of an ethos and a feeling that a good Language Policy existed, but without complete certainty of what it contained.

He highlighted that this led to the Language Policy being interpreted and implemented differently between schools, especially among the secondary schools. He noted that there was a clear difference between the primary and secondary sectors, with the Policy being applied firmly in the primary but varying more in the secondary sector. He elaborated that there was a feeling within the primary sector that the secondary sector disappointed them in terms of sustaining children's Welsh-speaking, as it did not carry on adequately when they reached secondary school.

It was reported that the main conclusion was that we needed a concise, clear and firm Language Policy which stated clearly what needs to be achieved, which must be monitored as it progressed.

A presentation was received from the Head of the Gwynedd Immersion Education System detailing the engagement sessions held by Siân Eurig (Secondary Language Strategy Coordinator) and Meirion Prys Jones. It was noted that the following feedback had been received from the engagement sessions regarding the current Language Policy:

- There was support for the Language Policy and a desire to reform it across the county.
- There was no specific feedback on how to amend the Policy.
- There was a feeling of pride towards the Immersion Education System.
- There was a strong desire for change, as there was a feeling that the Policy belonged to a time when the Welsh language was stronger in the county, and was therefore outdated.
- That the Policy needs to be evolved, not completely overhauled.

The main messages raised were underlined:

- There was praise for the primary sector for sustaining the Welsh language.
- There was a general feeling of slippage when pupils moved from primary to secondary.
- The question around expanding the capacity of Immersion Education Units had arisen.
- Learners' voice was in favour of the Policy.
- There was inconsistency between secondary schools in how they implemented the Policy, and a desire to reconcile it.
- Ysgol Friars and Ysgol Tywyn had been mentioned several times, which underlined the need for strategic planning over time to ensure an effective policy that increased the Welsh-medium provision.

- There was a need for better ownership by the schools and greater accountability by the Council, as there were strong calls for strengthening the Education Department's power to monitor this.

The main themes of the engagement sessions were highlighted in terms of the Policy itself, the need for training, the challenge of being able to recruit in order to implement the Policy, and the need to look carefully at the social use of Welsh and the role of the wider community in supporting that.

Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and offer comments.

The elected members from the Language Committee and the Scrutiny Committee expressed their feeling that the current Policy did not afford adequate protection to the Welsh language in the county. They highlighted that the main weakness was that the policy did not sustain language use, let alone increased it, in light of the demographic changes. The member noted that he was quite certain in his views about the weakness in terms of progression from one educational stage to the next, and mentioned the need for accountability for implementing the Policy and monitoring its implementation. They referred to a lack of vision in respect of the county's targets to increase the number of pupils who studied GCSE subjects and higher in Welsh, as noted in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP), noting that careful monitoring of the Plan could lead to progress over time.

It was noted that some believed that a Education Language Policy should be a policy referring to Welsh only. They elaborated that this could support headteachers, particularly when facing requests from parents to change the medium of subjects at the end of Year 9. It was enquired whether we should consider including a reference to how we can secure an adequate workforce within the Policy, and the need to introduce the benefits and importance of bilingualism, as this would contribute towards securing an adequate workforce within the County in the future.

Regarding Ysgol Friars and Ysgol Tywyn, it was noted that there had been agreement that the Gwynedd Education Language Policy should be a comprehensive policy, to include these schools, but with clear plans to successfully lead any change. They elaborated that there was an awareness of Tywyn's geographical challenges in terms of recruitment and the need to plan towards change more strategically.

It was highlighted that there was no suggestion or definitive answer as to what a revised policy should look like, should reform happen. It was expressed that the clear message was that change was needed, and that we needed a Policy that ensures language acquisition and protects the spoken language within it.

It was questioned how we could manage to keep communities as Welsh as possible throughout the county, and members had noted the need for a strategy to try to positively influence parents to promote and encourage the children's use of the Welsh language in the school and beyond. It was noted, in terms of school categorisation, that there had been comments about the need to ensure an understanding of the definitions in order to have a firm foundation to any policy, and for the Council to consider what else could be achieved within those definitions.

Thanks were expressed for the presentation. Representatives from the Committee and the Language Committee expressed pride in having the opportunity to provide input. It was noted that members' initial impression had been that they would be involved in creating the new Policy, but during the meeting, it became clear that this was not the intention. Satisfaction was expressed that a summary had been made of the comments made during the consultation meeting, and it was asked whether it would be possible to publish these notes publicly and attach them to the report for the next Committee meeting so that the comments could be seen.

A member expressed their view that the consultation carried out with some primary schools did not adequately represent the schools in the most Welsh areas, in Arfon, Meirionnydd and Dwyfor.

It was noted that there is a need for different strategies for the schools in the Tywyn catchment area and the Meirionnydd area in general, as those schools wish to be more ambitious, having been seriously identified as category one under the current categories. It was expressed that in drawing up one strategy for all schools, it was impossible to enable some schools to be as ambitious as they could be.

They referred to the report which concluded that the policy "needs to be evolved" rather than overhauled. The member emphasised that this supported the point that people were not aware of the existing policy and felt that it was not clear enough. It was expressed that this was a sign that the Language Policy needed to be completely reformed, not evolved gradually. It was noted that during the consultation session with Meirion Prys Jones, strong observations had been presented regarding the wording of the policy.

In response to the previous observations, it was noted:

- That officers were happy to append the minutes to the next Scrutiny Committee.
- The sessions being referred to were engagement sessions, with the aim of compiling as much information as possible.
- The information from the engagement sessions was being used to draw up the Language Policy, which would then be the subject of consultation.
- The schools had been selected to ensure a cross-section of the schools in Gwynedd.
- It had been a challenge to get headteachers to attend the engagement meetings. Therefore, a request was made to the federation to ask them to bring their catchment areas together to decide who would represent them.
- All headteachers had had the opportunity to express their opinions within their own catchment area, then a representative had presented those opinions in the engagement meetings.

A member referred to the Golwg 360 article in the pack, which suggested that there was less room for education and more room for other things, but reading the article, it appeared to refer to Wales generally, and not areas that were language strongholds such as Gwynedd. A member expressed that including the Golwg 360 article in the pack for this committee suggested that a decision had already been made. They felt that the article should not be part of the pack.

Reference was made to a comment in the presentation regarding society's wider role in sustaining the Welsh language, which was consistent with the decision to include the Golwg 360 article in the pack. It was understood that there were several elements involved in sustaining the Welsh language, not only education, but since we were currently discussing the Education Policy, we needed to focus on what we could influence the most. It was noted that they now had absolute power over the Language Policy, but did not have the same power over other elements that were mentioned. Concern was expressed regarding the overuse of words such as "pride" and "attitudes", noting that we needed to focus on what people did, and not on their attitudes alone. The member stated that more courage was needed in this field.

In response, the officers disagreed with terms such as "absolute power", as the Education Department did not force children to speak any language. It was noted that the fostering of positive attitudes amongst children and parents towards the Welsh language was important to encourage them to choose a Welsh-medium education. They elaborated that there were schemes underway in the Bro Dysynni and Bangor area to foster a positive attitude towards Welsh amongst children and parents. It was accepted that we needed to combine a positive attitude with a strong and firm policy. It was noted that the Education Department had a role in fostering conscientious citizens of Wales and the world. They noted that there was no intention to shape anyone's views by including the Golwg 360 article, and that it had been included merely to show context.

A member referred to an ESTYN report which indicated a shortage of teachers in several fields, including Welsh. They noted that schools such as Tywyn had difficulties finding teachers to teach subjects through the medium of Welsh, and therefore relied on English-speaking teachers to fill the roles. The member questioned what this report would do about this. They questioned whether this situation would cause some children to not speak Welsh at all.

In response, it was noted:

- That recruitment problems was an ever-increasing and national challenge.
- Work was happening with transitional schools to ensure that the workforce had access to Welsh lessons, and supporting them to introduce subjects through the medium of Welsh.
- The team were looking at an analysis of the workforce's language level in the transitional schools, and were collaborating with the National Institute to tailor and provide refresher courses, courses for raising confidence, and Welsh courses for beginners.
- Teachers from the transitional schools had applied for sabbatical courses for learning Welsh.

In response to a comment that Ysgol Friars had been excluded, it was confirmed that Ysgol Friars had not been excluded from implementing the Language Policy. They elaborated that there would be a Language Policy for the whole county, recognising the different situations of some schools such as Friars and Tywyn within the Policy, with a different plan for the Welsh language being created for these two schools and one other. It was noted that some participants in the engagement meetings had made suggestions that reflected that opinion.

A member expressed disappointment that this report only provided a taster of the information. They agreed that the inclusion of the Golwg 360 article had put an unfortunate skew to the discussion. They expressed uncertainty about having an individual strategy for different schools. It was noted that there was a genuine need to monitor the Language Policy in the future. The expressed concern regarding the phrase 'protect the spoken language', as it only signified one part of the picture. It was emphasised that this was an Education Language Policy, and that children only got one chance to gain proper acquisition of the Welsh language, therefore, high-quality language must be introduced to develop relevance and pride. It was expressed that none of this came through from the taster of the new Language Policy. It was noted that there was no time to have a gradual evolution. They hoped that the draft report would be more promising than what had been presented in the meeting.

In response, it was noted:

- That the new Language Policy would be one County Policy, with individual plans and specifications for every school.
- The policy did not differentiate, and the desire and ambition were the same for the County, but there would be individual plans for the schools so that they could demonstrate over time how they were achieving the Policy.
- Monitoring would be key to implementing the Policy, and a lack of monitoring had been identified as a weakness during the engagement.
- It was an elected member who had made the comment regarding 'protecting the spoken language'.

It was asked whether specific attention is intended to be given to monitoring methods. It was questioned whether schools would have the right to set their own improvement targets within individual plans and to develop their own individual Language Policy.

In response, it was noted:

- That the Language Policy in its current form was not one the Department could insist that schools followed, but the new Language Policy would be mandatory.
- Individual plans were required in order to help the schools reach targets and monitor them against those targets.
- We needed to set out the ambition within the Policy, specify clearly what the plans were, have plans to support schools to reach the goal and monitor that schools adhered to the strategic plans.
- This matter had been brought to the Committee to report where we had reached in the process, and to be transparent as possible.

The point made about having access to records from the engagements was reiterated.

Support was expressed towards strengthening this Policy. It was emphasised that social use of the Welsh language was paramount. It was noted that the Council had a responsibility to strengthen opportunities to use Welsh socially. It was noted that everyone had a responsibility regarding the social use of Welsh, including individuals and elected members, to support Welsh learners in communities and foster a positive attitude. It was further noted that people bringing up children, or who were involved

with children, had a responsibility to invite children from non-Welsh speaking backgrounds to take part in recreational activities with Welsh-speaking children.

A member questioned if lessons had been learned from the pilot in Bangor that focused on the transition between Primary and Secondary that could help us make the transition more successful.

In response, the following was noted:

- We had identified schools in the Bangor and Tywyn catchment areas specifically where the children's language fell to level C1, meaning that their English was stronger than their Welsh.
- We were working with Cwmni'r Frân Wen to provide opportunities for children to use their Welsh and gain confidence in their spoken Welsh within the project in Bangor and Tywyn.
- This project had gone from strength to strength over the third year.
- Schools were reporting that the children were developing confidence in the Welsh language and that they also saw the Frân Wen in Bangor as a hub outside school hours to use their Welsh.
- That feedback from the pilot had been very positive.
- They hoped to continue and extend these opportunities in order to ensure progression and maintain the language continuum, so that there was no slippage.

A member gave thanks for the report and hoped to see the full records from the engagement sessions. They noted that nothing unexpected sprang out when seeing the main conclusions. They expressed hope that there would be a summary of Meirion Prys Jones's personal recommendations as a language acquisition expert regarding the best way of proceeding to create a Language Policy in Gwynedd.

It was expressed that the Gwynedd Education Language Policy was weak because Ysgol Friars and Ysgol Tywyn were in the Language Policy, as the situation in those schools was that no-one studied a subject through the medium of Welsh, apart from Welsh itself. The member noted that the fact that the Policy allowed this showed how weak it was. It was elaborated that the Policy dated back to the days of the old Cyngor Gwynedd, and that it had not changed much since, and its essence was that if someone did not feel capable to do things through the medium of Welsh, there was no obligation on them to do so.

It was expressed that, with all the consultation, there was a tendency to lose sight of the point in question, which was to strengthen the Gwynedd Education Language Policy in an area where the language was still alive and stronger than in other parts of Wales. The member elaborated that we needed to try and strengthen it as much as possible, and a complete change was required. It was noted that Gwynedd had the demography and staffing resources to deliver this change – we just needed courage.

RESOLVED

- 1. To accept the report and note the observations.**

- 2. That the Committee scrutinises the Draft Education Language Policy along with the Strategy to support the implementation of the policy at the 10 April 2025 meeting.**
- 3. To ask for a copy of the relevant minutes of the engagement meetings.**
- 4. To invite members of the Language Committee to attend the Committee meeting for the item**

7. IMMERSION EDUCATION SYSTEM

The Cabinet Member for Education provided the context. It was noted that the Cabinet had decided at its meeting on 16 July 2021 that it was timely to reorganise these centres and create a new Immersion Education System. It was explained that the Committee had expressed a wish to scrutinise the new system after it had been given time to become established. He explained that the Education Department had decided to appoint a research team from Bangor University to evaluate the Immersion Education System in Gwynedd. He elaborated that this team had conducted visits and had spoken with stakeholders, and would report back soon with its recommendations.

A member questioned how the three participants had been selected for the case study, and what had been the criteria. In response, it was noted that the three had been selected by the university. It was explained that this relied on parental consent and that they had been selected at random, which was a scientific method of selecting participants in case studies. It was elaborated that the participants came from different immersion centres.

A member expressed interest in getting a copy of the equality impact assessment. Concern was expressed regarding the slant and focus of the report and the initial decision to cut from five immersion days to four. It was noted that the focus, without exception, was on the individuals going through the immersion system, with no mention of consultation with parents, other learners in the school, or wider society or elected members. It was expressed that the decision, the report, and the proposed research were thoroughly neo-liberal in their ideology.

It was explained, in response, that this research specifically looked at the implications for children going through the immersion system, but the point regarding the impact on schools was accepted, and conversations had been conducted with headteachers regarding this matter. Attention was drawn to the fact that the Education Department was prepared to strengthen or change the arrangements in response to recommendations, but they were waiting to see what the report stated before drawing any conclusions. The officer underlined that no effort had been made to conceal anything, and in terms of considering reports that had been produced over time, they were more than prepared to see what the impact had been. They noted that the point regarding equality implications was accepted, and that its scope was possibly greater than expected in standard reports.

In response to what was said, a member expressed that research would be expected before making the decision to reduce the number of immersion education days. From a lay person's perspective, it was noted that this appeared to be a financial decision.

It was noted that, considering the decision to revamp the immersion centres had been made in order to provide high-quality provision, the number of teachers had been reduced from two per centre to one teacher and one assistant, and the number of centres had been decreased, with the immersion period changed from five days to four. It was expressed that this type of immersion was not intensive if it was not five days. There were difficulties for teachers in scheduling for children who attended the centre for four days of immersion and then returned to school for one day a week. The member highlighted a reference in the documents to holding sports activities on Fridays for these children, but after enquiring, they noted that this did not happen. It was noted that children sometimes got materials on their laptops from the centre, but the language unit very rarely visited to inspect if the children were alright. It was questioned whether this was truly beneficial to the child being immersed.

It was noted that some children, when returning to school for one day a week, felt nervous about their ability to follow things. It was confirmed that this fact, consequently, could lead to teachers speaking more through the medium of English, changing the language customs of the class completely. It was expressed that this had not been measured at all in the consultation. They elaborated that the current consultation questions did not allow people to express comments on the impact of the arrangements on the remaining children or on their language habits. It was expressed that this was a matter that caused concern.

In response, it was confirmed that the evaluation of the system placed a clear focus on integrating the transition day back into the mainstream. It was noted that the staff involved in the research had followed the children during the first week in the immersion units, and on the Friday, and had also observed the end of the children's time on the course to compare their confidence level. The team had also followed the children in the mainstream to assess the effect of the transition on them, how much language use they had, and what was the effect on the schools.

The members wished to see any relevant documents regarding how the decision to cut immersion days had been made.

Disappointment was expressed regarding the comments expressed about the changes to the immersion education system. It was noted that although financial considerations applied to every service, they had managed to attract much more funding than had been invested in this service. It was highlighted that the main reason for reviewing the system was that it had not changed since its inception in 1984, and that it was now outdated and inefficient. This review was welcomed, and it was hoped that it will show the way forward and address the negative comments. A member underlined their view that the new approach would be much more effective.

One member expressed their view that immersion 80% of the time was not sufficient, and they believed that we were taking a step back in allowing this. Reference was made to the survey for parents and the questions, noting that the Education Department was looking for answers to justify what the Council wanted to do, without being entirely objective. Disappointment was expressed that teachers had to cope with increased work pressure on Fridays.

It was noted, in response, that immersion was not entirely comprehensive anyway, as children are at home over the weekend. It was pointed out that a number of schools in Gwynedd had a high percentage of children who used English on the school yard, and these were not just the children who attended the immersion centres. The officers accepted the point that releasing children from the immersion centres on Fridays can be inconvenient for teachers, especially given the amount of work they had. They expressed appreciation towards teachers who were willing to adapt plans and work for different levels of children's ability. They expressed their desire for the report to be accepted so that the matter can be considered in a scientific manner. Concern was noted about the feeling expressed about the changes, emphasising the important role that assistants played within immersion centres.

RESOLVED

- 1. To accept the report and note the observations.**
- 2. That the Committee scrutinises the Immersion Education Programme Improvement Recommendations Action Plan at the 10 April 2025 meeting.**

8. SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS IN SCHOOLS SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION BRIEF

It was noted that safeguarding arrangements in schools had been scrutinised at the Committee's meeting on 18 July 2024. There was an informal discussion after the meeting regarding the possibility of holding a Task and Finish Group or a Scrutiny Investigation into the area. It was concluded that a further discussion should be held at the informal meeting of the Committee on 5 September 2024. Concern had been expressed by the members present about the implementation of the safeguarding arrangements within our schools. A draft brief for the scrutiny investigation was considered at the Committee's informal meeting on 9 January 2025.

It was noted that the main question that the investigation would address is: "Are safeguarding arrangements in county schools appropriate and implemented consistently?". It was noted that the investigation intended to consider the authority's current arrangements in relation to safeguarding in schools, as well as arrangements in a sample of schools.

At the informal meeting of the Committee on 9 January 2025, the members were invited to express an interest in becoming members of the investigation. It was concluded that an e-mail should be sent to all members of the Committee to ask them to state which school governing bodies they were members of. The email stressed that members would be required to ensure they had completed the "Child and Adult Safeguarding Training" to be part of the investigation.

It was noted that a maximum of five members may be involved in the investigation and, in accordance with the Council's Constitution, the membership was required to include representation of no less than two different political groups. It was discussed that, given that this was an education issue, it would be appropriate to include one co-opted member with a vote on education issues only.

RESOLVED

- 1. To adopt the brief.**
- 2. To elect the following members to undertake the work of the investigation:**
 - Councillors Dawn Lynne Jones, Cai Larsen, Gwynfor Owen, John Pughe Roberts and Dyfrig Siencyn**
 - Co-opted Member – Sharon Roberts (Arfon Parent/Governor Representative)**
 - Reserve member – Councillor Richard Glyn Roberts**

The meeting began at 10:30am and ended at 1:00pm.

Chair

MEETING	Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee
DATE	10 April, 2025
TITLE	Youth Service
REASON FOR SCRUTINY	Council Plan 2023-28 - Tomorrow's Gwynedd
AUTHOR	Steffan Williams- Youth Services Manager
CABINET MEMBER	Cllr Dewi Jones

1. Why it needs scrutiny

1.1 The Youth Service provides an important service for the young people of the county.

1.2 The service's work was scrutinised by the Care Scrutiny Committee on 10 November 2022, prior to the transfer of the service to the Education Department. The Committee scrutinised developments in the field after the Youth Service was remodelled in 2018.

1.3 'Extending Opportunities for Play' is a priority project in the Council Plan 2023-2028. It is intended to review how the new provision for youth is implemented across the county, identifying and evaluating the outcomes it delivers for the young people of Gwynedd.

2. What exactly needs scrutiny?

- The conclusions of the evaluation
- What do young people think of the provision?
- Does the service meet the demand?
- Are there any new funding opportunities available to develop the service?

3. Summary of the Key Matters

3.1 The Youth Service is included as one of the priorities of the Council Plan, under the Tomorrow's Gwynedd project - *'Assurance that suitable facilities and playing fields are available for children and young people in their free time.'*

3.2 The Scrutiny Committee is required to provide guidance on the direction of the Youth Service in the future to discuss whether or not it still meets the needs of Gwynedd's young people and delivers its objectives following the restructuring in 2018.

3.3 Since the restructuring in 2018, there have been significant changes in terms of COVID, working methods, funding streams and policy expectations, including an increasing emphasis on youth well-being, equality of opportunities and provision that responds to local needs. It is crucial that the Youth Service assesses the impact of

these changes, with guidance from the Scrutiny Committee, to ensure that the quality and accessibility of the Service continues to offer relevant and effective support for young people.

- 3.4 Young people's needs have continued to evolve over the years, especially considering factors such as the impact of the pandemic, mental health challenges and changes to the education and employment landscape. This means there is a need to review the provision regularly to ensure that it remains relevant and reflects the reality that young people experience.

4. Background / Context

4.1 The Cabinet decided to remodel the Youth Service in 2018. The Youth Service was remodelled to establish a new model from 1 September 2018. The following structure was established for the Youth Service back in 2019:

- Provide a Programme of Youth Work Activities and Projects for young people aged 11-19 through the schools (14 secondary schools and 2 special schools) through a 11-19 Youth Support Team with eight full-time Youth Workers.
- Provide a Programme of Social Activities and Projects for young people aged 11-19 in communities throughout the year, by moving from place to place. This work is carried out by the Community Youth Work Team, with 37 part-time staff members.
- Support Community and Town Councils to establish Social Youth Clubs for young people according to demand. This work is carried out by the Community Youth Work Team, with 24 part-time staff members.
- Provide personal support to young people aged 16-25 who are facing barriers to engaging with education, training or employment, through the 16-25 Youth Support Team with five full-time Youth Workers.
- Commission the 3rd Sector to deliver activities and projects on behalf of the Youth Service as required.

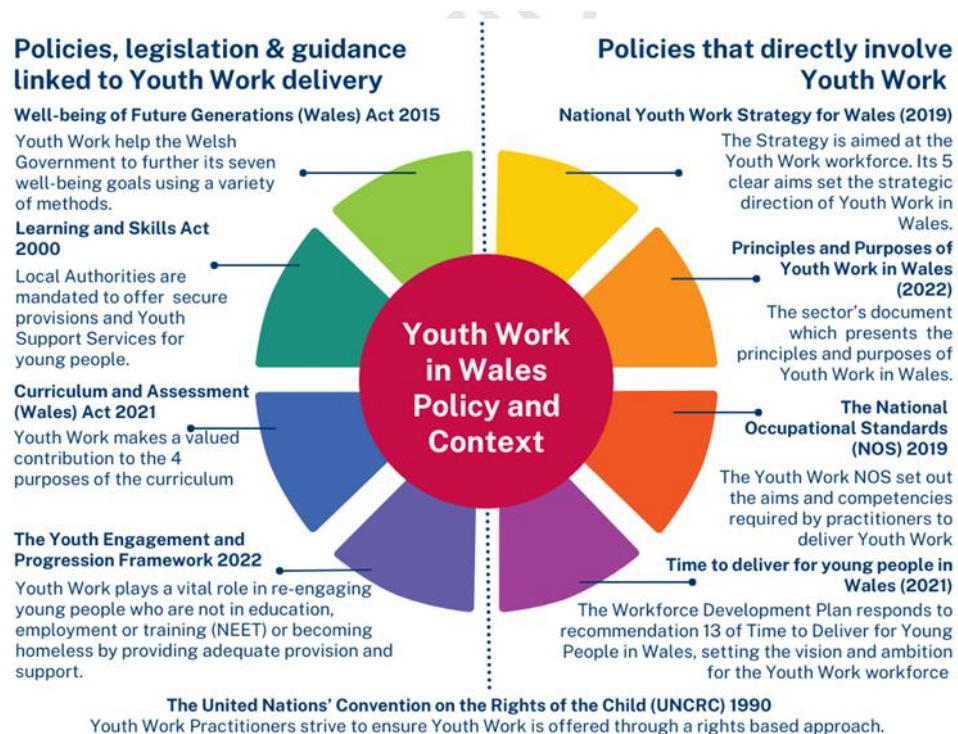
4.2 Legislative Context

4.2.1 The Youth Service is one of the priorities of the Council Plan within the Tomorrow's Gwynedd project - *'Assurance that suitable facilities and playing fields are available for children and young people in their free time.'* The service works to create safe spaces for young people, and offers education and adventure opportunities, and develops community activities and competitions to promote social skills and cohesion.

4.2.2 Providing Youth Support Services is a statutory requirement under the Skills and Education Act 2000. The Welsh Government (WG) directs local authorities to provide, ensure the provision of, or participate in the provision of youth support services. WG does this for the Youth Work and Youth Services of Local Authorities through the "Extending Entitlement - Direction and Guidance (2002)", the National Youth Work Strategy for Wales 2019; Engagement and Development Framework 2022; Curriculum for Wales and the Youth Charter 2016.

4.2.3 The Youth Service's provision also contributes to other broader Welsh Government Strategies - the Child Poverty Strategy for Wales 2024, Ending homelessness in

Wales: a high-level action plan 2021-2026, Children and Young People Plan and Housing Support Grant.



4.2.4 The Welsh Government is also in the process of consulting to strengthen statutory guidance with a new statutory guidance for youth work in Wales. This statutory framework will incorporate the following crucial elements:

- a definition of youth work as part of the broader youth support services.
- introduction of the new youth work entitlement for young people.
- an amended strategic planning and reporting mechanism for youth work.

4.2.5 Estyn has now started reviewing Youth Work as part of its national monitoring process to assess the quality and provision of youth services in Wales. The aim of the inspection is to evaluate how effective the youth services are at supporting the personal, social and educational development of young people. The inspectors will consider a broad range of factors, including service accessibility, the impact of activities on the well-being and skills development of young people, and the quality of leadership and governance. The feedback and the findings will steer the strategic development of youth services in the future, ensuring that young people receive the best possible support.

4.2.6 The Service's entire provision is now based on the "Five Ways to Well-being" model to ensure that all its activities, projects and interventions build personal resilience and promote young people's emotional well-being. Through grant-funding, the Service has a Health and Well-being Worker to lead on this work and ensure that the provider teams all address the five ways to well-being in the work they do from day to day.

4.3 Other Funding Sources:

4.3.1 To support the core funding the Youth Service receives within the Council, a percentage of the service's budget comes from the Welsh Government Youth Support Grant (the figure for 2025-26; £449,314), a reduction of 6.75% of the previous year. This funding has been confirmed in principle until March, 2028. The funding has conditions and priorities that have been identified by Welsh Government;

- The Implementation of the Youth Engagement and Development Framework in Gwynedd
- Mental Health and emotional Well-being through youth work methods
- Homelessness among young people

4.3.2 In addition to the above funding, the Youth Service is commissioned by town councils (9 areas) to lead on community provision in its cluster. This provision is in addition to our statutory offer, with a focus on providing safe locations for young people to socialise and participate in well-being activities. The service is open to collaborating with other town councils around the county who want to offer community provision in their local area however; it is an ongoing challenge to recruit part-time staff to lead this provision.

4.3.3 The Gwynedd Youth Service works with the Council's Youth Justice Team to fund a Preventative and Early Intervention Youth Worker as part of the 'Be Di'r Sgôr?' project. This provision, which is available for every young person across the county, provides essential support to reduce risks and prevent young people from issues relating to substance misuse. Through a combination of information, advice, targeted work and specialist support, the service responds to the individual needs of young people, helping them to make positive decisions and develop life skills. This collaboration is an example of how services integrate to create opportunities and provide effective support for young people in Gwynedd.

4.3.4 The Youth Service has also been successful in receiving funding through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund which funds one additional 16-25 Youth Support Team Lead Worker to increase the resource to respond to the needs of these young people.

4.4 The Future and our Challenges

4.4.1 Recruiting staff to work on our community provision remains a major challenge for the service. We have tried to overcome this by revising the way we promote the jobs and have attended a number of job fairs, but it is still challenging, especially in the rural areas.

We are seeing a continuation of behavioural challenges amongst some groups of young people, and/or in some specific areas. We work with North Wales Police and the Youth Justice Service when these situations arise. Often, the young people choose not to engage in the activities provided by the Youth Service, nor do they wish to receive support from a Youth Worker. We try to adapt our offer, talk to groups of young people to

find out their interests, to help them be involved in activities or to provide directly for them, but because of the voluntary nature of Youth Work we cannot force young people to engage with us or what we offer. At times young people's behaviour in their communities can be challenging and be the subject of statutory intervention by the Police / Justice Service, but it can at times involve improving society's understanding and tolerance of young people.

4.4.2 As some young people's needs become more profound, and as the number of young people needing support increases, the challenge of working with other partners continues. Many of our young people are finding it increasingly difficult to live a full life because transport is now one of the main barriers to them being involved with the Youth Service, but also, in general in their lives in terms of having access to education, training, employment, social opportunities and enjoyment.

5. Performance Data

5.1 The Youth Service provides reports on its performance every term during Education Performance Challenge meetings. The monthly measures are scrutinised by the Chief Executive, the Head of Education and the Cabinet Member. The following data is used to monitor and evaluate the impact of the provision on young people;

- Number of individuals who have used the Youth Support Service for 11-19 year olds
- Number of individuals who have used the Youth Community Service
- Number of accreditations young people have completed (measured every three months)
- 16-25 Youth Support Service Caseload
- % of young people who have enjoyed the service provided
- % of young people who have improved their well-being over a three month period (16-25 team)
- % of young people who have achieved the objectives of their personal plans.
- % of young people whose Well-being has been improved after attending the service
- % of young people who would wish to continue to attend well-being sessions in the future.

5.2 The Youth Service is currently reporting on young people's participation in its activities, rather than the number of unique individuals who participate in the provision. It will be possible to provide this information at the end of the financial year, as soon as the registrations of the community clubs have been received and analysed.

5.3 The Service recognises the need to modernise our data collection, monitoring and evaluation methods and we have set this as a key priority for the next year. Accordingly, meetings have been held with Cyngor Gwynedd's Innovation and Technology Team to develop an internal data gathering system that will be more effective and efficient.

5.4 There is also a requirement for the Youth Service to complete reports on progress against the activities funded by the Youth Support Grant;

- ◆ The Implementation of the Youth Engagement and Development Framework in Gwynedd
- ◆ Mental Health and emotional Well-being through youth work methods
- ◆ Homelessness among young people

The aim of the performance report is to ensure that we provide;

- Tailored / targeted open access youth work, in accordance with identified local needs, with consideration of equality and variety of opportunities for young people, and in accordance with National Occupational Standards and 'Youth Work in Wales: Principles and Purposes'.
- Strengthening youth work to ensure that it is in a better position to introduce, and increase access*, to provision, in order to identify young people's mental health, emotional or well-being problems early on and support them.
- Provide early intervention activity within the Youth Engagement and Development Framework and youth work which has the aim of addressing youth homelessness.

6. Consultation

6.1 Gathering opinion and feedback about the Youth Service after its restructuring in 2018 is essential to evaluate its impact and ensure that it meets the needs of young people in an effective way. It offers an opportunity to understand how relevant and efficient the changes are, identifying any gaps or fields that need improving. By listening to the views of young people, staff and other stakeholders, the provision can be amended and developed continually to ensure that it continues to be accessible, inclusive and supports the personal development and well-being of young people.

6.2 To obtain feedback about the Youth Service, a questionnaire was distributed to secondary schools, colleges, third sector organisations and on social media platforms. The Council's Research and Analysis Unit facilitated access to the questionnaire to all partners. This enables us to gather wide ranging and diverse views from young people and stakeholders, ensuring that the feedback represents different experiences and viewpoints on the service provision. Following the process of gathering information, the core data was evaluated by the Council's Research and Analysis Unit.

6.3 In addition to the questionnaire, conversations were held with our contacts in the schools to discuss the direct experiences of pupils and the support that was available to them through the Youth Service. This was an opportunity to hear directly from teachers and youth workers who support young people on a daily basis.

6.4 Discussions were also held with Llais Ni, the Youth Service's young people forum, providing a place for young people to express their opinion and to have an influence on improvements to the service. Additionally, discussions were held with the Gwynedd Young People Support Service Forum for 11-25 year olds including partners and organisations that work with young people to ensure that the opinion

and views of professional stakeholders are considered when assessing the impact and performance of the service.

7. What was the response to the questionnaire?

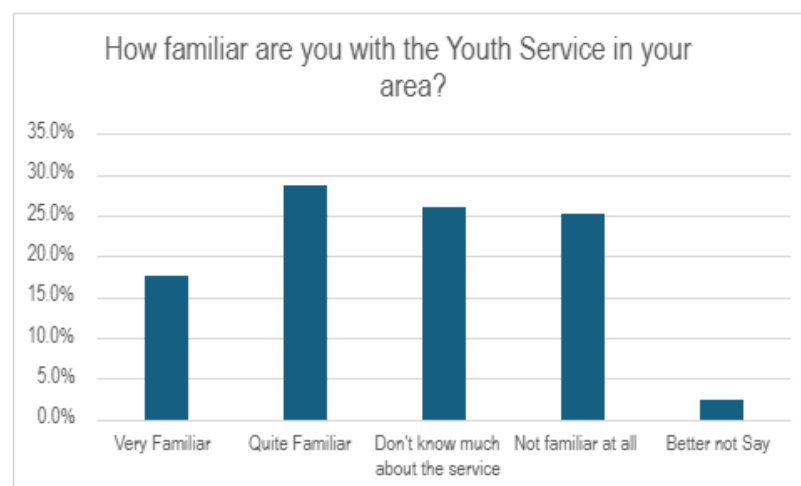
7.1

- 801 responses were received from young people.
- 707 responses were received from pupils (we were reliant on the schools to administrate/distribute the questionnaires to school pupils). Some schools shared it with a specific year and others shared it with a specific group / school council. Pupils from all of the secondary schools responded to the questionnaire.
- 65 responses were received from young people who attend one of the colleges located in Gwynedd.
- 10 responses were received from young people in work / apprenticeship or on a training scheme.
- 8 responses were received from young people who were unemployed.

8. What were the main findings of the Questionnaire?

8.1 The Current Service

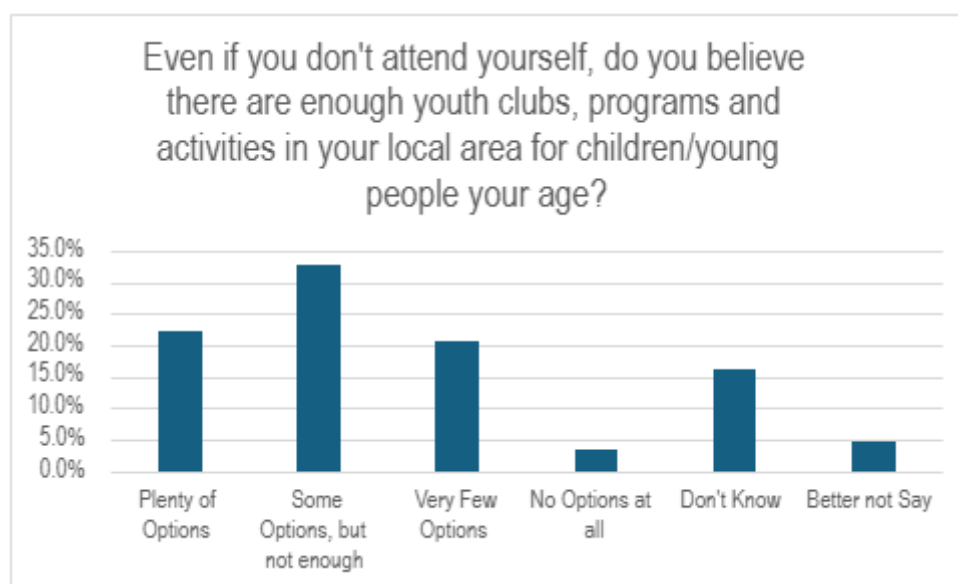
8.1.1 Of the 801 respondents, 17.6% were very familiar with the Youth Service in our area, while 28.7% were relatively familiar. However, 26.1% have heard about it but without much information. This shows that awareness of the service is mixed, with an opportunity to improve the recognition and understanding of what is available to young people.



8.1.2 The data shows that 14.6% of the respondents consider the provision for young people in their area to be "very good", with 28.6% calling it "good". Additionally, 21.5% consider it "satisfactory". Although the majority of respondents provide a positive or acceptable assessment of the offer that is available, the results suggest the need to consider measures to improve the provision and address any areas of dissatisfaction.

8.1.3 The data shows that the majority of responders consider the role of the Youth Service in schools and in the community important. In terms of its role in the school, 42.7% rate it as "very important" and 34.2% as "quite important", suggesting that youth support within the school is considered essential for developing skills, well-being and awareness. In the community, 33.8% consider the service to be "very important", while 40.9% see it as "quite important", drawing attention to the need for the Youth Service's strong presence beyond the schools, to ensure that young people receive support in different contexts. These results show that the service has a central role to play in different locations, offering opportunities and support to local people in their educational community environments.

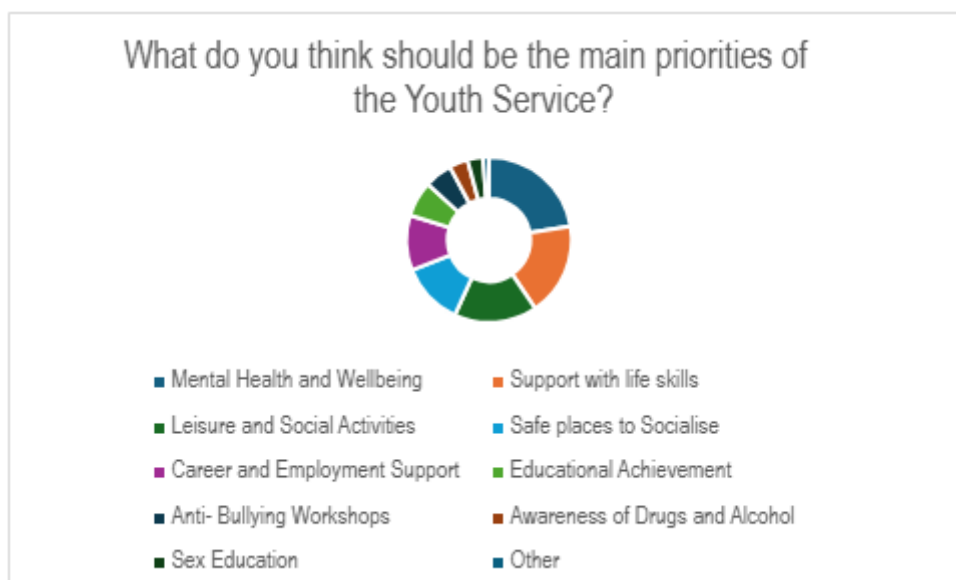
8.1.4 The following graph shows there is a mixed opinion about the availability of provision for young people in local communities. Only 22.2% of the respondents believe there are enough options available, while 32.7% acknowledge there are some opportunities but feel there are not enough. Also, 20.7% note that the opportunities are very scarce, and 3.4% report there are no options at all in their area. These findings draw attention to concerns about accessibility and provision for young people, suggesting there is a need to strengthen the offer to ensure more opportunities available to young people in every area.



8.2 Service Priorities

8.2.1 According to the responses, the greatest priority for the Youth Service in the future is the support for mental health and well-being, with 56.3% of respondents identifying it as a key matter. Additionally, 45.9% consider support with life skills important, while 40.9% emphasise the need for social and leisure activities. Safe places to socialise (30.8%) and employment and careers guidelines (27.2%) are also considered important.

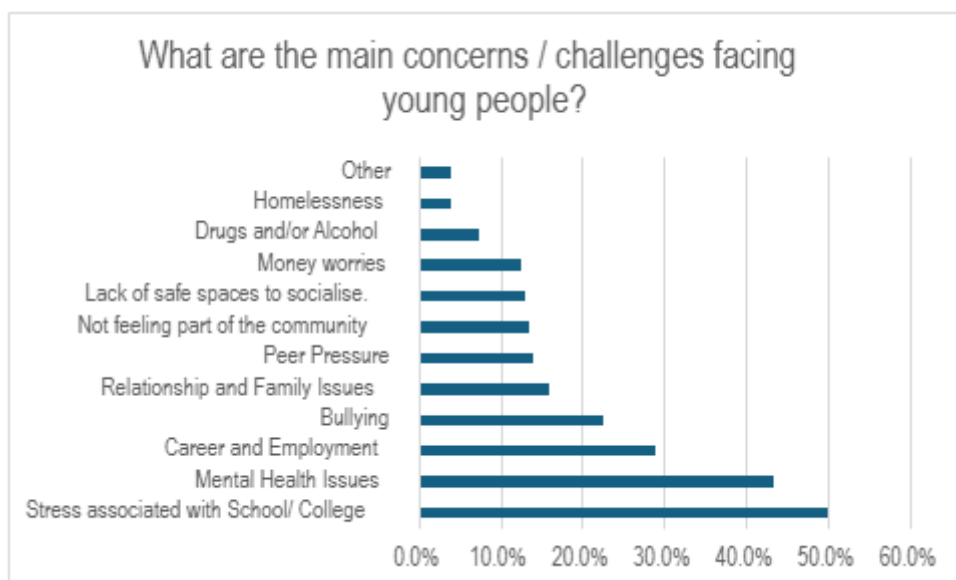
8.2.2 These results show that the Youth Service is expected to provide a range of support that goes beyond leisure activities only, including personal development and mental health, see the following chart.



8.2.3. In terms of access to youth support, the majority of respondents (46.4%) favour having this support in a youth club, while 40.8% see schools and colleges as a suitable location. Additionally, 19.5% like the idea of receiving support in a community location, and 14.6% prefer receiving this support in their home. These results show that a variety of locations is important to ensure that youth services are accessible and meet the needs of young people.

8.3 Current Challenges for Gwynedd's Young People

8.3.1 The data shows that young people face a variety of concerns and challenges, with the most common relating to stress associated to school, college or university (50.1%). Mental health problems are also a significant concern, with 43.3% of respondents identifying this as an important challenge. Additionally, 29% are concerned about finding a job or career path, while 22.6% identify bullying as a great concern. Family or relationship problems (16.1%), peer pressure (14.1%) and not feeling safe in the community (13.6%) are also highlighted as key matters. 13.1% see the lack of leisure areas or activities as a challenge, while 12.5% are worried about financial matters. Concerns relating to drugs and alcohol (7.5%) and homelessness (4%) are less common but are still important issues for some young people. These results show the need for comprehensive support to address these matters, especially in relation to mental health, education and career opportunities.



8.3.2 The data shows there is a variety of experience among young people in terms of feeling that their opinion is being heard during youth activities. 18% feel they are always heard, while 33.3% note that they are heard often. However, 22.7% say they are heard only occasionally, and 17% feel that their opinion is never considered.

8.3.3 These results draw attention to the need to strengthen engagement methods with young people to ensure that their voices are heard and that they feel part of the process of forming youth activities.

9. Other results from the questionnaire:

- 73% have noted that the Youth Service should be available to every young person rather than prioritising the whole service to provide targeted work.
- Lack of Time (44.8%) and Social Anxiety (26.6%) are noted as the main reasons that prevent them from participating in the Youth Service provision in the community.
- Young people note that the main reasons to participate in youth work activities in the community are; to have fun (40%), to spend time with friends (25.7%), to have new experiences (21.4%) and to improve my well-being (20.6%).
- Participating in youth work activities has improved their:
 - Confidence / Self-respect for 53.6% of respondents.
 - Life Skills for 51.7% of respondents.
 - Mental Well-being for 52.1% of responders
 - To help make positive life choices for 48.4% of respondents
 - Access to new opportunities for 51.8% of respondents

9. Findings from Meetings with Secondary School Contacts

9.1 The schools have expressed an appetite to see more presence from youth workers at the schools to be able to increase the positive impact of their work. It was shared there was a need to focus in particular on providing valuable experiences and developing life skills for young people in KS3 to prepare them for KS4 challenges.

There is a need to prioritise the offer of completing Agored Cymru accreditations, work to target specific groups and facilitate health education workshops for KS4 pupils.

- 9.2** The schools have drawn attention to the need for the Youth Service to work with specific groups of young people in KS4, including those with low attendance, year 10 / 11 pupils without a concrete plan after leaving school, learners who do not follow a core timetable, and young people with low level mental health needs and who find it difficult to cope within a school environment.
- 9.3** Additionally, the schools appreciate the need to have better communication between the Youth Service and schools, including sharing information about the available provision by creating a prospectus. There is also a suggestion that youth workers meet the school every term to introduce their work plan and session goals, in addition to sharing what's been delivered by the end of the term.
- 9.4** The consultations held with young people about the Youth Service have provided valuable insights to the way the service is perceived and experienced by the users. By gathering feedback using a variety of methods, it has become apparent that young people acknowledge the value of the existing provision. Although suggestions have emerged on improving certain areas, the general feedback has confirmed that the current structure continues to meet the needs of Gwynedd's young people. Therefore, the Youth Service can continue to develop within the existing framework, building on their strengths to ensure that the support offered continues to be relevant and effective.

10. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

- 10.1** The Youth Service contributes to improving social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being in Wales by operating in accordance with the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015. By providing learning opportunities, personal development and meaningful experiences, it supports young people to deliver their potential and build a sustainable future. The service adopts the 5 ways of working through long term planning, working with partners, integrating services, including young people in the decision process and preventing social problems with early support. In doing so, it contributes to each of the 7 well-being goals, including a healthier, more equal, resilient and cohesive Wales, strengthening its cultural identity and encouraging the active participation of young people in their communities.
- 10.2** The Youth Service plays a key role in helping the Council to deliver its well-being duty by acting in accordance with the sustainable development principle. By planning and implementing services that support young people to develop skills, knowledge and confidence, the service considers the long term impact of decisions on future generations. By working with partners and including young people in the decision process, it ensures that their present needs are met without risking future opportunities. This method contributes to building more resilient, equal and

sustainable communities, strengthening social, economic, cultural and environmental well-being in the long term.

10.3 Have you **involved** residents / service users? If not, when and how do you intend to consult with them?

We have already held engagement sessions with young people, stakeholders and schools, see point 8 for more information. Additionally, the Gwynedd Youth Service often engages with residents and service users to address the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Through schemes such as 'Llais Pobl Ifanc' and the process of developing the service's community provision, young people's opinions are heard and incorporated in decisions. The service promotes a participatory method, ensuring that young people are involved in creating safe social opportunities, meaningful activities and community competitions that contribute to economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being. Through collaborating with partner agencies and international organisations, the service supports a sustainable method of working that reflects the principles of the Act.

10.4 How have you considered the long term and what people's needs will be in years to come?

To prevent problems from arising or intensifying in the future, we will continue to work on a multi-agency level and regularly evaluate the impact of any change. This procedure is already in place, with £60,000 of the Youth Service's funding being shared with third sector organisations this year to identify the gaps in service, expand our community provision and meet the needs of young people in the county.

The Youth Service is also considering the long term needs of young people by adopting a strategic method that focuses on developing skills, resilience and opportunities that prepare them for the future. By gathering evidence internally through questionnaires, Young People's Voice forums, engaging with partners, and monitoring social and economic trends, the service is able to anticipate emerging challenges and opportunities. By working with partners in education, employment, health (through SHRN findings) and support services, it ensures that young people receive the necessary support and resources to develop to become confident and responsible adults. This method ensures that the service is ready to respond to changing needs in the future and contributes to the long term well-being of communities.

10.5 To ensure **integration**, have you considered the potential impact on other public bodies?

The Youth Service ensures integration by working closely with other public bodies, including local authorities, schools, health services and community organisations to provide holistic support to young people. By coordinating services, sharing information and co-developing enterprises, the service improves the impact on broader policies such as well-being, education and community safety. This method not only avoids duplicating services but also strengthens strategic cohesiveness and ensures that the voice of young people influences public decisions. This integration will highlight itself further over the next 12 months, when a 5 year strategy will be designed in accordance with the requirements of the New Statutory Framework for Youth Work.

11. Next Steps

11.1 Following the general consultation process with young people, partners and secondary schools regarding the Youth Service provision, the Youth Service proposes to act to ensure that the provision meets the needs and expectations of these groups. This work includes developing a strategy and action plans for the future and is based on the opinion and input provided during the consultation process.

11.2 Developing a three-year strategy

11.2.1 We are in the process of developing a three-year strategy to coincide with the confirmation of three year's funding through the Youth Support Grant. This strategy will provide a clear direction to develop services and offer opportunities to young people, ensuring that the resources and provisions that are available support the needs of this group. The strategy seeks to ensure that youth services are accessible, adequate and that they respond to the new challenges that young people face nowadays, while also working closely with key partners such as schools, community organisations and health services to provide holistic support. The strategy will also include measures to increase young people's participation in local decisions and activities, giving them a place for their voice to be heard and ensuring that their needs are considered when developing services and policies in the future.

11.3 Developing the Gwynedd Support Services Forum for Young People aged 11-25 years old

11.3.1 To respond to the new Statutory Framework for Youth Work that has been formed by the Welsh Government, where there is a requirement to strengthen the process of planning and delivering by working with local partners, the Youth Service has established the Gwynedd Support Services Forum for Young People aged 11-25 year olds. This group includes a range of professional workers and key partners who have an important role in providing youth services in Gwynedd. The

membership includes third sector organisations, representatives of the health sector, statutory partners and other departments in local government. The group plays a key role in the process of discussing, developing and implementing long term plans for youth work in the future.

11.4 Youth Forum

- 11.4.1 To ensure that the voice of young people is heard and that their needs are considered in the strategic decisions, a Youth Forum has been established. This forum will give young people an opportunity to come together to share their opinions and experiences, including any challenges and opportunities that arise from the consultation process. The forum will be an integral part of the plans, ensuring that every element of the provision is based on the requirements and the viewpoints and values that come from the young people.

11.5 Work Contract with Schools

- 11.5.1 As part of our efforts to standardise our provision in the schools, we will look to concentrate on strengthening our communications with schools to ensure clarity of the role of the Youth Service within the schools, and our expectations of the schools' commitments. Our plans include sharing our prospectus with the schools that will outline our offer and also a

Relevant Timetable:

- We have already started the process of developing the strategy by holding meetings with staff in-house, holding conversations in our young people's voice forums and discussions with third sector organisations. The feedback received as part of these consultations will add to the wealth of feedback to be used to develop the strategy by May, 2025.
- The Young People Support Services Forum is already in place and meets on a quarterly basis. The terms of reference are in the process of being approved by the members, which will provide clarity on the purpose of the forum and its objectives in the future.
- Meetings will be arranged with our school contacts during the summer term for September '25. A prospectus will be shared with the schools and an agreement with the schools will be discussed in terms of their expectations of the Youth Service and the school's commitment.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Youth Service Annual Report 23/24
- Appendix 2 - Findings of the 2025 Questionnaire



ANNUAL REPORT

2023/2024



Darparu ffordd ddiogel a hwyl i
bobl ifanc Gwynedd gwrrdd,
dysgu a thyfu.

Providing the young people of
Gwynedd a safe way to meet,
learn and grow.

Snapshot of statistics 1 April 2023 - 31 March 2024

19870
participations

10509
in the
community

9180
in
schools

181
Caseloads
16-25 years
old

Young People's Feedback

95%
Noted that their well-being had improved

94%
Had
Enjoyed

96%
Had new
experiences

95%
would attend
again

1192
accreditations
completed

48
community
locations

£62,000
grants for
community
organisations.



15
Secondary schools
and special schools
receiving the service

2240
Sessions held in
schools



WHAT IS YOUTH WORK?

A service that;

“ Enables young people to develop holistically, working with them to facilitate their personal, social and educational development, to enable them to develop their voice, influence and place in society and to reach their full potential’

Youth Work National Occupational Standards

Provision and Facilitation

- Informal educational opportunities and experiences.
- Access to personal advice, information and guidance.
- Safe spaces for young people to socialise.
- Young people to identify their rights
- Support through an important time in their lives

Youth Work Values

 **Educational**

 **Expressive**

 **Participative**

 **Inclusive**

 **Empowering**

STRUCTURE

Service Manager

Team Leader

Team Leader

11-19 years
old

16-25 years
old

Community

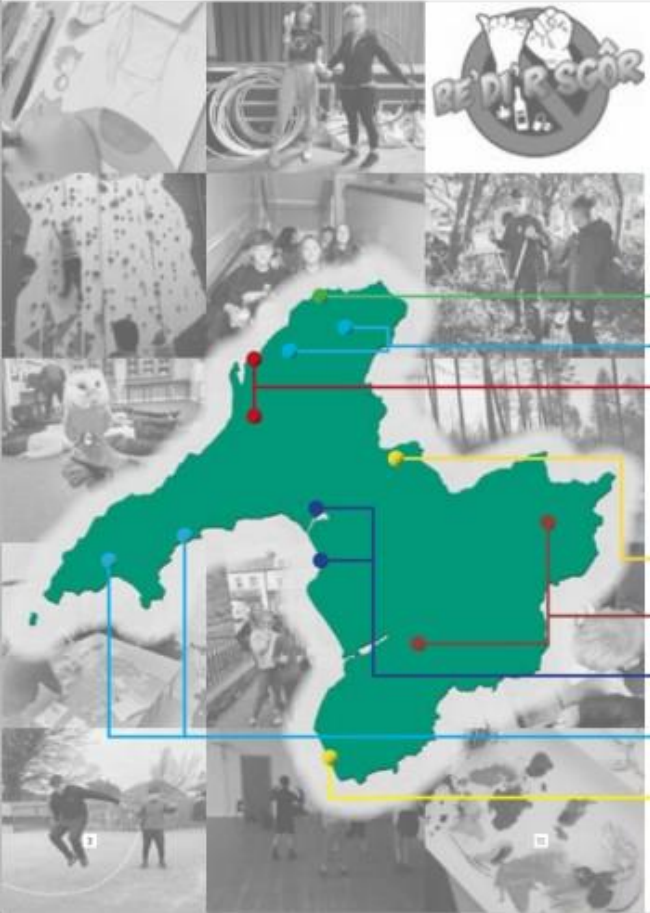
Mental Health and Well-being

Youth Homelessness









Be Di'r Sgôr? worker

Training, Engagement and Administration

11-19 YEARS OLD SUPPORT TEAM



RE DŪ SCŌR

	Lieam Williams 07833 406726	Gweithiwr Ieuenctid - Arfon lieamwilliams@gwynedd.llyw.cymru
	Ffion Williams 07909893715	Gweithiwr Ieuenctid - Arfon ffionwilliams@gwynedd.llyw.cymru
	Barry Williams 07909891994	Gweithiwr Ieuenctid - Arfon BarryAlanWilliams@gwynedd.llyw.cymru
	Alaw Paul 07768598360	Gweithiwr Ieuenctid - Meirionnydd alawpaul@gwynedd.llyw.cymru
	Dion Jones 07584 534053	Gweithiwr Ieuenctid - Meirionnydd dionjamesjones@gwynedd.llyw.cymru
	Nia Rees 07814159895	Gweithiwr Ieuenctid - Meirionnydd niaheledrees@gwynedd.llyw.cymru
	Andrew Owen 07825 316958	Gweithiwr Ieuenctid - Dwyfor andrewowen@gwynedd.llyw.cymru
	Joanne Edwards 07780284321	Gweithiwr Ieuenctid - Tywyn joannecarolineedwards@gwynedd.llyw.cymru





PURPOSE



I want you to listen to me and include me

I want you to help me through my adolescence....

To make a contribution to my communities, improve my well-being and learn skills so that I am a young person who is happy, safe and ready for the world of work!

Offer a service that is open to all

– ‘Open Universal’ youth work for 11–19 year old young people in Gwynedd

6 full-time / 2 part-time Youth Support Workers working in two Secondary Schools and in communities across the County, day, night and residential

Creating and running projects and individual opportunities based on the views of young people as part of informal learning

Provide opportunities for learning and to gain skills and qualifications in an informal atmosphere

Provide support in a friendly and leisurely environment
– far from the formality that is usually associated with school, college or the workplace

Provide informal support and leisure activities for any young people in a number of ways

Develop and run projects and activities with young people in communities to increase participation within their local community

5 Ways to Well-being through all the work / Promotion of good Emotional Well-being and Mental Health

STATISTICS

9180
participations

Services
provided in 15
secondary and
special schools

308
received the
Duke of
Edinburgh
award

25
weekly 'Pop up'
projects

2200 sessions
provided in
schools
throughout the
year

6000+
Volunteer hours
completed



School Provision

Based on the 5
Pillars of Youth
Work



Addysgol Mynegiannol Cyfranogol Cynhwysol Grymusol



Provision Details

Complete
Qualifications

Respond to the needs of
Young People and Schools

5 Ways to Well-being
sessions

Duke of Edinburgh
Award

Offer a variety of
workshops

Community Bridging Projects



- **Volunteering**
- **Fund-raising for Charities**
- **Offer new experiences**
- **Respond to the needs of the community**
- **Provide a safe environment for socialising**



25
Community
projects each
week

16-25 SUPPORT TEAM



Bethan, Arweinydd Tîm

"Rydym yn cynnig cefnogaeth i bobl ifanc sydd angen help i baratoi ar gyfer eu camau nesaf mewn bywyd. Gall wynebu'r camau yma fod yn heriol. Rydym ni yma i wrando arnoch chi a helpu chi ar eich taith."



Glyn, Gweithiwr Ieuenctid

"Rwy'n gredwr cryf mewn rhoi cyfleoedd i bobl Ifanc dyfu a datblygu fel unigolion, gan feithrin ymdeimlad o berchnogaeth a balchder ynddyn't eu hunain a'u cymuned."



Steph, Gweithiwr Ieuenctid

"Rwy'n credu bod pobl ifanc yn haeddu teimlo'n ddiogel, cael eu cefnogi a rhydd i fynegi barn. Mae'n anrhydedd gallu cynnig cyfleoedd i bobl ifanc ddatblygu sgiliau ar gyfer dyfodol llwyddiannus."



Donna, Gweithiwr Ieuenctid

"Rwy'n ymfalchïo mewn cefnogi pobl ifanc i gyrraedd eu nodau personol eu hunain, trwy eu hannog i gymryd rhan mewn profiadau newydd, gan eu helpu i adeiladu ar eu hyder a'u meddylfryd cadarnhaol."



Sarah, Gweithiwr Ieuenctid

"Rwy'n credu bod pob person ifanc yn bwysig. Dwi'n angerddol dros gefnogi pobl ifanc i ddod o hyd i'w llais, dylanwad a lle mewn cymdeithas, ac i gyrraedd eu llawn botensial."



I want you to

Give me time

Listen to me

Give me an opportunity to develop

Support young people aged 16-25 who are not currently in education, training or work or are studying part-time at College

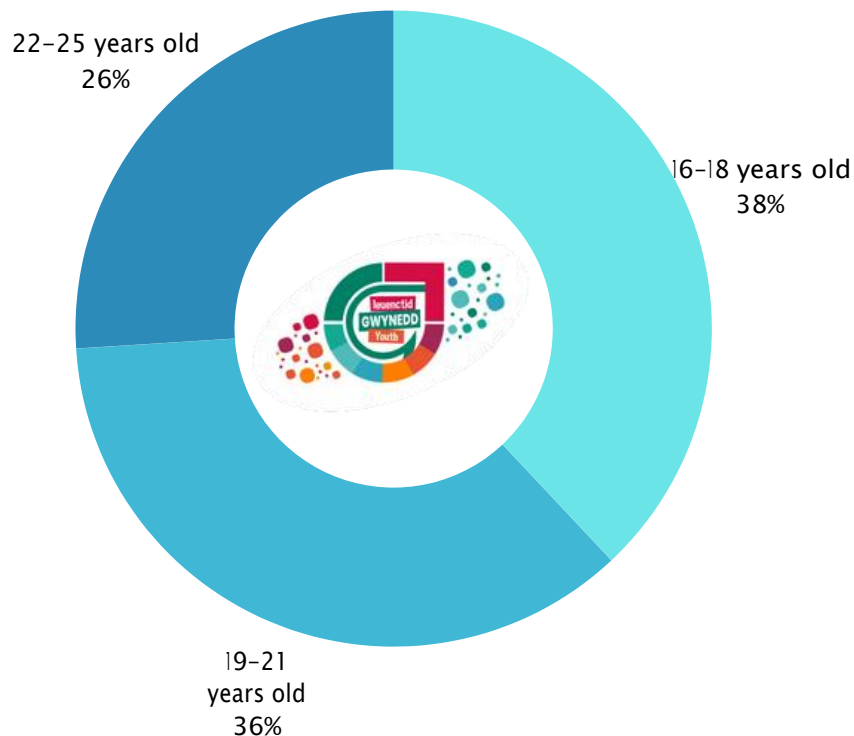
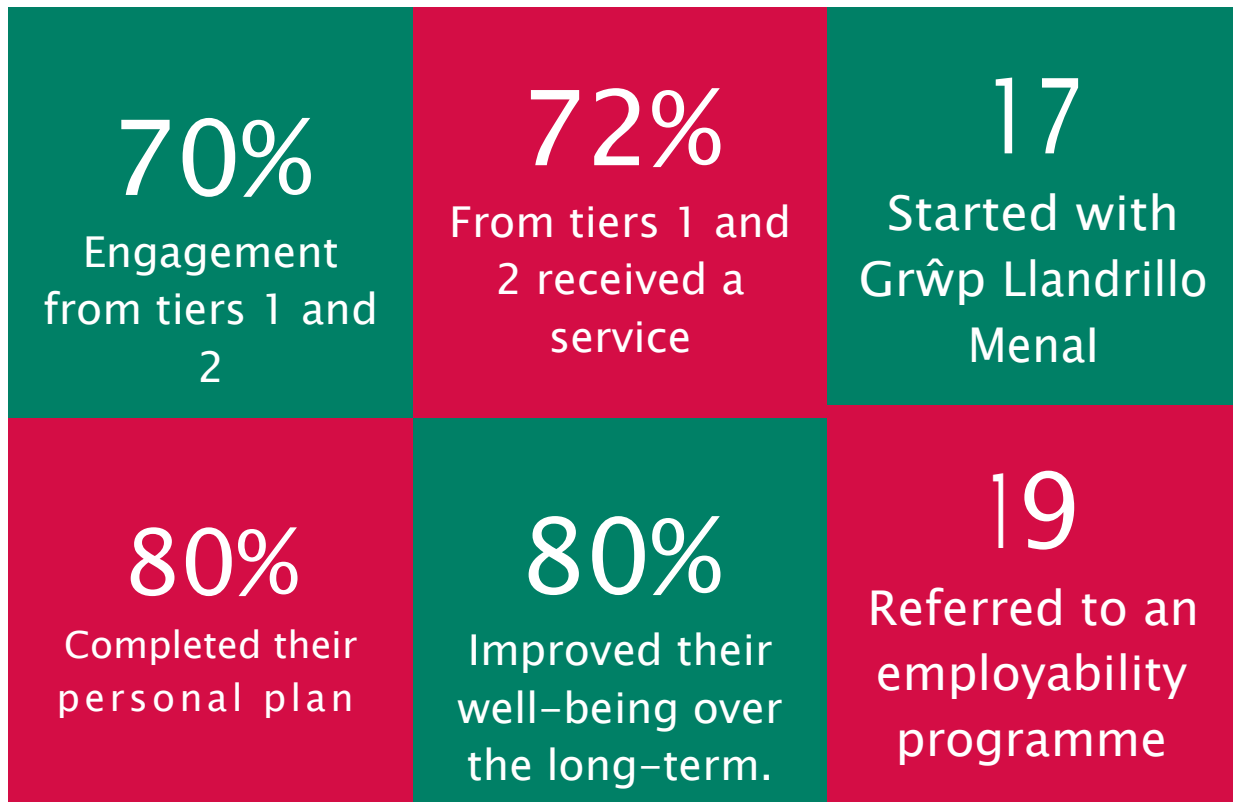
Support individuals who are furthest away from the labour market, but who are ready to engage and start thinking about their next steps.

Individuals who need support to develop personal, social and emotional skills

Service across Gwynedd

We can support young people alongside other Youth support provision

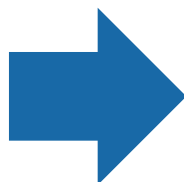
STATISTICS



Breakdown of participants' ages

The Support Journey

The relationship between the young person and their Youth Worker is central to youth work practice.



During the one-to-one work, young people and their Worker get to know each other, know the young person's interests and strengths; identify the barriers preventing them from taking their next steps into education, training or work



Young people are encouraged to create a Personal Development Plan that sets out what their short and long term goals are that they would like to realise. Each person's starting point is different, so the support starts from the individual's starting point



To support the young people to achieve their personal goals, we will promote young people's rights to services, support and opportunities and facilitate young people's access to these services and opportunities.

5 Greatest Barriers

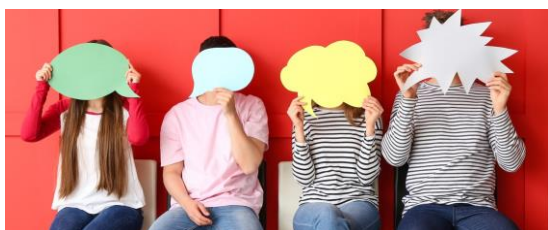
Low confidence

Lack of experience/skills

Mental health worries

Negative learning experiences

Social Isolation



Projects and Provision

FRIENDS

Resilience Programme

Helping young people to develop a set of skills that will enable them to become more resilient to deal with life's challenges, to manage emotions and overcome anxiety and depression.



Arts for Well-being

The Arts for Well-being are run by The Youth Support Team. The sessions provide an opportunity for you to enjoy the arts by being creative and learn about self-care.

Paws and Hooves–

Nurturing Young People's Well-being through Animal Therapy

Creating a safe and therapeutic space for vulnerable young people to improve their well-being and resilience through animal therapy and support, based on the Five Ways to Well-being. In parallel with therapy and animal support we run a Youth FRIENDS course to provide an opportunity for individuals to further reflect and reinforce what they have learnt from the sessions with the animals.

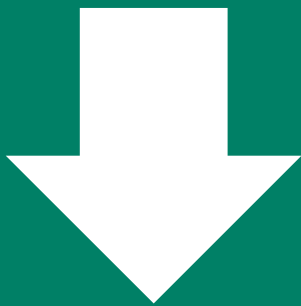


COMMUNITY YOUTH WORK TEAM

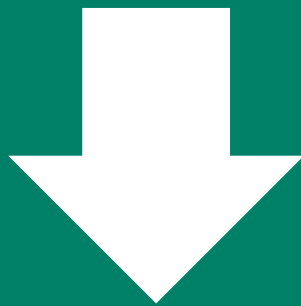


Sion Roberts
07920264113

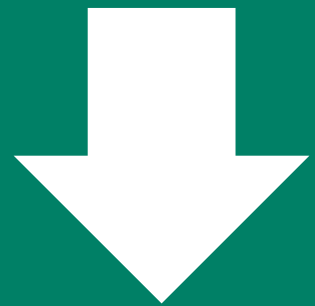
Arweinydd Gwaith Cymunedol leuenctid
sionbrynroberts@gwynedd.llyw.cymru



17 Part time
Project
Workers



17 Part time
Community
Workers



4 Derwen
Part time
Workers



PURPOSE



I want you to

Create social and
development
opportunities for young
people in our
communities

Run projects and activities
in the community

Move from
community to
community with an
emphasis on fun and
socialising

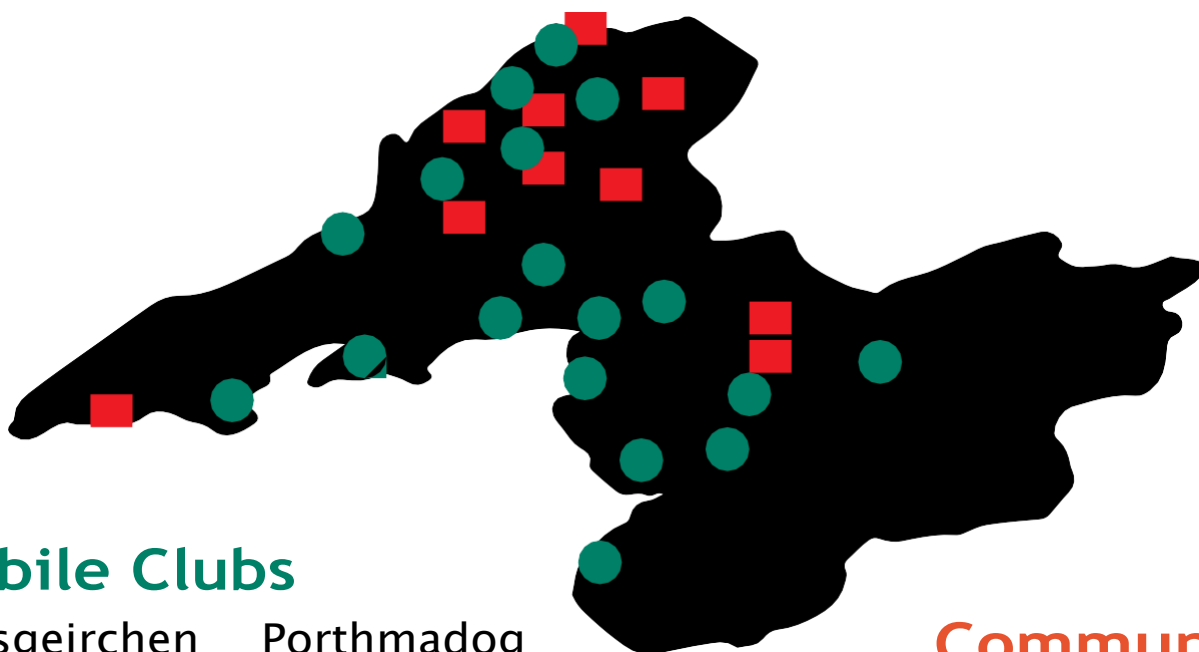
Coordinate
provisions that are
funded by Town
Councils

Develop residential
opportunities and
Summer of Fun
Activities

Develop Framework
Activities and
collaboration with
local partners.

Coordinate 38 part-
time staff working
in the community

Community Provision Locations



Mobile Clubs

Maesgeirchen
Coed Mawr
Caernarfon

Porthmadog
Cricieth
Barmouth

Rhiwlas
Bontenwydd
Waunfawr
Pwllheli
Nefyn
Trefor

Porthmadog
Dyffryn
Ardudwy
Tywyn
Bala
Dolgellau

Abersoch
Penrhyndeudraeth
Beddgelert

Maentwrog
Harlech

Community Clubs

Bethel
Penygroes
Aberdaron
Blaenau
Ffestiniog

Bangor
Bethesda (x2)
Caernarfon (x2)
Llanrug
Deiniolen

Llan Ffestiniog

Llanberis
Page 51

Community Provision

10509
participations



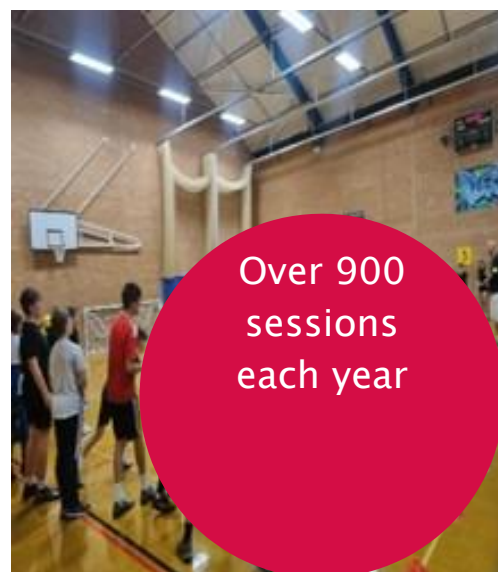
10 community
clubs funded
by town /
village councils



£62,000
shared with
third sector
organisations
to increase
provision



Over 900
sessions
each year



Trips and Events



Arranged Trips

Glan Llyn
Alton Towers
Llandudno Trip
Ice Skating
Ten Pin Bowling
Plas Menai
Zip World
Mountain Biking
Beacon Centre
Bwncath Gig
Gaming Van



Over 1000 young people attended trips and residential activities.

This provision is very broad to engage with young people from all communities across Gwynedd. The service is tailored to the needs of the participants and the voice of young people is central to planning the activities for these sessions

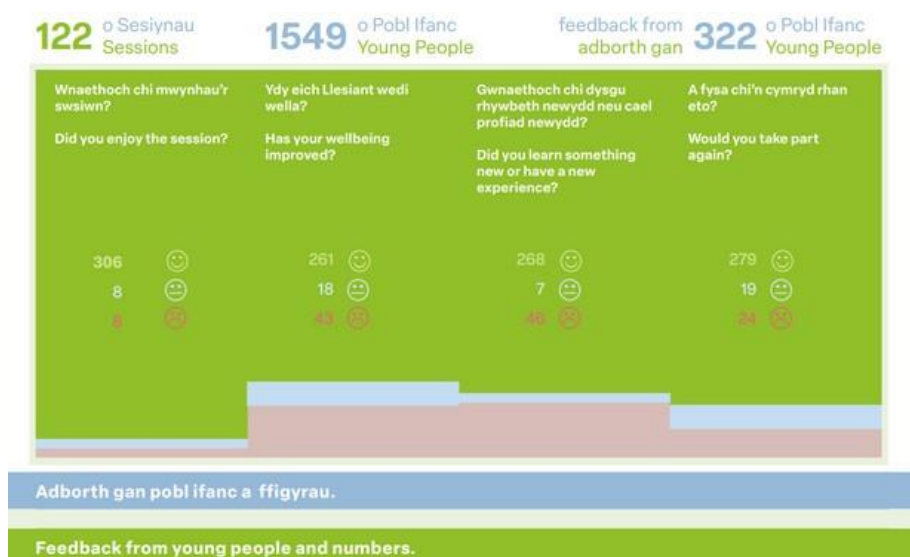


Health and Well-being



The Festival was intended to promote good mental health and well-being, with a number of activities including sessions on creativity, stress, mental health, recurring training, Lego, financial matters, L G B T+ and more, held across Gwynedd for young people in the county.

The Well-being Festival this year was a huge success that had a positive impact on the lives of young people in the county.



Five days of Mental Health awareness held in Glan Llyn and Plas Menai, attended by 12 secondary schools.

Bloom, FRIENDS resilience sessions and sessions on anxiety were provided in all Gwynedd's secondary schools.

The Youth Service is part of the 'Mind Our Future' project that is led by young people to improve young people's mental well-being in Gwynedd by asking the young people what can help them.



Homelessness Project

Provides an early intervention in the Youth Engagement and Development Framework and youth work, with the aim of addressing youth homelessness

Research

Collaboration with the housing and homelessness departments, the Post-16 Team and the education department to gather data on the young people (up to 25 years old) who have presented themselves as being homeless over the past three years.

This work recognised any patterns that had been identified from these referrals that helped us to prioritise and target the right young people far more quickly on the path to becoming homeless.

Our offer

Primary Homelessness Prevention Scheme

Prevent or reduce the risks of homelessness for young people across the population in general

Secondary Homelessness Prevention Scheme

Prevent or reduce the risks of homelessness for young people who have been identified as a high risk group or vulnerable young people.

15

Secondary and special schools have received awareness raising sessions

Workshops held;

- Financial Helper
- Healthy Relationships
- Independent Living and Life Skills Accreditations

Charis available to support vulnerable young people

Grants to

Have worked with target groups in all secondary schools through our Early Identification System



Project - Be di'r Sgôr?



Be Di'r Sgôr is funded by Youth Justice, working with young people between 11 and 18 years old to provide advice, support and information about drugs and alcohol. The service works in a flexible way for people up to 25 years old who already receive support from another agency.

Young people can get in touch directly for support / information through the links below.

It is also possible for parents/ teachers/ doctors or anyone who supports a young person to contact us



Awareness Raising
Sessions for

1510

young people

Intense support provided
to

25

young people

Awareness Raising
Sessions at

28

locations across
Gwynedd



Summer of Fun



Over the summer the Youth Service provided fun and well-being activities in the community for 11–25 year old young people as part of the Summer of Fun project

18

locations across
Gwynedd



550

participants



Over 200 young people from Gwynedd attended the Eisteddfod in Pen Llŷn over the Summer period as part of partnership work between the Youth Service and the Eisteddfod. This initiative enabled young people from all corners of Gwynedd to experience the Eisteddfod free of charge.

Qualifications and Accreditations



The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is a challenging programme of activities that help you learn new skills, help others, go on an adventure and gain an amazing feeling that you have achieved something great. In addition, many organisations such as employers and universities value it and what it says about you as a participant.

DofE is a programme with four sections and these are at three levels: Bronze (14 years and older)

Silver (15 and older) and Gold (16 and older).

For each level 4 sections need to be completed:

Volunteering

Physical Skills

Expedition

Residential (Gold Award only)



Gold Silver Bronze

5 48 155

received the award

The Youth Service is an Open Wales Recognised Centre. We are able to offer over 6,000 quality-assured accredited units and 400 qualifications that are nationally recognised, ranging from Essential Skills to Sustainability.



1192
Qualifications
completed



Youth Voice

Purpose

Ensuring that the voice of Gwynedd's young people is central to designing Youth Service provision to meet its needs

1 County Forum and 3 Regional Forums

53 participants

Aims

Play an active part in the way the Service is provided

Raise awareness about democracy and rights

Provide opportunities to develop learning pathways

Develop future youth workers



What do young people say?



“

These activities have helped me develop new skills and discover my interests. I've learned how to be a leader and confident when speaking in front of groups

“

The youth work has opened my eyes to opportunities I didn't know existed. I have participated in community activities and learned the value of volunteering

“

I've learned a lot about the importance of mental health and how to look after my well-being. The workshops have given me the tools I need to cope with stress.

“

Through the support sessions I now know what I want to do in the future and how to get there. It has given me the confidence to achieve my dreams

“

I was taken to one side by my youth worker when I was going through a difficult time in my life. Their support and advice was exactly what I needed to get through it

“

The youth club has given me a safe place to be myself and make new friends. Without it, I would feel very lonely

“

The workshops on life skills have helped me prepare for independent living. I feel more confident about managing money and taking care of myself.

“

The youth club has helped me develop my social confidence. I feel more comfortable meeting new people and forming new relationships

“

Through the community projects, I've learned the value of giving back to the community. It has inspired me to be more social and to try to make a difference

Celebrating Young People's Success

4

Award Nights



Success in these fields:

Volunteering
Qualifications
Duke of Edinburgh
Open Wales
Virtual College
Community Work



149

Young people received awards

Partnerships



Urdd



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Betsi Cadwaladr
University Health Board



With Gobaith



Grŵp
Llandrillo
Menai



Gogledd Cymru
North Wales



Pontio



hunan iaith
Menter iaith Gwynedd





leuenctid Gwynedd Youth



ieuenctidgwyneddyouth



@ieuGwyneddyouth



@ieuGwyneddyouth

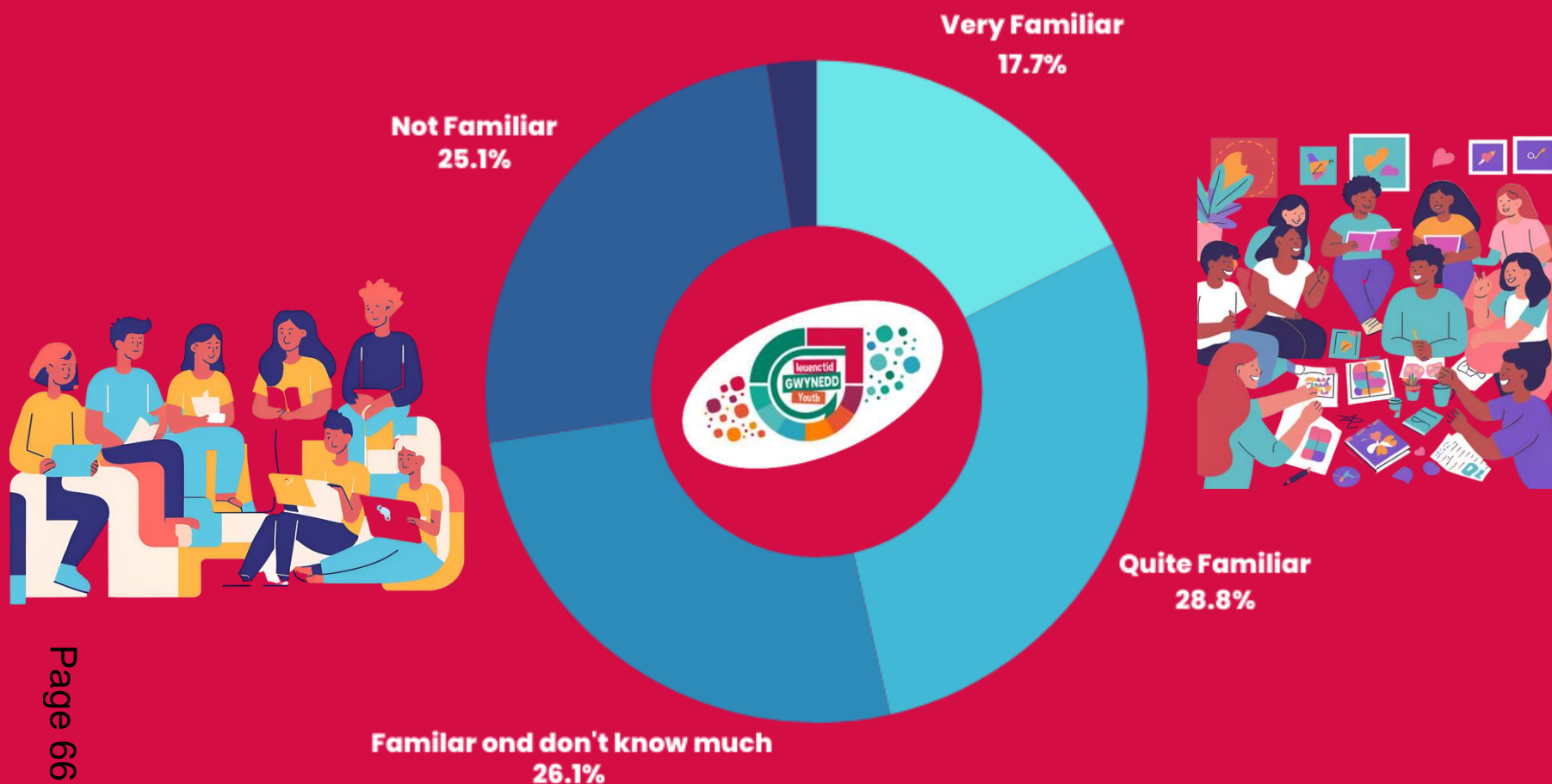


ieuenctidgwyneddyouth

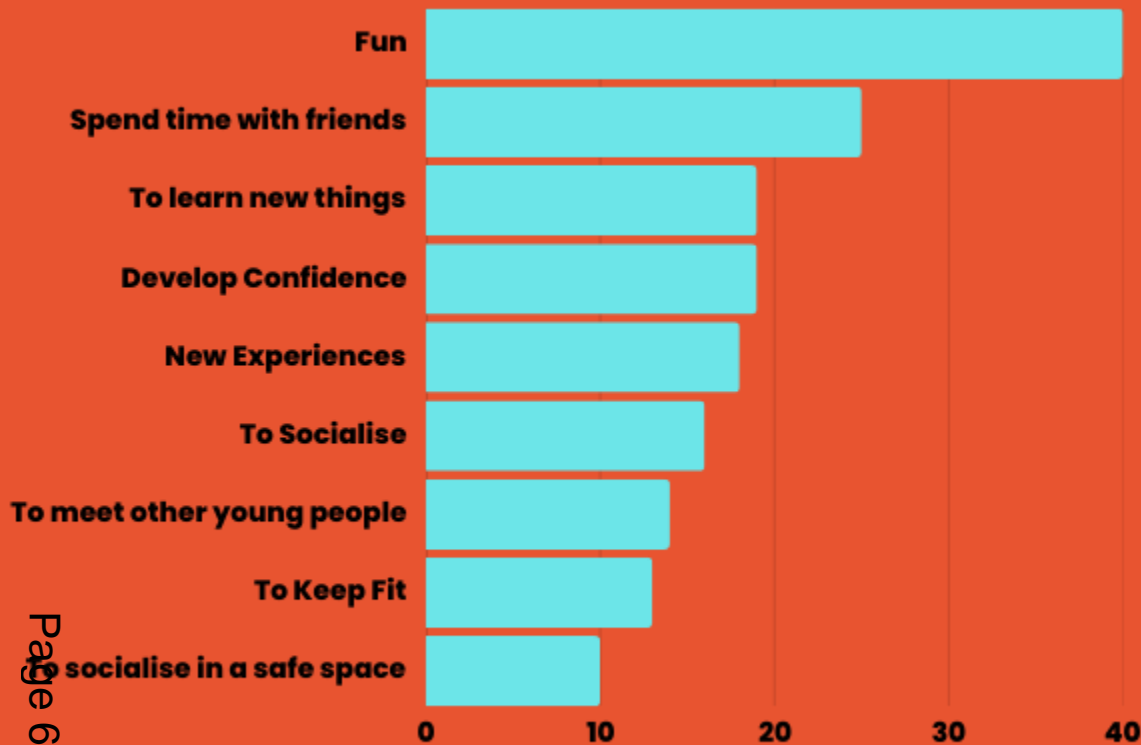
Young People's Questionnaire Feedback 2025



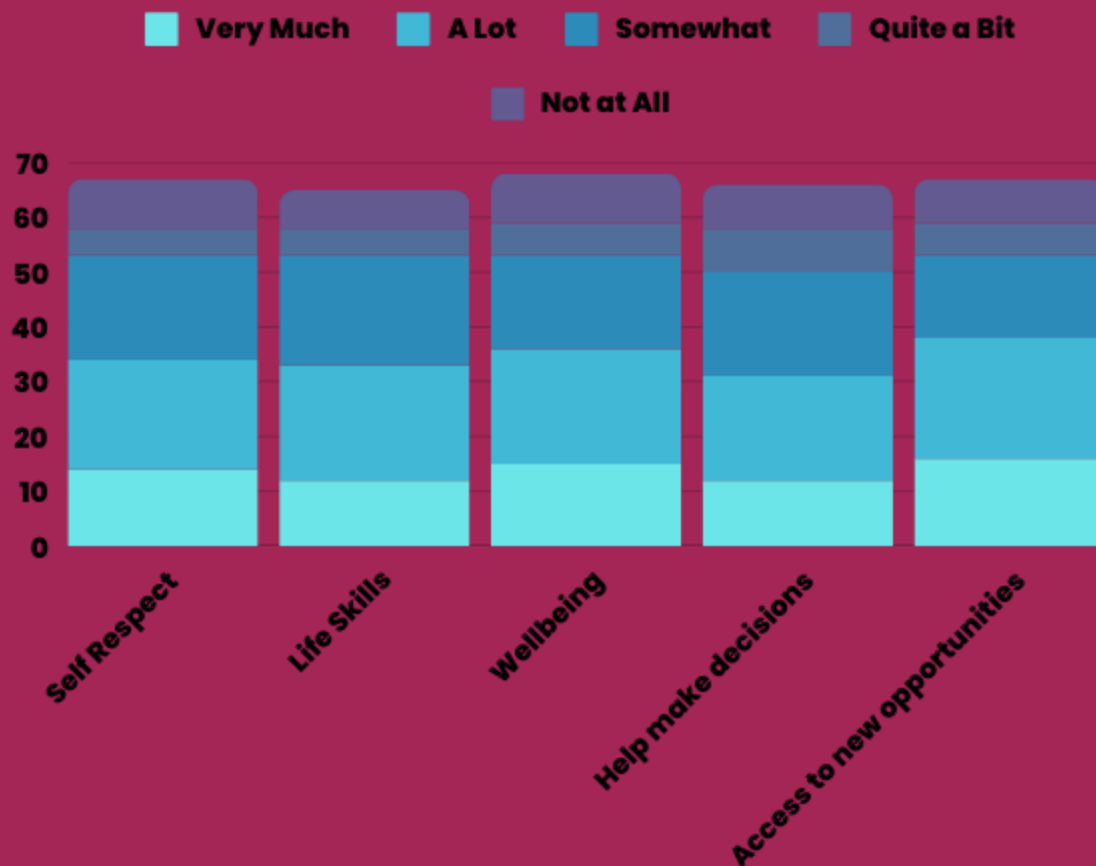
How familiar are the young people of the Youth Service in your area?



What are the main reasons young people take part in youth work activities in the community?



To what extent has participating in youth work activities improved my.....?



What, if anything, is stopping you from getting involved with youth clubs, programs or activities in the community? "



No aware of opportunities
15.2%



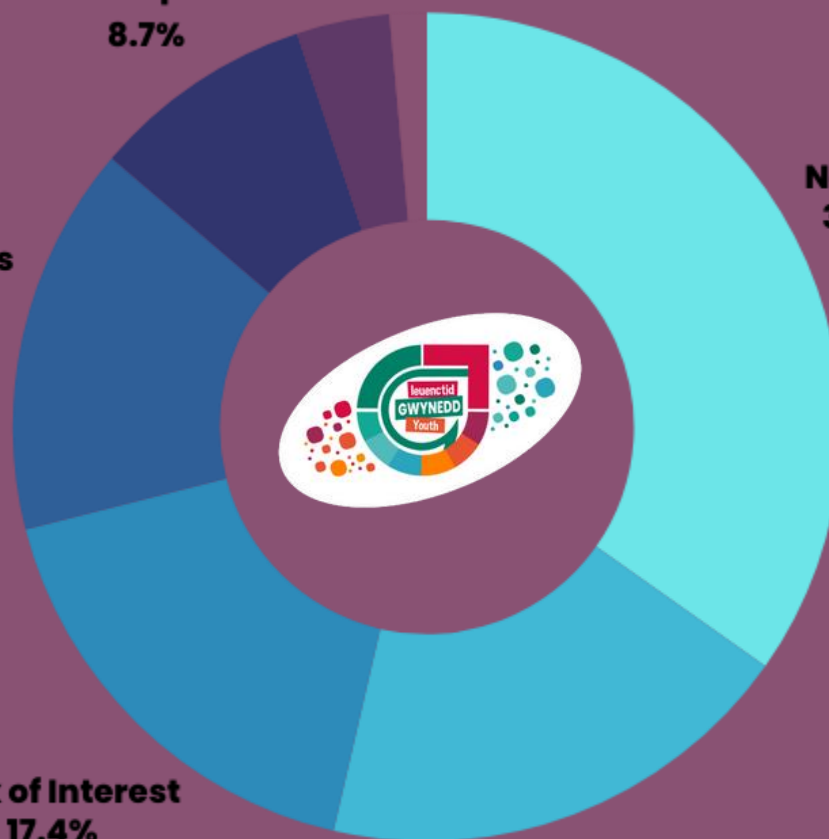
Transport
8.7%

No Time
34.8%

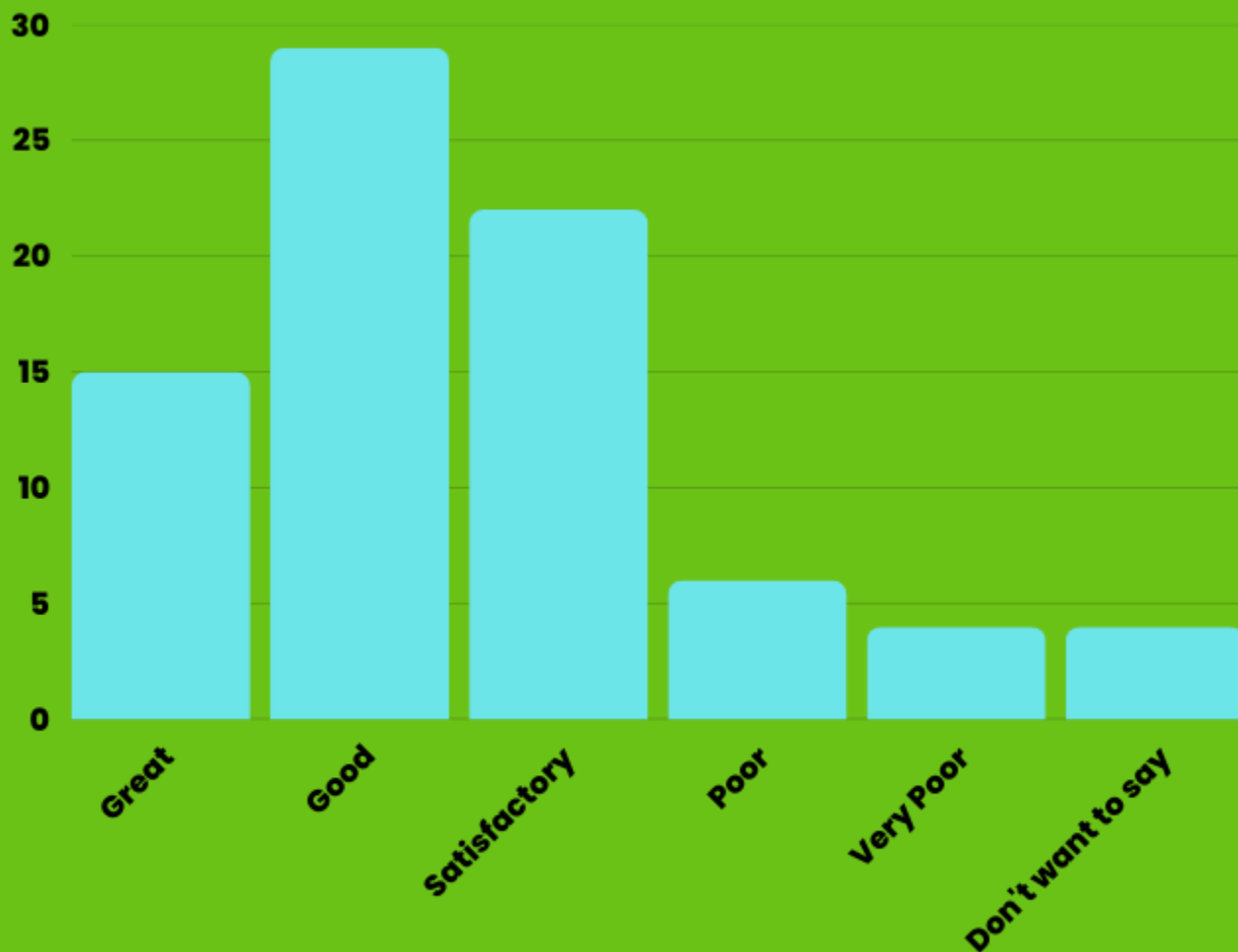


Lack of Interest
17.4%

Social Anxiety
18.8%



How would you rate the 'offer' for young people in your local area?



**Even if you don't attend yourself, do you believe
there are enough clubs
youth, programs and activities in your local
area for children/people
young your age?**

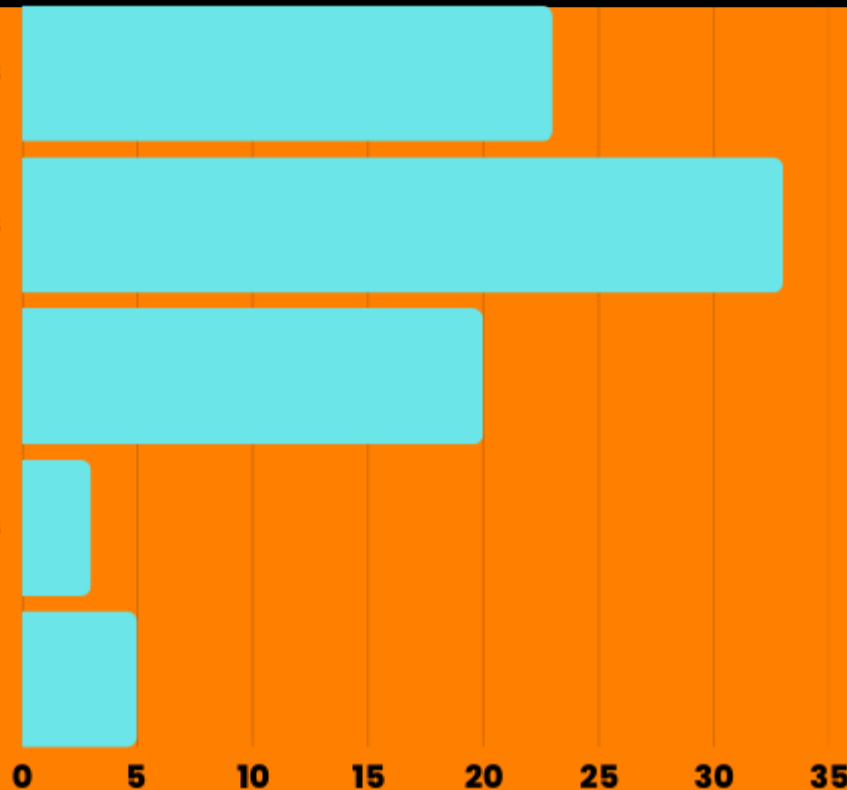
Plenty of Options

Some Options

Very Little Options

No Options

Prefer not to say



What do you think the main priorities of the Youth Service should be?



Careers and Emp...

Safe Spaces

Anti Bullyin...

Mental Health and Wellb...

Life Skills



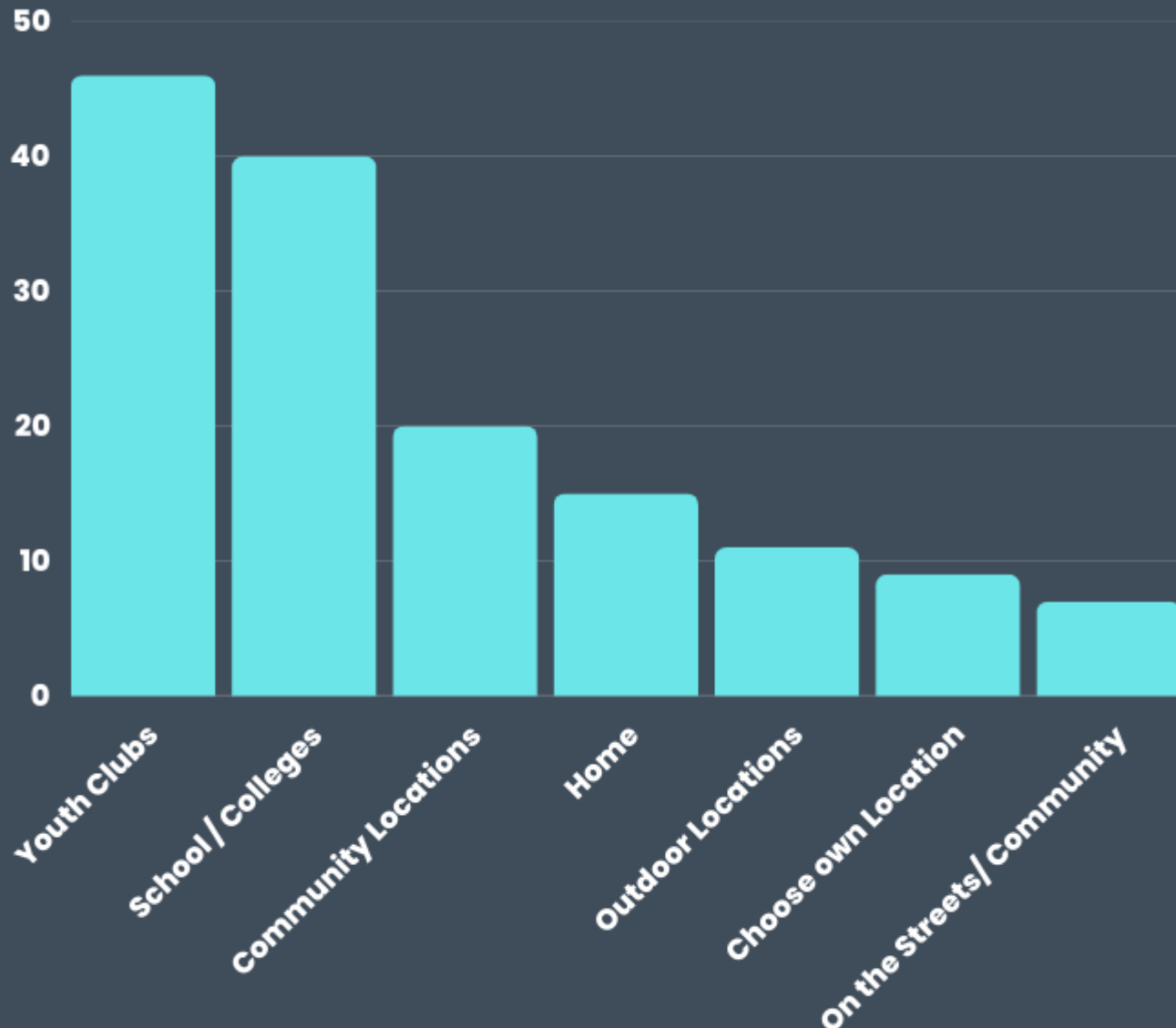
Educational...

Leisure and Socialising

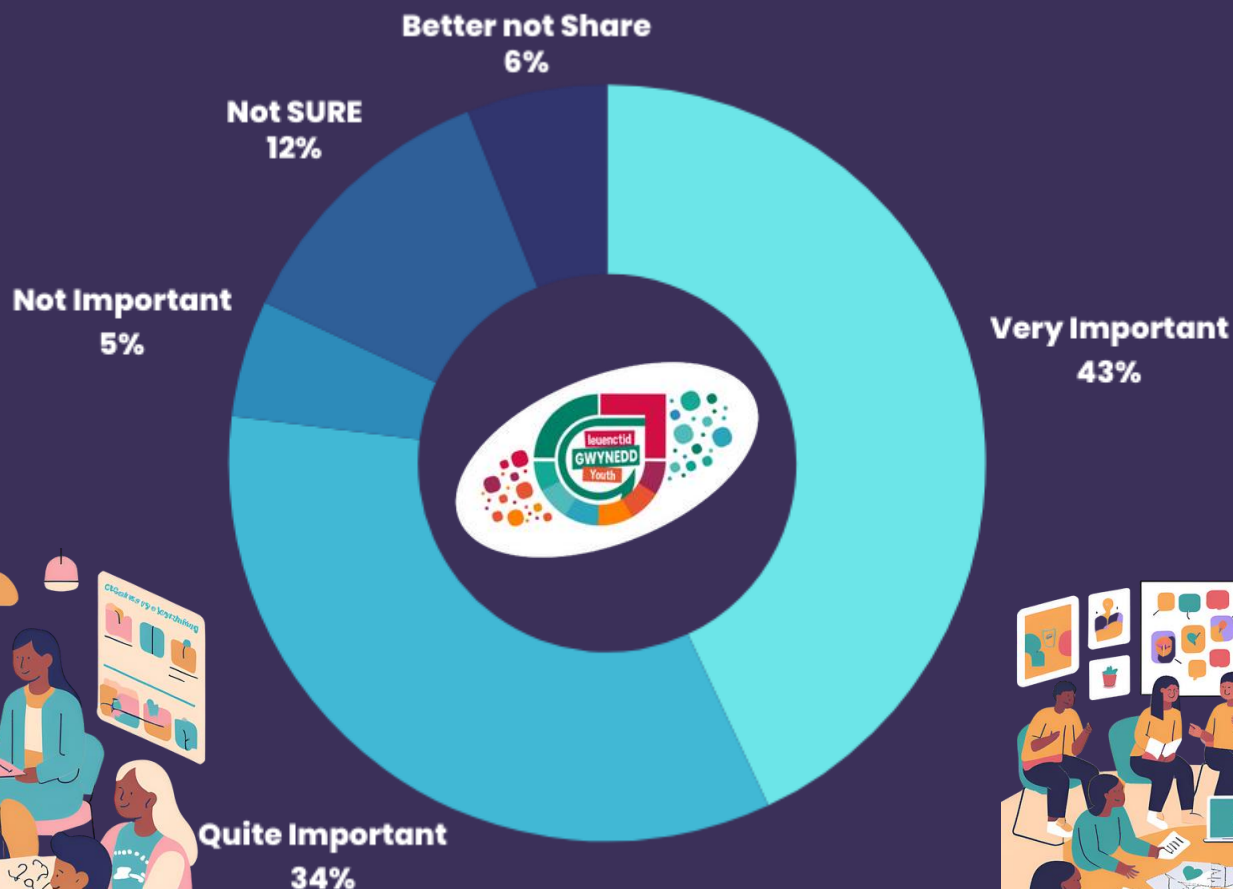
Ymwyby...



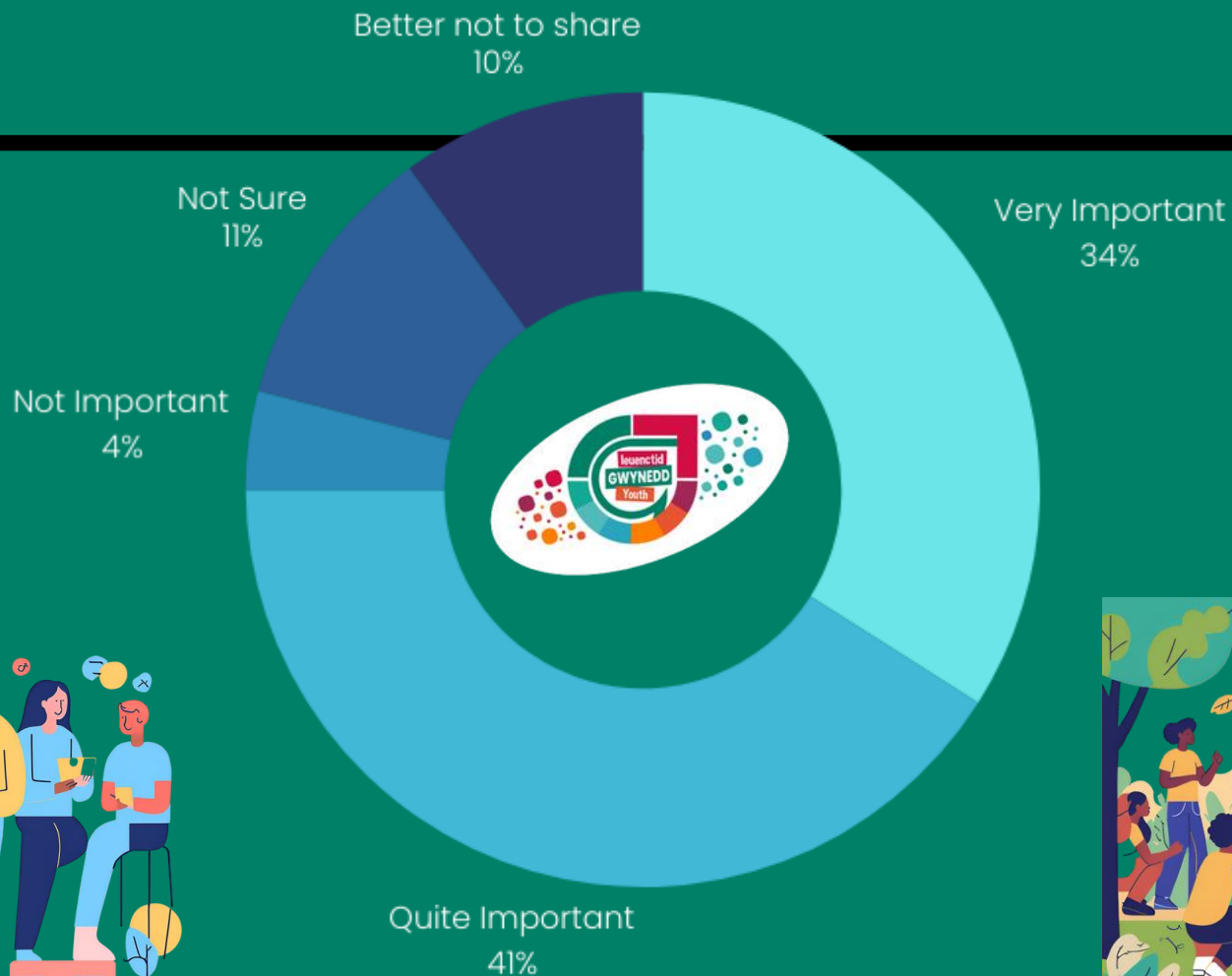
Where would you prefer to access youth support?



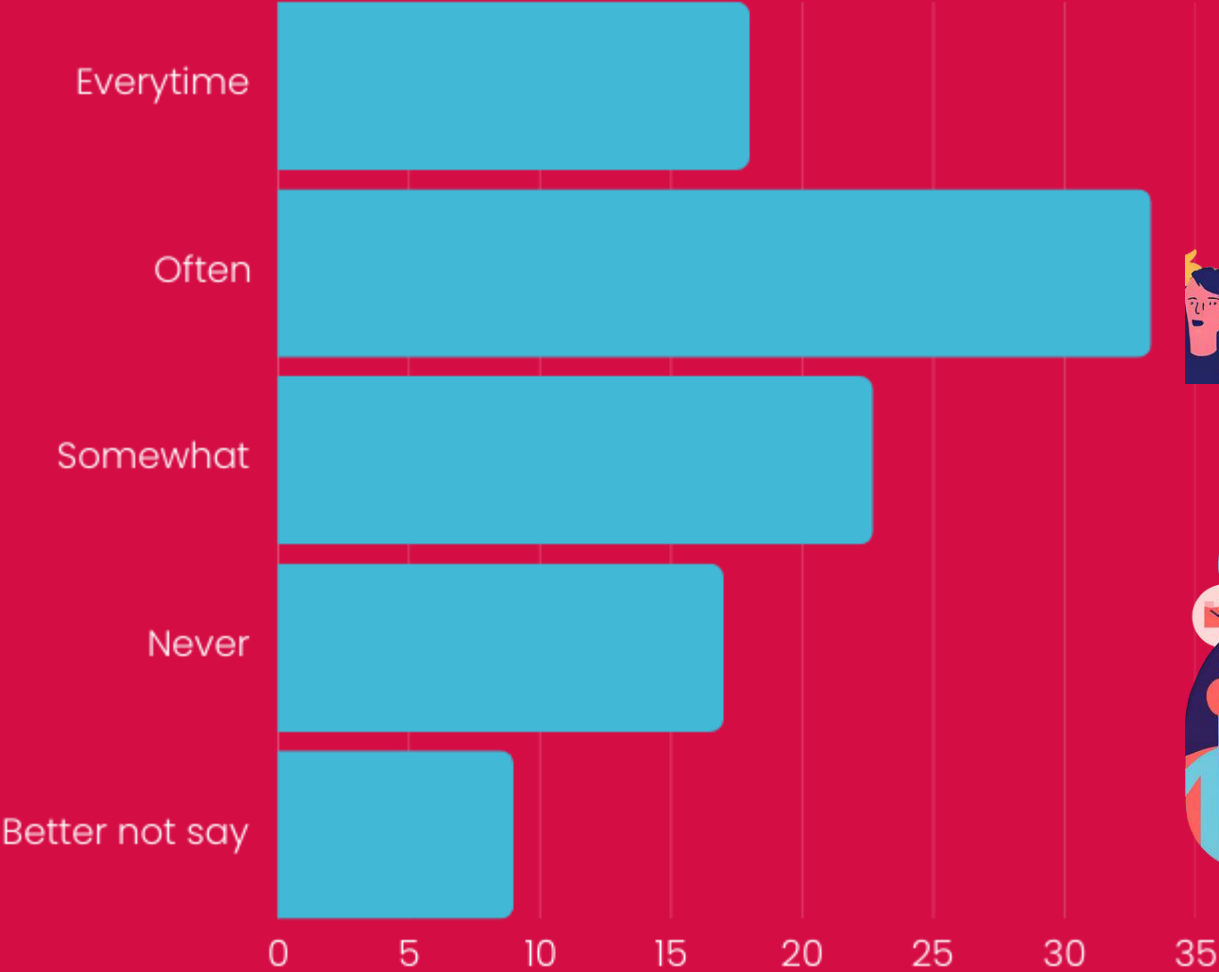
How important do you think the role of the Youth Service is in the school?



How important do you think the role of the Youth Service is in the community?



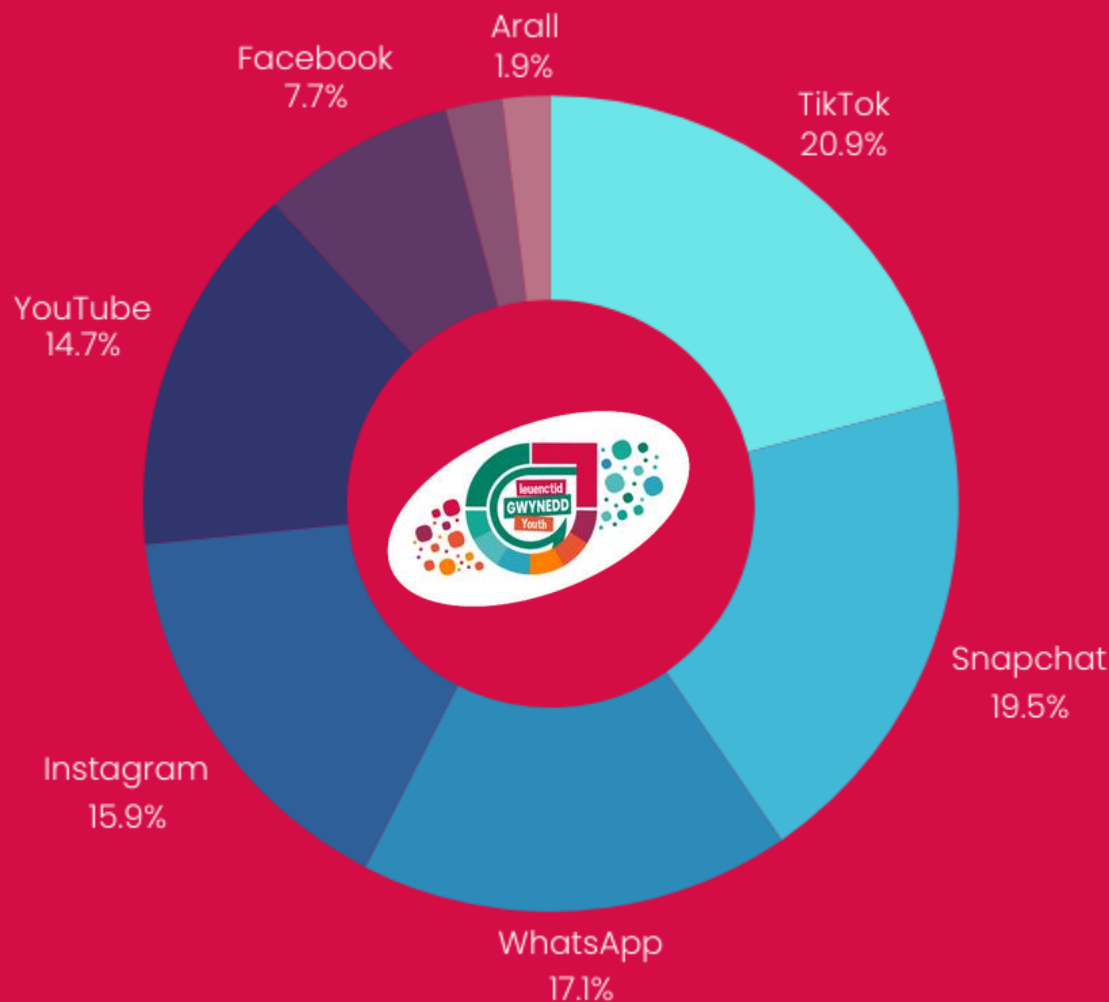
Do you feel that your opinion is heard during Youth Work activities?"



What are the main concerns/challenges facing you as a young person?



Which social media platforms do you use most to interact with organisations or services?



MEETING	Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee
DATE	10/04/25
TITLE	ALN in Main Stream and Special Schools
REASON FOR SCRUTINY	To scrutinise the Additional Learning Needs education provision and to secure the input and understanding of the Scrutiny Committee of the progress made to ensure that Gwynedd is ready for the new ALN and Inclusion Act.
AUTHOR	Ffion Edwards Ellis, Assistant Head: Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Inclusion (Education Department)
AELOD CABINET	Cllr. Dewi Jones

1. Why does it need scrutiny?

1.1 This report is submitted in response to a request from members of the Scrutiny Committee Education and Economy to receive a report on ALN in Mainstream and Special Schools.

1.2 During the discussion on the item 'Gwynedd's Education Strategy towards 2032' in the Committee meeting on 14 September 2023, concern was expressed about 2 specific issues,

- Overcrowding at the two ALN schools in Gwynedd.
- The number of children in the mainstream who are unable to cope with a mainstream education system.

1.3 There is a significant shift in the area in terms of integration and the role of assistants. How does the financial allocation of the special education sector in Gwynedd compare with the rest of Wales, along with the challenges in the field.

2. What exactly needs scrutiny?

This report is intended to present information regarding the situation of ALN in Gwynedd, within the context of a significant change in legislation, as well as an increase in demand for a service.

3. Summary and Key Issues

3.1 This report summarises the difficult situation facing Gwynedd Schools considering the change in demand for a service, the current financial climate and the impact of budget cuts.

3.2 There is a need to provide an update on the situation of Additional Learning Needs in Gwynedd in the context of changes in legislation and a change in demand for a service.

4. Background / Context

4.1. Key Information:

- The new 'ALN and Tribunal Act Wales (2018)' has come into force since September 2021, with a transition period ending in September 2025.
- The ALN and Inclusion Service was established in September 2017, in conjunction with Ynys Môn Council and Cyngor Gwynedd. The Service has evolved over the years since, in order to respond to changes in demand, and has been Externally Reviewed in 2020, and again in December 2023.
- There are two Special Schools for ALN within the Authority – Ysgol Hafod Lon and Ysgol Pendalar.

4.2 What is the ALN provision in mainstream?

- Each School receives funding to cater for learners with an Individual Development Plan (IDP). They create a provision map using this funding. Additional funding is currently available by applying to the Moderation Panel at individual child level. From March 2025 (following implementing a working group, and consultation with Schools and Finance officers) this will change to receive funding on a formula basis. The formula will use data on the number of learners with an IDP, as well as the level of need.
- The ALN and I Service supports the schools to cater for the learners. The type of input depends on the needs of the school and learners. Input is tailored in order to respond in the most appropriate way. The input is given for a period, with a focus on upskilling school staff to be able to respond to their needs. We measure progress following receipt of input. See Appendix 1.
- Historically, the Special Schools budget have protected from cuts, while there have been cuts to the budget of the Mainstream Schools. The Special Schools are funded based on the intensity of each learner's need using 'bands' to describe the learners' need.

4.3 What works?

- The transition to the New 'Additional Learning Needs and Tribunal Wales Act 2018' has been successful in terms of:
 - Working with the Schools to successfully transfer learners to Additional Learning Plans, from the old Statement arrangements.
 - Creating provision maps that are consistent (but with a more local flavour at individual school level) across the catchment areas and the schools.
 - Creating dispute resolution processes with parents, schools and the ALN Quality Officers. This is noted by Estyn as good practice within the Estyn ALN Thematic Survey (2023) (see link at the end of the report).
 - Review the funding methods for Schools, so that the method of funding responds to the requirements of the new act.
 - There is a close working relationship between the Schools and the ALN and Inclusion team, and the provision is well known by the LA.
 - The Act requires Schools, and the LA, to 'keep provision under constant review'. This includes evaluating how effective the provision is, and the effectiveness of interventions that are being provided. We have established a process to do this. The review process is a way for the Quality Service to monitor the provisions, and

discuss further developments with the Schools, with key information available within the IDP. The specialist teams also measure the progress of learners who receive input termly, with the majority making good progress.

- We have an electronic IDP System, and this development has been innovative. We have established an IDP User Group to further develop the system, with a focus on reducing the workload of ALN Coordinators in our schools.
- The Role of the Designated Education Clinical Lead Officer within the Act is a Statutory Role. We have a close relationship and clear communication systems with this officer, and this is a key part of our collaboration and dispute resolution processes with parents.
- Our knowledge of ALN in the early years, along with the provision offered to them, is good practice. There has been investment in this area through a bid for funding.

4.4 How is the provision intended to meet demand? What specialist support and training is available to staff who support pupils with significant needs in mainstream schools? Is it sufficient?

The provision provided is tailored to the needs of the school or learner where possible. Appendix 1 summarizes what is provided.

It is more challenging to do this now, with resources being spread more thinly. The Data in Appendix 2 indicates the increase in needs. It is also necessary to note that the needs of learners are now more complex and across more areas. Communication and interaction skills development, and emotional and social development are growth areas.

As school budgets shrink, schools find it more challenging to deliver what's in their provision map. This leads to more requests for support for input from the ALN Team and also requests for special school placement.

4.5 What action is in place to respond to challenges in the area?

i) What are the challenges?

- The statutory responsibility of the ALN Act has extended legal responsibilities. Because of this, the pressure on Schools, particularly the Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo) has increased significantly. This is a challenge for Schools, especially where budgets are shrinking, and the ability of the ALNCo to fulfill the role is a challenge. This has been recognised in the Estyn ALN Thematic Review (2023) and by Welsh Government.
- Resources have been reducing. With needs increasing and more complex, meeting needs is increasingly challenging. This is true for schools, and the ALN Team is facing an increase in referrals. Grants in this area are provided by WG, but it does not match the increase in demand, and there is no assurance of recurrence of funding, so it is difficult to plan strategically (Appendix 2 – Data)
- The demand for a specialist placement is increasing, and not all requests for a specialist placement are appropriate. Some learners have complex needs, but should be supported in mainstream, but the challenge of doing this increases by reducing budgets. This can drive parents to apply for a Special School when they feel the mainstream are unable to meet needs.

- The number of Tribunals has increased over the last two years (partly related to the previous point), which is challenging in terms of the time of Officers and Schools to prepare for Tribunals and work with the parents and schools (Appendix 3 – Number of Tribunals)
- The lack of availability of individuals applying for Teaching Assistant positions is a challenge, and is a stressor on the school provision map when vacant positions are unable to be filled.
- The training of Educational Psychologists through Cardiff University affects our ability to recruit Educational Psychologists who are able to speak Welsh. It is a statutory role within the Act, and a key role in identifying the provision that the learners need.

ii) What will we focus on, in order to respond to the challenges?

- In March 2025 the Primary Schools funding method will change to a formula approach in order to:
 - Provide greater financial stability to sustain staffing.
 - Be more consistent across schools – the formula is based on the number of learners who have a IDP, as well as the level of the learner's needs.
 - Reducing bureaucracy that currently exists.
- We will need to consider whether there is a need to put together a bid for extending the integration funding available to schools to provide adequate interventions, with financial challenges currently contributing to applications for specialist placement, and potential disputes with parents.
- We will work with Headteachers and ALNCo to:
 - Address the role of the ALNCo, reducing bureaucracy, and look at opportunities to collaborate across catchment areas.
 - Monitoring and evaluation of the new funding formula.
 - Ensure that the ALN and I service adapts to respond to the needs of Gwynedd schools.
- With the demand for specialist placement continuing, we are:
 - Continuing with the work to map the possible demand for specialist provisions from the early years upwards (see 4.6).
 - Look carefully at what our offer is for learners who have significant needs in the mainstream, but where a special school would not be a suitable placement. We have already scheduled training in April for all Mainstream Schools, with a focus on planning for learners with significant needs in mainstream. The Special Schools, and some of our Mainstream Schools, will share good practice during the day.
 - To collaborate with the Headteachers of the special schools to map their capacity. and the curriculum being offered (e.g. in the Post-16 sector). We will also look at the funding method through banding the learners needs (See 4.6).
 - Plan use of the ALN capital grant to develop to capacity/environments for learners in the special schools, mainstream and our centres.
- Continue to address the need for a training route for Educational Psychologists. This includes discussions about a training pathway in North Wales (Bangor University).

4.6 What are the plans to respond to capacity issues in special schools?

Special Schools have seen an increase in numbers over recent years (see Appendix 2), but this growth is not sustainable. The transitions to Special Schools tend to take place at certain key periods:

- Learners with intensive needs in the early years, who are assessed at the ABC centres, then transfer to the Special Schools at Reception Class age (4/5 years old).
- Learners moving into the area who have been attending special schools in their previous area.
- Learners who are coming to the end of a key stage (usually the end of the foundation phase or towards transition time to Secondary) with concern about their ability to make progress in mainstream moving forward.

When looking at the graph in Appendix 2, an increase in the numbers in current years 6-8 can be seen, with the number stabilising thereafter. This is likely to be in the period when the range of ALN and I centres were not available in the same way to support the mainstream, and also towards the end of the period of the current legislation. There were also a number of families moving to the area following the lockdown.

It is unusual for learners to transition back to mainstream once they have moved to a special school, and are able to stay in school until they reach Year 14 (18/19 years old).

It's unusual for a learner to share a placement with a mainstream school, but this can work well for some.

To target this situation we have been taking the following actions:

- Mapping: Our Early Years processes for ALN identification are robust. This means that we are able to map needs in the early years for forecasting numbers better than ever. We have started mapping more intensive needs in the early years, along with the learners who receive input from the ALN teams, in order to predict which learners are likely to need a specialist placement in the future.
- Integration: When a learner now attends the ABC Centre (Nursery), each one shares a placement with a Mainstream School. This helps us to observe the child in a mainstream placement – if the child is coping in mainstream, then we should be able to continue with the placement. We will also be looking at models of sharing placement with a Special School where possible, and transferring back to mainstream if a learner has made sufficient progress to be able to cope with mainstream curriculum.
- Intervention Centres and Groups: We have started to change the provision that some of our teams provide to more complex learners in the mainstream, in order to provide them with more regular support, and to upskill the schools in a different way. We will also look at provision maps with our schools, to improve provision for learners who are bordering on needing a special placement, but are making progress in the mainstream.
- Collaborative planning: We will be bringing the above information together with Special School Heads shortly, in order to plan further across the sector.
- We have invested in Ysgol Pendalar, using the ALN Capital grant in order to improve the use of the space available there, and increase capacity.

The above will enable us to develop a service and strategy for ensuring that we meet the requirements of Gwynedd Learners.

4.7 How many pupils with additional learning needs are there in mainstream schools in Gwynedd?

The data contained in Appendix 2 is annual data. Live data as of 23/3/25 showed the information below. There are 2139 children with an IDP (correct 23/3/25) in Gwynedd, which is 12.8% of the 0-25 population. There are also 36 children who have an Individual Medical Plan due to a condition e.g. Epilepsy, Type 1 Diabetes, which is provision for medical needs only. This equates to 0.2% of the school/preschool population.

School IDP – School Provision	943
Forum IDP Forum – School Provision, with input from the ALN Team	876
Authority IDP - Additional provision for a school, with input from the ALN Team	320

4.8 Do all pupils in mainstream schools have an Individual Development Plan? If not, is there a process in place to keep an eye on these pupils?

If education provision (pre-school/school or college 01-16) has identified that a learner has ALN (and therefore requires Additional Learning Provision) the learner has an IDP. If a school/pre-school/college is in the process of targeting the child, or gathering evidence to make a decision on whether a learner has ALN, they do not yet have an IDP.

Each school has a provision map, and as part of the map they will identify how they are keeping an eye on a learner's progress, in order to initiate an 'ALN enquiry' process if they feel ALN may be emerging.

5. Consultation

- Collaborating with Headteachers to Develop the ALN and I Funding Formula
- Gathering information about school opinions through satisfaction questionnaires.
- Further Consultation will take place with the Headteachers of Special Schools as set out in the report.

6. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

6.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 seeks to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act imposes a duty of well-being on public bodies and is aimed at achieving 7 well-being goals by following the 5 ways of working.

6.2 The Act imposes a welfare duty on the Council to carry out sustainable development work by acting in co-operation with the 'sustainable development principle'. This means that the impact on people in the future needs to be considered when making decisions.

6.3 In terms of **collaboration and inclusion of others**, we are:

- Collecting monthly satisfaction questionnaires from parents and school staff, and respond to these comments.
- Gathering learners' views at the end of an intervention where possible, and also through a Person Central Planning process within the IDP.
- Discussing with Heads in the Strategic Groups and the Federation
- An Annual Panel meeting with each school, where there is an opportunity for them to give views on different aspects of the service

What has been done or will be done to **prevent** problems from arising or worsening in the future?

- The ALN Legislation and the Education Tribunal state the importance of responding early to any need that arises. Identifying a learner's need early is critical to reducing the long-term need.
- We will continue to review our ALN identification processes, so that we are proactive in preventing problems from developing.
- We have strong processes in starting the process in the early years, and this has been recognised by Estyn.

How have you considered the **long-term** and what will people's needs be in years to come?

In terms of **the long term** and looking to the future, we are already aware of the increase in demand for services. We use trend data to identify demand. This starts from the cradle, as the ALN Act covers the ages of 0-25.

To ensure **integration**, have you considered the potential impact on other public bodies?

- We work closely with the ALN Designated Clinical Lead Officer within the Health board, with our Early Years partners, and ongoing multi-agency work.

7. Impact on Equality, Welsh Language and Socio-Economic Duty Characteristics

The Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Service is in keeping with the ALN and Tribunal Act Wales 2018

The Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Service offers a complete service through the medium of Welsh.

An impact assessment will be carried out when relevant to any change.

8. Next Steps

See 4.5.

Background Information

Thematic Estyn - [The new additional learning needs system](#)

ETW Report - [The Education Tribunal for Wales, Annual Report 2023-24](#)

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Staffing Structure of ALN and CH Service (Gwynedd)

Appendix 2 – ALN Data

Appendix 3 – Appeals/Tribunal Data

Appendix 1 – ALN and CH Structure and Provision

Within the ALN Service the Green Teams are 'Additional Learning Needs' teams, the blue Teams are 'Inclusion' teams. The teams that are orange are teams that support ALN and Inclusion.

Every team has a Team Leader

This Report focuses on the ALN provision.

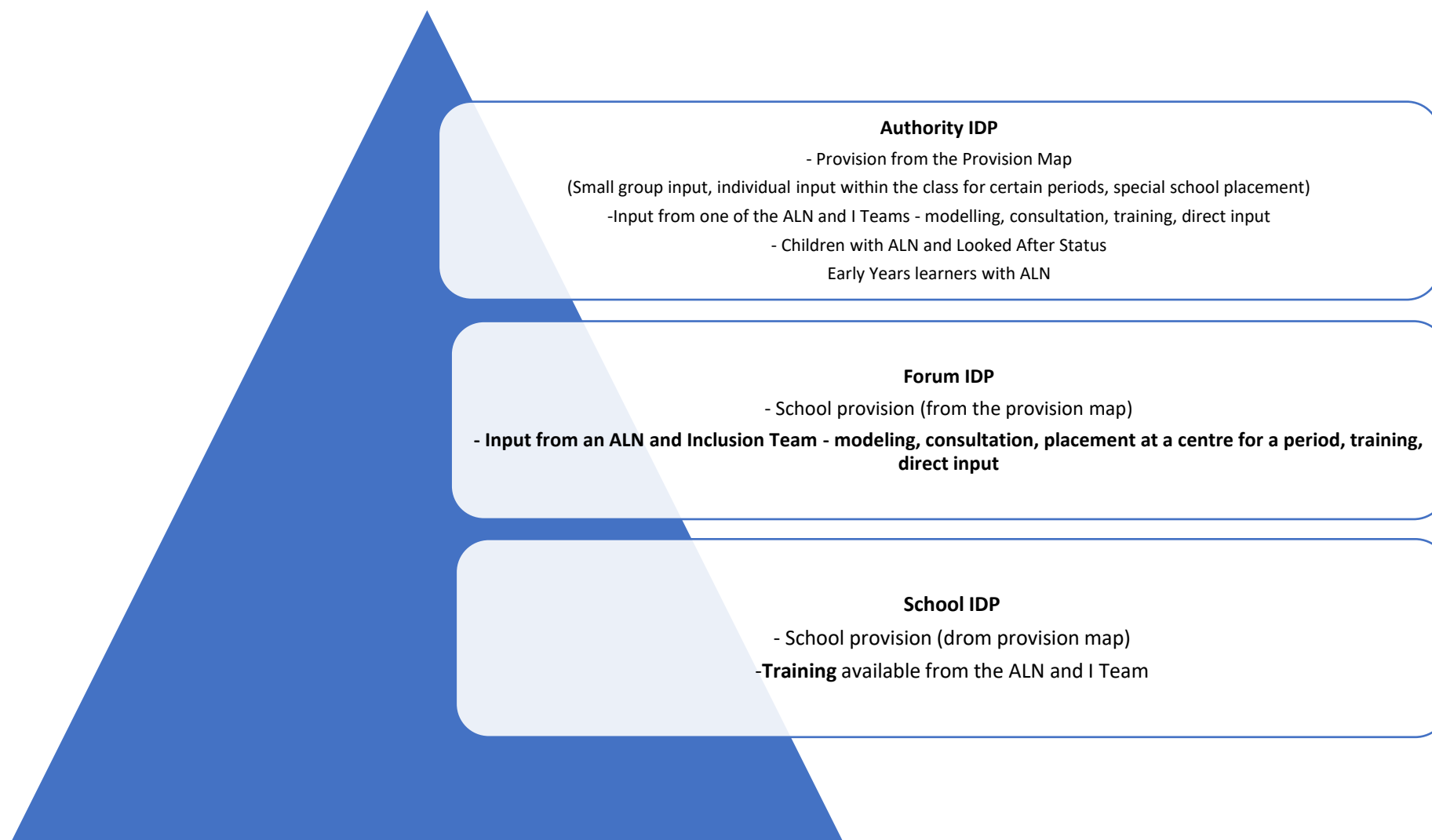
Stretch Out = training, modelling and consultancy service

Temporary Centres = Learners spend part of their week in a centre within a Main Flow School to get direct input



Appendix 1 – ALN and CH Structure and Provision

What input do the Teams provide?



Appendix 1 – ALN and CH Structure and Provision

Where a Learner has Additional Learning Needs their areas of need are identified within an Individual Development Plan. All UDPs must include 'additional learning provision (i.e. which specifies what the school will provide to meet the ALN.

The creation of the UDP should be a process where the family and learners have input.

The additional learning provision is something that is offered within the school's provision roadmap, and includes input from the ALN Team with UDP Forum and UDP Authority.

When the UDP is a single 'Authority' this means that the Authority ensures that the provision is put in place. When in one School or Forum, the school is responsible for putting in place.

Appendix 2 – ALN Trends Data

Numbers of Learners with a IDP in Gwynedd:

PLASC	Authority IDP	School/Forum IDP	Total	
2022	767	1186	1953	Totals show an increase in numbers since 2022. An increase can be seen at all levels.
2023	804	1109	1913	
2024	795	1148	1943	
2025*	852	1219	2071	
				Forum IDP Status is a School IDP according to the Legislation – the Forwm level is a local description for Gwynedd and Anglesey, where the Team is involved with learners who are on School IDP

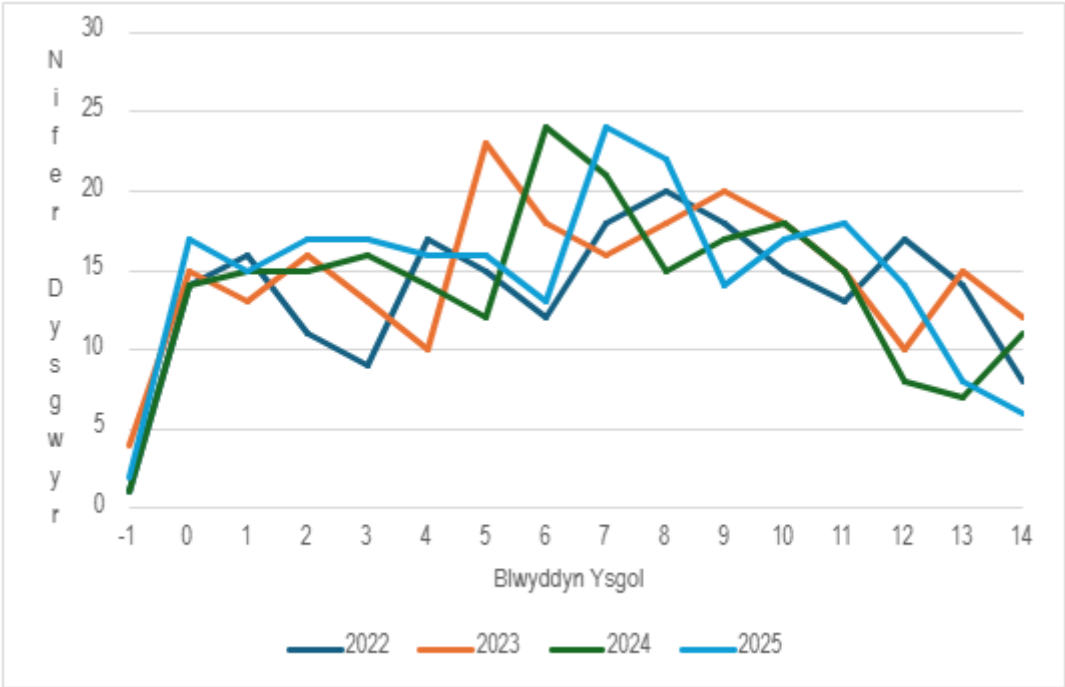
Numbers of Learners based in Special Schools in Gwynedd:

The table and graph show the number of learners placed in a Special School. Note that the number has increased since 2022, but the age profile shows an increase in a given period (year 6-8 during the period) , and the graph shows this in the trend over time. The graph line seems to stabilize in the youngest years in School, which .

Period/BCC	PLASC	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total
Special	2022	1	14	16	11	9	17	15	12	18	20	18	15	13	17	14	8	218
Special	2023	4	15	13	16	13	10	23	18	16	18	20	18	15	10	15	12	236
Special	2024	1	14	15	15	16	14	12	24	21	15	17	18	15	8	7	11	223
Special	2025	2	17	15	17	17	16	16	13	24	22	14	17	18	14	8	6	236

Appendix 2 – ALN Trends Data

Age Comparison of Learners within Special Schools



Appendix 2 – ALN Trends Data

PLASC Description Learners with a UDP (two descriptions can be given)

The area of need for all ALN learners needs to be recorded in the annual PLASC data. A school can give a primary field, and a second field. It can be seen from the data below that the use of some descriptions has increased over the last three years, with the fields in red standing out as areas of increase. It also possibly reflects the increased complexity of needs, where more than one code needs to be used.

PLASC	ADHD	ASD	Social, Behavioral, Emotional	Numeracy Difficulties (DYSC)	Literacy Difficulties (DYSL)	Dyspraxia	General Learning Difficulties	Hearing Impairment	Moderate Learning Difficulties	Multisensory	Physical/Medical	Intense and Multiple Communication	Speech, Language and Communication	Intensive Learning Difficulties	Visual Impairment	Total
2022	29	132	137	3	11	10	25	17	47	3	86	42	264	126	32	964
2023	40	163	196	3	19	14		22	78	5	111	53	382	128	39	1253
2024	36	167	225	2	20	14		20	99	5	112	44	404	131	40	1319

Appeals received to the Education Tribunal for Wales¹

The number of SEN / ALN (previous legislation) appeals received to the Education Tribunal for Wales between 2015-2016 and 2024-2025 from Gwynedd local authority, and as a percentage of appeals from the total Welsh local authorities

Deddf ADY		Deddf AAA/ADY			SEN Act				
2024-2025 (to date)	2023- 2024	2022- 2023	2021- 2022	2020- 2021	2019- 2020	2018- 2019	2017- 2018	2016- 2017	2015- 2016
4	4	2	1	2	5	2	2	2	2
Unpublished		ADY: 5% AAA: 0%	17%	1%	4%	1%	2%	1%	2%

Source:

<https://tribiwnlysaddysg.llyw.cymru/adroddiadau-blynnyddol>, accessed 29/04/2024.

¹ or its previous name Special Educational Needs Tribunal for Wales (SENTW)

MEETING	Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee
DATE	10 April 2025
TITLE	Education Language Policy
REASON TO SCRUTINISE	Following the submission of the findings of the Engagement process on 13-2-25 in the context of amending the Language Policy, an invitation was extended to return to the Scrutiny Committee to present a draft of the amended policy.
AUTHOR	Rhys Meredydd Glyn, Head of Gwynedd Immersion Education System
CABINET MEMBER	Cllr Dewi Jones

1. Why does it need scrutiny?

1.1 : The linguistic changes taking place in Gwynedd, as well as changes in terms of the Welsh Government's influence on education in Wales, make it timely for us to consider reviewing Cyngor Gwynedd's Education Language Policy. Following the engagement process, the Education Department has been working with Meirion Prys Jones to produce a draft revised Language Policy that is submitted as an appendix to this report for scrutiny.

2. What exactly needs scrutiny?

2.1 The Draft Revised Education Language Policy

This policy is an attempt to set Gwynedd's ambition to ensure that the County's children and young people grow up to be proficient users of the Welsh language and develop bilingual or multilingual skills within our Education System.

This is the first step on our journey to reform the language policy. Creating policies is a complex process and we recognize that more work needs to be done on the legal aspects in this area, as the Welsh Language and Education Measure evolves on its journey through parliament. This is an opportunity to ask for your opinion, and your guidance as elected members of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee regarding the strategic direction of this draft.

3. Summary of the Key Matters

3.1 This report summarises the proposed changes to the existing Education Language Policy, as follows:

- All pre-school education settings will provide through the medium of Welsh.
- All pupils in the Foundation Phase until the end of Year 2 will be taught **and** assessed through the medium of Welsh until the end of Year 2. Schools will provide opportunities for pupils to use the Welsh language regularly, inside and outside the classroom, in a curricular and extra-curricular manner.
- From year 3 onwards, in a context of fostering skills that are associated with full bilingualism, at least 80% of the pupils' educational activities (both curricular and extra-curricular) will be in Welsh.

- Pupils' grasp of Welsh will continue to be developed, giving attention to the development of their skills in both languages. From year 3 onwards, English will be introduced as a subject and cross-curricular learning medium.
- In the Secondary schools Welsh will be the main language of education for all pupils up to 16 years old (in accordance with the Welsh Government's definition of the statutory expectations for Category 3 Secondary schools).
- Pupils' grasp of Welsh will continue to be developed, giving attention to the development of their skills in both languages. English will continue to be introduced as a subject and learning medium of some cross-curricular elements.
- Schools are expected to ensure that all pupils (Years 2-9) who are latecomers and new Welsh speakers are referred to attend Gwynedd's Immersion Education System, for them to be able to follow the curriculum in full in accordance with Cyngor Gwynedd's Education Language Policy.
- Children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN) will receive equal linguistic opportunities in accordance with this policy.
- **The main significant amendments proposed to the existing Language Policy is to remove bilingualism and bilingual teaching. The policy notes clearly that Welsh will be the principal language of the education.**

4. Background / Context

4.1: Gwynedd's Education Language Policy is part of the Council's wider strategy to ensure that children and young people up to 18 years old are given the opportunity to develop their language skills in Welsh and English, so that they are proficiently bilingual.

4.2: As part of Education Legislation (2013), local authorities were required to agree on a *Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)* with the Welsh Government – a plan that will remain in force for a ten-year period (2022-2033). The WESP sets out the main current principles associated with Cyngor Gwynedd's education language policies.

4.3: In 2016 the *Welsh 2050: a Million Welsh Speakers* (Welsh Government) strategy was published. The document emphasises the importance of increasing the numbers who speak Welsh but it is also emphasised that increasing the daily use of Welsh is as important. The strategy's aims align with the strategic aims that Cyngor Gwynedd has been promoting for several decades.

4.4: Within the *Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021* (Welsh Government; 2021) it is noted that the Welsh language is a mandatory requirement, which includes:

- Welsh
- English: from age 7.

4.5: Cyngor Gwynedd's education strategies are also expected to take into account the following documents: *Our nation's mission: high standards and aspirations for all* (Welsh Government; 2023) and *School improvement guide: a framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability* (Welsh Government; 2024). In these documents, local authorities and schools in Wales have a

duty to plan appropriately for increasing the number of young people who can speak Welsh and who do so on a daily basis.

4.6: Another development is the Welsh Government's intention to put on the Statute Book legislation relating to the further development of aspects of Welsh Language Education - *Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Bill*. It notes *"The Bill will take steps to enable all pupils in Wales to become confident Welsh speakers through the statutory education system."*

4.7: One of the intentions of the Bill is to turn the school categorisation process into a statutory one, and will be based on the provision and numbers of pupils who will receive Welsh-medium education in a school, up to the age of 16. All schools in Gwynedd, with the exception of two Secondary schools (Tywyn, Friars) and one primary school (Our Lady's School) are in Category 3T (Transitional).

4.8: In the secondary sector, there will be an emphasis on increasing the number of areas of learning available for study through the medium of Welsh and increasing the number of pupils taking courses up to the age of 16 through the medium of Welsh. The Welsh Government expects to see an increase in the provision of education through the medium of Welsh over the next few years, and there is a statutory obligation for the local authorities to plan for this growth.

4.9: One of the objectives of the proposed changes to the current Education Language Policy is maintaining and increasing the use of the Welsh language. It will be expected for 70% of the teaching time in Gwynedd's schools to be through the medium of Welsh, with the remaining 30% to be used for the teaching of English as a subject, and as a teaching medium for some cross-curricular elements.

4.10: **As a result of any agreed amendments, and given the need to incorporate the Act in the Education Language Policy, it will be a statutory policy. The Current Education Language Policy is an exemplary policy.**

4.11: As part of the process of formulating the Policy, we as a Department will produce a detailed Equality Assessment and a Language Impact Assessment on its implementation.

4.12: We will also undertake a Public Consultation process.

5. Consultation (Engagement)

A series of meetings were held across the three regions over a two-month period from October to December 2024. We spent time with representation from primary, secondary, special and lifelong school headteachers:

Primary Schools:

Arfon: Our Lady's School, Ysgol Hiraef, Ysgol Llandygai, Ysgol Llanllechid, Ysgol Rhosgadfan.

Dwyfor: Ysgol y Gorlan, Ysgol Treferthyr, Ysgol Llanbedrog

Meirionnydd: Ysgol Cefn Coch, Ysgol Talsarnau, Ysgol y Traeth

Special Schools: Ysgol Hafod Lon and Ysgol Pendalar

Secondary Schools:

Arfon: Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen, Ysgol Brynrefail, Ysgol Tryfan and Ysgol Friars, Ysgol Dyffryn Nantlle

Dwyfor: Ysgol Botwnnog, Ysgol Eifionydd, Ysgol Glan y Môr

Meirionnydd: Ysgol y Moelwyn, Ysgol Ardudwy, Ysgol Tywyn

Lifelong Schools: Ysgol Bro Idris, Ysgol Godre'r Berwyn.

- 5.1 Pupils were also welcomed to the engagement meetings to discuss the language policy. Suitable and purposeful background documents were prepared for the age ranges of different learners. It was also ensured that the voices of a cross-section of Gwynedd's children and young people were listened to in the meetings. Children were selected from schools in the Welsh language strongholds in Gwynedd, and also from the more Anglicised areas, including a school that is in the transitional category in terms of the school's Welsh-medium provision.

Primary School Learners: Ysgol Cymerau, Ysgol Bro Hedd Wyn and Ysgol Cae Top

Secondary School Learners: Ysgol Botwnnog, Ysgol y Moelwyn, Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen and Ysgol Tywyn

Special School Learners: Ysgol Hafod Lon.

- 5.2 An engagement meeting was also held for the following representatives:

Language Organisations:

Cylch yr Iaith

Cymdeithas yr Iaith

Dyfodol yr Iaith

RHAG - Parents for Welsh Medium Education

- 5.3 We also welcomed representatives from the **Gwynedd Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee:**

Councillors: Jina Gwyrfai, Elwyn Jones, Beth Lawton, Richard Glyn Roberts and Rhys Tudur

- 5.4 The following Councillors were also welcomed, representing the **Language Committee:**

Councillors: Menna Baines, Meryl Roberts, Elfed Wyn ap Elwyn, Alan Jones Evans and Olaf Cai Larsen.

5.5 A meeting was also arranged with representatives from the **Gwynedd Governors' Forum** and also a meeting with the Welsh Language Commissioner's officers.

6. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

6.1 The aim of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act places a well-being duty on public bodies which is aimed at delivering the seven well-being goals by following the five ways of working.

6.2 The Act places a well-being duty on the Council to carry out sustainable development work by working in cooperation with the 'sustainable development principle'. This means that the impact on people in the future must be considered when making decisions.

6.3 In terms of **collaborating and involving** others, we have already held engagement sessions between October and December 2024, see point 5 for more information.

6.4 During the engagement process the need to amend the current language policy in light of recent developments, including the 2021 census, was highlighted. Acting now provides an opportunity to respond to the situation and try to **prevent** a further decline in the number of Welsh-speaking learners aged 3-15.

6.5 Ensuring that the children and young people of Gwynedd develop into confident, bilingual citizens improves opportunities for them educationally, economically, culturally and socially in the **long-term** and enriches their experience of living and working through the medium of Welsh in Gwynedd.

6.6 Empowering the county's Education Language Policy is a solid foundation for developing bilingual citizens and complies with the status of the Welsh language in the context of Public Bodies.

7. Impact on Equality Characteristics, the Welsh Language and the Socio-Economic Duty

7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of formulating the final Language Policy. Consideration will be given to all the comments received as part of the consultation, and the Education Language Policy and the Equality Impact Assessment will be amended as appropriate according to the comments received.

8. Next Steps

8.1 Gwynedd Council Cabinet 13/5/25 or 10/6/25

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Draft Summary Education Language Policy

Appendix 2 - Strategy to Support Cyngor Gwynedd's Education Language Policy

Appendix 3 - One Page Policy

Appendix 4 – Key Messages of the Language Policy Engagement Meetings

Appendix 5 - Additional Questions

Cyngor Gwynedd: Draft Education Language Policy

1. Cyngor Gwynedd Language Strategy 2023 - 2033

Aim

We intend to create an inclusive strategy, with the primary aim of increasing opportunities for all residents in Gwynedd to see and use the Welsh language in a vast number of different contexts. By working on raising its status and increasing people's use of the language in all parts of their lives, we also hope to increase the motivation for others to learn the language. We will give specific attention to young people's use of the language in coming years, which include giving particular attention to their use of the Welsh Language with technology, showing them the value of the language as a skill for the world of work, and trying to increase the informal opportunities for them to use the Welsh language in their daily lives.

2. Cyngor Gwynedd's Revised Education Language Policy

The main aim of this Policy is to ensure that schools and Governors are aware of Cyngor Gwynedd's expectations for schools to comply with the expectations noted in the new system of categorising schools according to their linguistic provision. Schools and governing bodies are expected to be fully aware of the definitions included in the document when planning their educational provision.

<https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-12/guidance-on-school-categories-according-to-welsh-medium-provision.pdf>

This policy is part of a wider strategy by Cyngor Gwynedd to maintain the Welsh language and to promote bilingualism within the county.

As part of this policy, school Headteachers and Governors will be expected to intentionally plan to use and promote Welsh in all parts of the operation of schools in the county.

Objectives:

In implementing this policy, the school and governing body will ensure that:

- their school complies with the current Welsh Government definition of a Category 3 school and that the relevant information about the teaching medium in the school is clearly conveyed to the school's parents and prospective parents.
- every pupil has the appropriate language skills in both Welsh and English by the time they reach the end of their statutory education period.

- appropriate provision is available to enable every pupil to develop bilingual proficiency. In this context, schools are expected to continue to foster the skills of those pupils who are Welsh first language, and introduce Welsh to those who receive immersion education during whichever period this takes place.
- every pupil who is a latecomer and a new Welsh speaker is encouraged to attend Gwynedd's Immersion Education System.
- all of the county's education establishments reflect and reinforce the Language Policy and Language Standards where relevant, in their administration, social life and pastoral arrangements, as well as in their curricular **and extra-curricular** provision.

Pre-school education provision

All pre-school education settings will provide through the medium of Welsh.

Primary

Every primary school in Gwynedd is a Category 3 School or is working to achieve Category 3 School status in accordance with Welsh Government definitions for primary schools.

<https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-12/guidance-on-school-categories-according-to-welsh-medium-provision.pdf>

The aim of the Education Language Policy in the primary sector is to develop the ability of all pupils to be confident in both languages by the time they reach 11 years old, developing the linguistic skills of pupils and providing opportunities to **use them** in real and meaningful situations.

Welsh is the main medium of the education of pupils and the internal communication within Gwynedd's primary schools. Communication with parents and guardians will either be in Welsh or English, or bilingually, as required. Every school will have a strong Welsh ethos, which will support and enable the learners to use the Welsh language in all contexts in and outside the school.

Foundation Phase until the end of Year 2

Every pupil is taught **and assessed** through the medium of Welsh until the end of Year 2. **Schools will provide opportunities for pupils to use the Welsh language regularly, inside and outside the classroom, in a curricular and extra-curricular manner.**

Year 3 – Year 6

From year 3 onwards, in a context of fostering skills that are associated with full bilingualism, at least 80% of the pupil's educational activities (both curricular and extra-curricular) will be in Welsh.

The pupils' grasp of Welsh should continue to be developed, giving attention to the development of their skills in both languages. From year 3 onwards, English will be introduced as a subject and cross-curricular learning medium.

Cyngor Gwynedd is committed to providing an Intensive Immersion Course within the Immersion Education System. Schools are expected to ensure that all pupils (Years 2-6) who are latecomers and new Welsh speakers are referred to attend Gwynedd's Immersion Education System, for them to be able to follow the curriculum in full in accordance with Cyngor Gwynedd's Education Language Policy.

Secondary

Every secondary school in Gwynedd is a Category 3 School or is working to achieve Category 3 School status in accordance with Welsh Government definitions for secondary schools.

<https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-12/guidance-on-school-categories-according-to-welsh-medium-provision.pdf>

In all schools within this category, Welsh will be the main language of education for all pupils up to 16 years old (in accordance with the Welsh Government's definition of the statutory expectations for Category 3 Secondary schools).

The pupils' grasp of Welsh should continue to be developed, giving attention to the development of their skills in both languages. English will continue to be introduced as a subject and learning medium of some cross-curricular elements.

Cyngor Gwynedd is committed to providing an Intensive Immersion Course within the Immersion Education System. Schools are expected to ensure that all pupils (Years 7-9) who are latecomers and new Welsh speakers are referred to attend Gwynedd's Immersion Education System, for them to be able to follow the curriculum in full in accordance with Cyngor Gwynedd's Education Language Policy. Schools will have appropriate linguistic provision for any learner arriving at the school as a latecomer in years 10 and 11.

Welsh will be the main language for internal communication. The school will communicate with parents and guardians either in Welsh, English or bilingually, as required. Every school

will have a strong Welsh ethos, supporting and allowing the learners to use the Welsh language in every social context in the school and outside the school.

3. Additional Learning Needs in the Mainstream and Special Schools

Children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN) receive an equal linguistic opportunity in accordance with this Policy.

The ALN and Tribunal Wales Act (2018) must be considered when interpreting this policy. Where Additional Learning Provision is noted within an Individual Development Plan with use of a specific method of communication and intervention, this provision must be secured, in keeping with any specialist advice. The Equality Act must also be considered

4. Welsh Language Progress Plans (Individual Schools)

Each school and Governing body will be expected to present their Welsh Language development priorities in the Welsh Language Progress Plan. This Plan will be agreed with Cyngor Gwynedd and the Welsh Government in accordance with the WESP Outcomes.

The Government's documentation emphasises that the percentages noted in the definition of Category 3 Schools are a minimum.

Strategy to Support Cyngor Gwynedd's Education Language Policy

1. Cyngor Gwynedd Language Strategy 2023 – 2033

Aim

We intend to create an inclusive strategy, with the primary aim of increasing opportunities for all residents in Gwynedd to see and use the Welsh language in a vast number of different contexts. By working on raising status and increasing people's use of the language in all parts of their lives, we will also hope to increase the motivation for others to learn the language. We will give specific attention to young people's use of the language in coming years, which includes giving particular attention to their use of the Welsh language with technology, showing them the value of the language as a skill for the world of work, and trying to increase the informal opportunities for them to use the Welsh language in their daily lives.

2. Gwynedd Education Language Policy 2024-2034

Background

2021 Census

According to the 2021 Census, **73,560 people** (aged 3 and over) were able to speak Welsh in Gwynedd, which equates to **64.4%**.

In 2011, the number of speakers in Gwynedd was **77,000** and the corresponding percentage was **65.4%**. Therefore, the proportion of people who speak Welsh in Gwynedd between 2011 and 2021 has reduced by 1%.

Cyngor Gwynedd is implementing schemes in a number of national policy and statutory fields, and is implementing schemes on a local level that positively affect communities in the county and are involved in many ways with efforts seeking to maintain and promote Welsh.

These include:

- Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)
- Gwynedd Housing Action Plan
- Local Development Plan
- Sustainable Visitor Economy Plan
- Our Area Regeneration Schemes

3. Use of the Welsh Language by the residents of Gwynedd

In terms of linguistic planning, there are several key factors affecting the language use of individuals.

- **opportunities to use the Welsh language** – the quality and convenience of opportunities can greatly affect the use of the language and supporting future use of the language.
- **progression in the use of the Welsh language** – the continuation of experiences and opportunities from the home to primary to secondary education; from secondary education to further or higher education; from education to the workplace, leisure, raising families, as well as social and community experiences, together with continuity between learning Welsh and becoming fluent.
- **attitudes towards the Welsh language and bilingualism** – it is important to consider how Welsh speakers feel about their ability and language use and the way in which they act or do not act on this, and how non-Welsh speakers feel about the language and how this is articulated and perceived.
- **confidence to use the Welsh language in a variety of situations** – the confidence of Welsh speakers can vary according to the situation (e.g. formal and informal) and therefore consideration must be given as to how and where to target support effectively.

In terms of the challenges identified in Gwynedd, these are the main challenges at present:

- Transferring the language within the family
- Young people's use of language
- The status of the Welsh language in the community
- Opportunities for people to use the Welsh language in the community
- Creating new speakers
- The influence of technology
- Evidence base and the ability to measure the impact of schemes and interventions
- Demographic and geographical challenges including people's migration
- Opportunities to use the Welsh language in the workplace

Certainly, getting people to use the skills and ability they have to speak Welsh, and doing this in as many contexts as possible, is the key factor for the success of the language in Gwynedd.

4. Development stages of the Council's language strategy in the education field

Target

- Ensure all pupils become fluently bilingual
- General increase in the regular use of the Welsh language
- Many more pupils studying through the medium of Welsh up to external exam level (16yrs)
- 100% of Gwynedd children having the opportunity to speak Welsh and use the language regularly.

5. The Context

In formulating a new Education Language Policy for Cyngor Gwynedd, we must now look at a wider context than the role and work of the Council itself. Cyngor Gwynedd constantly innovated when developing a progressive education system over the last decades, leading much development in the field of providing and promoting Welsh and bilingual education. By building on this innovation for the future, careful consideration should be given to the developments taking place in Welsh and bilingual education at an all-Wales level as a number of statutory and innovative steps are now taking place at that level.

Since the process of devolving powers to the Welsh Government was established, the Welsh Government has played an increasingly key part when drawing up the national legislative context in terms of language and education in Wales. As the first step when the Government undertook its responsibility in the field of education and the Welsh language, the Government published its first **Welsh Education Strategy** in 2010 by setting specific targets to develop the provision.

https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/id/eprint/11114/14/100420welshmediumstrategycy_Redacted.pdf

In 2013, the **School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013**

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2013/1/contents/welsh> set the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESP) on a statutory basis and as a follow-up to the Welsh Education Plans that were required by local authorities under the **Welsh Language Act 1993**.

6. Agree on Welsh in Education Strategic Plans

As part of the 2013 Legislation, local authorities were required to produce their first statutory Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESP) for the 2014-2017 period. In 2018, it was resolved to revise the regulations for these plans and amend them from 3-year strategic plans to 10-year plans. Cyngor Gwynedd's latest WESP was agreed with the Welsh Government in 2022 and is effective for the 2023-2033 period.

It is noted in the Guidelines to formulate the WESP that:

The purpose of these regulations is to improve opportunities for local authorities to plan Welsh-medium education provision in order to support the current and future expectation for growth in Welsh-medium education. Improving the planning of Welsh-medium education will also support our long-term national ambition for the Welsh language as set out in our Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh speakers strategy
<https://www.llyw.cymru/sites/default/files/publications/2021-02/canllawiau-gynlluniau-strategol-cymraeg-addysg.pdf>

As a follow-up to this, in 2016 the Welsh Government published its latest strategy for the Welsh language, a language strategy that would cover the next three decades to the year 2050: **Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh speakers**
<https://www.llyw.cymru/sites/default/files/publications/2019-03/cymraeg-2050-strategaeth-y-gymraeg-v1-1.pdf>

In this document, specific targets are noted to increase the numbers who speak Welsh along with its use.

The Aims of Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh speakers

	Aim	Target
1.	Increase the number of Welsh-speakers	1 million Welsh-speakers by 2050
2.	Increase the use of the Welsh language	Daily use of Welsh increasing from 10% to 20%
3.	Create favourable conditions - infrastructure and context	

Many other specific targets are also noted in the strategy that are relevant to Cyngor Gwynedd's Education Language Policy:

Education:

- ***Increase the proportion of every school year group that receive their education through the medium of Welsh from 22% to 30% by 2031, and then to 40% by 2050.***
- ***Transform how we teach Welsh to all learners so that at least 70% of those learners can state in 2050 that they can speak Welsh by the time they leave school.***
- ***Increase the number of primary school teachers who can teach through the medium of Welsh from 2,900 to 3,900 by 2031 and to 5,200 by 2050;***

- ***Increase the number of secondary school teachers who can teach Welsh from 500 to 900 by 2031 and to 1,200 by 2050; 4***
- ***Increase the number of secondary school teachers who can teach through the medium of Welsh from 1,800 to 3,200 by 2031 and to 4,200 by 2050.***

The strategic document, *Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh speakers*, emphasises the importance of increasing the numbers that speak Welsh but it is also emphasised that increasing the daily use of Welsh is as important.

Moving to a position where there are a million speakers is one aspect of our vision for the prosperity of the Welsh language. But a thriving Welsh language is a language that is being used. We want the use of Welsh to be a normal part of daily life, so that speakers at all levels feel confident to use it in formal and informal scenarios... According to the Use of Language Survey 2013-15 (Welsh Government and Welsh Language Commissioner 2015), there is a clear correlation between proficiency and the frequency of the use of Welsh - 84% of fluent Welsh speakers speak Welsh every day.

In all these documents, the local authorities and schools in Wales have a duty to plan appropriately for increasing the number of young people who can speak Welsh and who do so on a daily basis.

7. Welsh Education Bill

Another impending development is the Welsh Government's intention to put on the Statute Book legislation relating to the further development of aspects of Welsh Language Education. It is stated in the White Paper, published by the Government, which is associated with this Bill, that the intention is that:

The Bill will take steps to enable all pupils in Wales to become confident Welsh-speakers through the statutory education system. Key proposals include:

- *Reflecting the target of one million Welsh-speakers in law;*
- *Creating a single Welsh language skills continuum to describe skill levels so that learners, teachers, parents and employers have a common understanding of the journey towards learning Welsh;*
- ***Establishing a statutory system of categorising maintained schools according to language;***
- ***Over time, increasing Welsh language provision in maintained schools that are not already dedicated Welsh-medium schools;***

- *A requirement for Welsh Ministers to create a statutory National Plan for the acquisition and learning of Welsh, and review it in each Senedd term;*
- ***Reforming how local authorities plan Welsh language provision in schools to meet targets set by Welsh Ministers;***
- ***Requirements on local authorities to pro-actively promote Welsh-medium education, including late immersion provision; and***
- *Providing specialist support for schools with Welsh language learning.*

From what is noted in the White Paper, it can therefore be seen that the Welsh Government expects to see an increase in the provision of education through the medium of Welsh over these next few years and that there is a statutory obligation for the local authorities to plan for this growth. It is expected for education authorities to have plans in place to support schools as they increase this provision.

Therefore, when undertaking the reform of the Gwynedd Schools Language Policy, the Welsh Government's laws and strategies have a much greater influence on the content of local authority language policies than they had previously. The government is now setting out clearly enough its desire to see the Welsh Language and Education in Welsh flourish and develop in Wales throughout the period pupils are in statutory education and beyond.

The Welsh Education Bill plays a key role in what is to be included in an Education Language Policy, particularly because of the changes that have taken place to the process of categorising all schools in Wales according to their linguistic nature.

All primary and secondary schools fall into one of three categories. The numbers 1, 2 and 3 are used to designate the categories. In the primary, Category 1 will refer to schools that teach primarily through the medium of English, Category 2 to dual-language schools and Category 3 to schools that teach primarily through the medium of Welsh.

<https://senedd.wales/media/r3cm5xcm/pri-ld16583-w.pdf>

For those schools that do not fully meet the definition of the language category in which they wish to be, a transitional period and a duplication plan will be agreed with the local authority and included as part of the reforms to the WESP agreed with the government. The intention and ambition is that all Gwynedd primary schools will be Category 3 Primary schools.

In the secondary sector, there will also be 3 categories but the definition of these will be slightly different to the definition for the primary sector. The emphasis is now on increasing the number of subjects that are available to be studied through the medium of Welsh and **also an emphasis on increasing the number of pupils who continue to take courses up to the age of 16 through the medium of Welsh.**

In his foreword to the *Guidance on school categories according to Welsh-medium provision* (2021) document, the Minister for Education noted:

Looking at the global context – bilingualism is the norm. I'm proud that in Wales we support a truly bilingual system that reflects the bilingual demographic of Wales, the official status of Welsh alongside English and our national well-being goal of 'a thriving Welsh language'.

I want all learners to have the opportunity of becoming bilingual citizens, but what's important to me is that we create speakers who use the language. Welsh belongs to us all and I want to make sure that people are not only able to speak the language, but are happy to use it in all walks of life. This is my vision.

<https://www.llyw.cymru/sites/default/files/publications/2021-12/canllawiau-ar-gategoreiddio-ysgolion-yn-ol-y-ddarpariaeth-cyfrwng-cymraeg.pdf>

By introducing the new arrangements, it is noted in the above document that one of the main principles will be the principle of not providing less than previously provided:

*One of the core principles when introducing the new arrangements is that schools should not offer less of a Welsh language provision in the future than it did in the past. **We will ensure that learners have as many opportunities as possible to use their Welsh in as many different contexts as possible during the school day. This will mean giving our learners the best opportunity to become confident Welsh speakers who can use the language in all aspects of life.***

8. Curriculum for Wales (2021)

Within the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021, which outlines the Curriculum for Wales, **it is noted that the Welsh language is a mandatory requirement.**

The legislation that outlines the regulations relating to the new Curriculum for Wales states that there are (in addition to the four purposes of the curriculum) mandatory elements spanning the 3-to-16-year-old learning continuum, namely:

- The cross-curricular skills of literacy, numeracy and digital competence
- Names of the areas of learning and experience
- Relationships and sexuality education
- Religion, values and ethics
- **Welsh**
- **English – from age 7. Headteachers and funded but non-maintained nursery education providers can exercise their discretion in deciding whether, and to what extent, they will deliver English to learners aged between 3 and 7. This is to facilitate the immersion process of early years learners in Welsh.** Therefore, it is expected that English-medium and bilingual schools will continue to include English in their curriculum.

Gwynedd's Education Language Policy also takes into account the following Welsh Government documents:

- *Our nation's mission: high standards and aspirations for all Welsh Government (2023)*
- *School improvement guide: a framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability (Statutory in 2024)*

9. The linguistic and educational profile of Gwynedd

2021 census statistics show that **86.2%** of Gwynedd's 3-15-year-olds can speak Welsh. This percentage is significantly higher than the percentage of Welsh-speakers among the general population, which is 64.4%.

There are two ways to increase the number of Welsh speakers, either at home or through the care and education system. These numbers show that Gwynedd schools' Education Language Policy has had a very positive impact by increasing the number of young people who can speak Welsh within the county. Also in Gwynedd is the largest number and percentage of Welsh speakers in Wales according to the 2021 Census. The smallest reduction of all local authorities was seen in this percentage between the 2011 and 2021 censuses.

Looking at a wider platform, and looking at the situation of languages that are not state languages, Gwynedd is among the best in terms of marketing its minority language. It is very likely that it could be stated that Gwynedd is more successful at maintaining its linguistic position in terms of the Welsh language than any other region in the world apart from Catalonia, a language that has approximately 10 million speakers, and across several states. Therefore, Cyngor Gwynedd can take pride in its language policy and education policies over the last decades as they have played a key part in this linguistic success. However, Cyngor Gwynedd believes that there is more room to innovate and improve in its schools' Education Language Policy.

10. Linguistic confidence in two languages

As already noted, improving language skills is one way to measure the success of a policy of promoting bilingualism. But for stable bilingualism to be successful, young people must have the confidence to speak both languages, using Welsh and English with complete fluency in both formal and informal situations.

As society is significantly changing at present and many young people live in households where nobody, or only one parent, speaks Welsh, there are not as many opportunities to speak Welsh in the home or with the extended family as there used to be. Despite this, the education system can present several linguistic skills to children and young people and ensure they are completely fluent in both languages. However, in order for the Welsh language and bilingual skills to thrive and for the confidence among its speakers to increase,

the language must be spoken on a daily basis and in a range of different situations, formally and informally. This is the reason why the second primary target of the *Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh speakers* document specifically emphasises the need to increase the practical use of the Welsh language. The importance of increasing social use of the language is noted in the document, its use in the home, in workplaces and in the provision of services in general.

To achieve this, it is clear that the education system alone cannot achieve all of these requirements or expectations. Therefore, a broader strategy must be planned instead of an education policy alone. The education strategy will of course be central to a much more holistic strategy that would consider how the opportunities for people in Gwynedd to use Welsh and English with full confidence in any situation can be expanded.

11. Promoting Bilingualism and Bilingual Education

The aim of this policy is to promote the bilingual skills of every pupil within the authority, and in a county that has the highest percentage and highest numbers of Welsh speakers in Wales. Cyngor Gwynedd has been a very innovative authority in terms of promoting Welsh/bilingual education for decades. The unquestionable success of this policy was seen in the number of young people who can use Welsh and English totally fluently in the county. However, to protect these developments, purposeful planning must be undertaken to continue to maintain and improve the linguistic skills of pupils who live within the county. To maintain and develop the high level of proficiency in both languages that has been developed, it must be ensured that the Welsh language does not lose ground within a context of people's migration and general globalisation.

What is now clear is that planning must be intentional and cautious to maintain the bilingual proficiency of our young people. One of the most effective methods of doing this is to give them more opportunities to receive their education and extra-curricular experiences through the medium of Welsh up to 16 years old. We must therefore continue to plan the process of linguistic immersion that takes place very effectively in the primary sector and extend that process more thoroughly to the secondary sector. To achieve full bilingualism, all the evidence shows that it is extremely beneficial for pupils to continue a high percentage of their education through the medium of Welsh while they are within the statutory and post-statutory education system. The aim of this policy is to contribute to this linguistic maintenance which ensures robust and sustained bilingual proficiency. Following this path will be challenging for some schools, but support will be available from Cyngor Gwynedd in planning and monitoring the success of these developments as they progress and as secondary schools take advantage of the opportunities offered by this new policy.

12. Cyngor Gwynedd's Revised Education Language Policy

The main aim of this Policy is to ensure that schools and Governors are aware of the expectations of Cyngor Gwynedd for schools to comply with the expectations noted in the new system of categorising schools according to their linguistic provision. Schools and governing bodies are expected to be fully aware of the definitions included in the document when planning their educational provision.

<https://www.llyw.cymru/sites/default/files/publications/2021-12/canllawiau-ar-gategoreiddio-ysgolion-yn-ol-y-ddarpariaeth-cyfrwng-cymraeg.pdf>

This policy is part of a wider strategy by Cyngor Gwynedd to maintain the Welsh language and to promote bilingualism within the county.

As part of this policy, school Headteachers and Governors will be expected to intentionally plan to use and promote Welsh in all parts of the operation of schools in the county.

Objectives:

In implementing this policy, the school and governing body will ensure:

- that their school complies with the current Welsh Government definition of a Category 3 school and that the relevant information about the teaching medium in the school is clearly conveyed to the school's parents and prospective parents.
- that every pupil has the appropriate language skills in both Welsh and English by the time they reach the end of their statutory education period.
- that appropriate provision is available to enable every pupil to develop bilingual proficiency. In this context, schools are expected to continue to foster the skills of those pupils who are Welsh first language, and introduce Welsh to those who receive immersion education during whichever period this takes place.
- that every pupil who is a latecomer and a new Welsh speaker is encouraged to attend Gwynedd's Immersion Education System.
- that all of the county's education establishments reflect and reinforce the Language Policy and Language Standards where relevant, in their administration, social life and pastoral arrangements, as well as in their curricular **and extra-curricular** provision.

Pre-school education provision

All pre-school education settings will provide through the medium of Welsh.

Primary

Every primary school in Gwynedd is a Category 3 School or is working to achieve Category 3 School status in accordance with Welsh Government definitions for primary schools.

<https://www.llyw.cymru/sites/default/files/publications/2021-12/canllawiau-ar-gategoreiddio-ysgolion-yn-ol-y-ddarpariaeth-cyfrwng-cymraeg.pdf>

The aim of the Education Language Policy in the primary sector is to develop the ability of all pupils to be confident in both languages by the time they reach 11 years old, developing the linguistic skills of pupils and providing opportunities **to use** the language in real and meaningful situations.

Welsh is the main medium of pupils' education and internal communication in Gwynedd's primary schools. Communication with parents and guardians will either be in Welsh or English, or bilingually, as required. Every school will have a strong Welsh ethos, which will support and enable the learners to use the Welsh language in all contexts in and outside the school.

Foundation Phase until the end of Year 2

Every pupil is taught **and assessed** through the medium of Welsh until the end of Year 2. **Schools will provide opportunities for pupils to use the Welsh language regularly, inside and outside the classroom, in a curricular and extra-curricular manner.**

Year 3 - Year 6

From year 3 onwards, in a context of fostering skills that are associated with full bilingualism, at least 80% of the pupil's educational activities (both curricular and extra-curricular) will be in Welsh.

The pupils' grasp of Welsh should continue to be developed giving attention to the development of their skills in both languages. From year 3 onwards, English will be introduced as a subject and cross-curricular learning medium.

Pupils' progress in Welsh and in English are assessed during and at the end of their primary school period.

Cyngor Gwynedd is committed to providing an Intensive Immersion Course within the Immersion Education System. Schools are expected to ensure that all pupils (Years 2-6) who are latecomers and new Welsh speakers are referred to attend Gwynedd's Immersion Education System, for them to be able to follow the curriculum in full in accordance with Cyngor Gwynedd's Education Language Policy.

Secondary

Every secondary school in Gwynedd is a Category 3 School or is working to achieve Category 3 School status in accordance with Welsh Government definitions for secondary schools.

<https://www.llyw.cymru/sites/default/files/publications/2021-12/canllawiau-ar-gategoreiddio-ysgolion-yn-ol-y-ddarpariaeth-cyfrwng-cymraeg.pdf>

For every school in this category, Welsh will be the main language of education for all pupils, in the context of fully developing the bilingual skills of all pupils. Welsh will also be the main language for internal communication. The school will communicate with parents and guardians either in Welsh, English or bilingually, as required. Every school will have a strong Welsh ethos, supporting and allowing the learners to use the Welsh language in every social context in the school and outside the school.

Gwynedd secondary schools ensure progression and continuation to develop skills in both Welsh and English. Every pupil will continue to follow courses through the medium of Welsh in the secondary sector up to 16 years old (in accordance with the Welsh Government's definition of the statutory expectations on Category 3 Secondary schools), with the exception of pupils who are included within the Council's Exceptions Policy.

Cyngor Gwynedd is committed to providing an Intensive Immersion Course within the Immersion Education System. Schools are expected to ensure that all pupils (Years 7-9) who are latecomers and new Welsh speakers are referred to attend Gwynedd's Immersion Education System, for them to be able to follow the curriculum in full in accordance with Cyngor Gwynedd's Education Language Policy.

13. Additional Learning Needs in the Mainstream and Special Schools

Children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN) receive equal linguistic opportunities in accordance with this policy.

The ALN and Tribunal Wales Act (2018) must be considered when interpreting this policy. Where Additional Learning Provision is noted within an Individual Development Plan with use of a specific method of communication and intervention, this provision must be secured, in keeping with any specialist advice. The Equality Act must also be considered.

14. Individual School Development Plans (The Welsh Language)

Each school and governing body will be expected to present their Welsh language development priorities in the Welsh Language Progress Plan. This Plan will be agreed with Cyngor Gwynedd and the Welsh Government in accordance with the WESP Outcomes.

It is emphasised in the Government's documentation that the percentages noted in the definition of Category 3 Schools are a minimum.

15. Definition of Language Cohorts

To ensure progression and continuation on the linguistic continuum, primary schools will assess the linguistic ability of pupils in accordance with the definitions of the Language Cohorts. Secondary schools are responsible for providing appropriate progression and continuation so that pupils develop bilingually proficient.

A	The Welsh and English skills of these pupils are robust, and they are confident to complete their classwork through the medium of both languages.
B	The Welsh skills of these pupils are stronger than their English skills. Their English skills are weak.
C1	Although the English skills of these pupils are stronger than their Welsh skills, they have the ability to complete their classwork through the medium of Welsh.
C2	The Welsh skills of these pupils are limited. It is very likely that they are latecomers / new speakers.
CH	These pupils' use of Welsh and English is limited.

16. Transitional Sub-categories

There are three schools in a transitional category in Gwynedd. An action plan as a consequence of that decision will then be agreed between the authority and the school to move the individual school along the linguistic continuum so that more Welsh-medium provision is provided, in a specific and reasonable manner.

The Government's documentation emphasises that the intention with transitional periods is to encourage an increase in the Welsh-medium provision. It is noted:

We emphasise here that the aim of the transitional sub-categories is to increase Welsh provision, to be able to proceed to the next category. Transitional categories should not be permanent. Schools and local authorities should agree on plans to categorise schools according to their Welsh-medium provision, and incorporate this in their WESP. Local authorities are expected to undertake intensive planning during the first five years of their Plan. Similarly, decisions that will move the school along the linguistic continuum are expected to be made during the first five years. No transitional category should last for more than 10 years.

It is also noted:

There will be a need to ensure that a plan is agreed between the local authority and the school to prepare for an increase in their Welsh provision. Any school in a transitional sub-

category should note this in their school prospectus. Also, in terms of local authorities, this must be outlined in their county composite prospectus.

Therefore, Cyngor Gwynedd will hold a discussion with those three transitional schools that currently offer less Welsh and Welsh-medium provision than what is noted in the thresholds for Category 3 Schools, and draw up and agree on a plan spanning between 5-10 years to ensure that they offer the type of provision that aligns with the requirements of the definition of Category 3 Schools.

17. Bangor Area Development Plan

Due to the nature of the educational/linguistic provision offered in the Bangor area, and as a result of the different nature of the area in terms of people's migration to the area compared to the rest of the county, it is intended to undertake a strategic review of Cyngor Gwynedd's Education Language Policy in the Bangor area. This review will consider the next possible steps to address the intentions of the Welsh Government to ensure that as many pupils as possible become confidently bilingual in all Cyngor Gwynedd areas over the next decade.

18. Information for parents

Schools will be expected to provide information in their handbooks for parents regarding the new system of categorising schools, ensuring that the information is clear and easy to understand. From 2024 onwards, schools will also include this information in their PLASC forms.

19. Latecomers to Welsh Education

In order for Gwynedd's Education language policy to be inclusive, a specialist service is provided within the county, namely the Immersion Education System. The immersion system for newcomers is a strength here in Gwynedd. Since its establishment in its new form in January 2023 there are six strategic locations across the county providing an excellent service for latecomers to acquire the Welsh language.

Arfon Region:

Maesincla Primary Immersion Unit, Caernarfon (yrs 2-4 learners)

Tryfan Primary/Secondary Transition Immersion Unit (yrs 5-9 learners)

Dwyfor Region:

Cymerau Primary Immersion Unit, Pwllheli (yrs 2-4 learners)

Eifionydd Primary/Secondary Transition Immersion Unit (yrs 5-9 learners)

Meirion Region:

Bro Idris Primary Immersion Unit, Dolgellau (yrs 2-4 learners)

Tywyn Primary/Secondary Transition Immersion Unit (yrs 5-9 learners)

Gwynedd has been pioneering in the field of language immersion for decades when the first language unit was established forty years ago and generations of children have developed as new speakers as a result of the successful immersion courses at the language immersion centres. Taking an intensive immersion course for a period of ten weeks equips learners with the skills necessary to enable them to integrate and thrive back in mainstream schools in a formal and informal context within Gwynedd's Welsh and bilingual education system.

20. Exceptions

Exceptions to the Education Language Policy will mainly involve Secondary school pupils who are latecomers to the Gwynedd schools' education system, or who have additional learning needs.

21. Monitoring the provision

It is the responsibility of school governing bodies to ensure that they comply with the Welsh Government's policies and strategies and, where relevant, the policies of Cyngor Gwynedd in the field of education. Cyngor Gwynedd will gather data from schools regarding their compliance with this policy annually. Each school and governing body will present their Welsh language development priorities to the Primary/Secondary Cluster Development Plan. This Plan will be agreed with Cyngor Gwynedd and the Welsh Government in accordance with the WESP Outcomes, and it will be monitored.

Cyngor Gwynedd will have a particular interest in the number and percentage of pupils who sit external examinations when they are 16 years old through the medium of Welsh.

In this context, and when considering the Government's wider plans to monitor these developments, it is noted in the Government's guidance:

Individual school development plans are used by Estyn to provide context before inspection and monitoring visits. Ensuring that school plans to increase the Welsh language provision are included in the School Development Plan means that the school's linguistic context and development can be noted and considered correctly as part of Estyn's monitoring processes. This will become even more relevant as Estyn tries to give more attention to assessing the full range of experiences available for learners in Welsh as part of its assessment framework.

22. Training

In order to realise the principles of Cyngor Gwynedd's Education Language policy, training and professional learning opportunities will be provided for the workforce.

23. The Welsh Language Charter/Secondary Language Strategy

The National Language Charter Framework is a statutory plan for schools in all sectors. The aim of the Language Charter is to ensure that the Welsh language thrives as a living language inside and outside the class. Through these activities, Gwynedd's children become more

confident when using both languages socially and professionally at school and once they leave school. With the new school categorisation system, there will now be an opportunity to integrate the work of the Language Charter into the core activity of every school and to view the Charter as an essential part of promoting the bilingual skills of pupils.

Therefore, schools are expected to:

- incorporate the requirements of the Welsh Language Charter and the Secondary Language Strategy as an integral part of the school Curriculum to achieve the requirements of the county language strategy.
- ensure that every learner develops their Welsh language skills for socialising, to prepare for the world of work, and to show positive attitudes towards the language.
- plan to embed and expand the informal use of Welsh as an integral and core part of the Areas of Learning and Experience within the new curriculum.

Cyngor Gwynedd will also closely collaborate with other organisations and the Gwynedd Language Initiative to increase the provision of Welsh-medium social activities for school-aged pupils.

24. Post-16 Education and Training

Although post-16 education and training is non-statutory, Cyngor Gwynedd's aspiration is that the same commitment in terms of promoting Welsh-medium teaching and facilitating bilingualism will continue in the post-statutory sector. Cyngor Gwynedd, together with schools and colleges and apprenticeship providers within the authority, will discuss their plans to build on this education language policy in the context of maintaining and developing the bilingual skills of all pupils.

GWYNEDD EDUCATION LANGUAGE POLICY

PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION PROVISION	
All pre-school education settings will provide through the medium of Welsh.	
ALN: MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS	
Children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN) receive an equal linguistic opportunity in accordance with this Policy. The ALN and Tribunal Wales Act (2018) must be considered when interpreting this policy. Where Additional Learning Provision is noted within an Individual Development Plan with use of a specific method of communication and intervention, this provision must be secured, in keeping with any specialist advice. The Equality Act must also be considered.	
PRIMARY SCHOOLS	SECONDARY SCHOOLS
<p>Every primary school in Gwynedd is a Category 3 School or is working to achieve Category 3 School status in accordance with Welsh Government definitions for primary schools. The aim of the Education Language Policy in the primary sector is to develop the ability of all pupils to be confident in both languages by the time they reach 11 years old, developing the linguistic skills of pupils and providing opportunities to use them in real and meaningful situations.</p> <p>Welsh is the main education medium of pupils and internal communication of Gwynedd primary schools. Communication with parents and guardians will either be in Welsh or English, or bilingually, as required. Every school will have a strong Welsh ethos, which will support and enable the learners to use the Welsh language in all social contexts in and outside the school.</p> <p>Foundation Phase until the end of Year 2</p> <p>Every pupil is taught and assessed through the medium of Welsh until the end of Year 2.</p> <p>Schools will provide opportunities for pupils to use the Welsh language regularly, inside and outside the classroom, in a curricular and extra-curricular manner.</p> <p><u>Year 3 - Year 6</u></p> <p>From year 3 onwards, in a context of fostering skills that are associated with full bilingualism, at least 80% of the pupil's educational activities (both curricular and extra-curricular) will be in Welsh.</p> <p>The pupils' grasp of Welsh should continue to be developed, giving attention to the development of their skills in both languages. From year 3 onwards, English will be introduced as a subject and cross-curricular learning medium.</p> <p>Cyngor Gwynedd is committed to providing an Intensive Immersion Course within the Immersion Education System. Schools are expected to ensure that all pupils (Years 2-6) who are latecomers and new Welsh speakers, are referred to attend Gwynedd's Immersion Education System, for them to be able to follow the curriculum in full in accordance with Cyngor Gwynedd's Education Language Policy.</p>	<p>Every secondary school in Gwynedd is a Category 3 School or is working to achieve Category 3 School status in accordance with Welsh Government definitions for secondary schools.</p> <p>For every school in this category, Welsh will be the main language of education for all pupils up to 16 years old (in accordance with the Welsh Government's definition of the statutory expectations on Category 3 Secondary schools).</p> <p>The pupils' grasp of Welsh should continue to be developed, giving attention to the development of their skills in both languages. English will continue to be introduced as a subject and learning medium of some cross-curricular elements.</p> <p>Cyngor Gwynedd is committed to providing an Intensive Immersion Course within the Immersion Education System. Schools are expected to ensure that all pupils (Years 7-9) who are latecomers and new Welsh speakers, are referred to attend Gwynedd's Immersion Education System, for them to be able to follow the curriculum in full in accordance with Cyngor Gwynedd's Education Language Policy. Schools can provide in an appropriate linguistic manner for any learners arriving at the school as a latecomer in years 10 and 11.</p> <p>Welsh will be the main language for internal communication. The school will communicate with parents and carers either in Welsh, English or bilingually, as required. Every school will have a strong Welsh ethos, supporting and allowing the learners to use the Welsh language in every social context in the school and outside the school.</p>

Gwynedd Education Language Policy Engagement Meetings.

The feedback gathered during a series of meetings with a wide cross-section of stakeholders in the statutory education sector in Gwynedd.

1. The Current Education Language Policy

- Clear support was generally felt towards the Welsh language, the Language Policy and the desire to see this policy updated across the County.
- A sense that the policy was an effort to protect the Welsh language in a stronghold like Gwynedd.
- The Welsh language was the norm for most of the pupils - they did not question that, only accepted it as a completely natural thing.
- The desire to see change and strengthen the policy, but not because the current policy does not 'work' or 'succeed'. Acknowledgement that the current policy belongs to a period where the Welsh language was slightly 'stronger' in the County compared to what it currently is in 2024.
- Although clear support is seen to update the policy, no definitive feedback was received proposing how exactly it should be amended.
- A clear sense of pride was expressed towards the Immersion Education System and a desire to strengthen and expand it.
- Therefore, the main message is a positive one: There is a need for change, but there is no need to overhaul the policy, only build on the strengths of the current policy.

2. Main Messages

Themes - Five sub-headings: Primary, Secondary, The Voice of the Learner/pupil, Inconsistencies, Support

- The primary sector is especially strong in terms of maintaining and developing the linguistic skills of pupils.
- Praise to the primary sector in terms of maintaining the Welsh language slightly stronger than what it was in the Secondary.
- Excellent work to create proficient, bilingual speakers before transferring to year 7, but there is a more varied linguistic situation once the transfer to the Secondary has taken place.
- Lack of clarity and consistency in terms of implementing the policy was partially responsible for that.
- Leads to a discussion of what is noted in the policy in terms of the percentage of subjects that pupils are expected to study through the medium of Welsh.
- The need to expand the capacity to support pupils' development after year 9 was noted, to ensure progression and continuation to their linguistic skills to enable them to study more subjects through the medium of Welsh.
- The Voice of the Learners is positive.
- A feeling of inconsistency in the way that the policy is implemented across the County, from one area to the other, from one school to the other.
- A desire and a wish to see change.
- Ysgol Friars and Ysgol Uwchradd Tywyn - a varied opinion regarding how to plan for the linguistic development of both schools when planning for the future, difficult to present a definitive conclusion of the discussions.

- The need to have one county policy was emphasised many times, but the need to plan strategically with every school over a period of time to comply with such a new policy was noted.
- More of a challenge is needed in the WESP targets to ensure that the current provision is maintained and strengthened.
- The Council needs to show more accountability for the policy and strengthen the powers of the Education Department to monitor this.

3. The Main Themes

- A need for training.
- Recruitment challenge to realise the policy.
- Social use of the Welsh language, and the role of the wider community.
- Deterioration in the use of the children's language as a result of external influences.
- A desire to see a policy with clear content for the County communities to promote an ethos of collaboration with enterprises and clubs.
- The importance of the Language Charter and the Secondary Language Strategy activity.

4. Revised policy

- The need to monitor the way that it is implemented.
- Everyone working with the same criteria.
- Support and measured implementation plans.
- Clear achievement targets.
- Primary/secondary transition is inconsistent across the county - weakness in the way that the current policy has been analysed and interpreted.

5. Training

- Demand for specific training for headteachers to plan for any possible change.
- The County needs to be clear of the support that will be available to support any change.
- Recruitment challenges in some areas.
- Training for Governors to understand the implications of any change.
- Training for teaching staff and ancillary staff to implement the change.
- Promoting and marketing change.

6. Elected Members' observations from the Language Committee and the Education Scrutiny Committee.

- The current policy does not offer sufficient protection to protect the Welsh language.
- The current policy does not assist to maintain the use of the language or increase the use of the language as a result of the demographic changes.
- Weakness in terms of progression from one educational stage to the next.
- Need for accountability to implement policy and to monitor policy implementation.

- Lack of vision in the County's targets to increase the number of pupils who follow GCSE and A Level subjects.
- A clear demand for the need to monitor.
- Should the policy only refer to the Welsh language?
- This supports headteachers to object to any requests to change the language medium of subjects.
- Is there a need to consider including a reference to how a sufficient workforce is ensured?
- Presenting the advantages and importance of bilingualism.
- Friars and Tywyn Schools: mixed opinions.
- Awareness of Tywyn's geographical challenges in terms of recruitment.
- Need to plan towards change more strategically.
- No suggestion or definitive answer as to what a revised policy should look like.
- A clear message: the need for change

7. Considerations when reviewing

- Challenge of how to keep the communities as Welsh as possible throughout the County.
- The need for a strategy to try to positively influence parents to promote and encourage the children's use of the Welsh language in the school and outside of school.
- School categorisation - outline the need to ensure an understanding of the definitions to have a baseline as a foundation for any policy.
- The Council to consider what can be achieved within those definitions.

8. Summary

- The need to note the context for any changes
- Unquestionable success of the current policy generally but needs to be updated to face the current linguistic situation
- The need for a concise, clear and robust policy
- A concise policy is required, which is explained by a background document which includes directions on how to implement the policy
- The background document must refer to matters beyond the remit of the education department and statutory education which would include the role of parents and pre-school education. A more detailed analysis of the provision and the arrangements regarding immersion education
- Develop support plans to expand the provision of Welsh language education up to 16 years old
- Ensure effective progression between each education stage, including the post-16 sector

Appendix 5

Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee Additional Questions 10-4-25

1. How have you assessed the operational force of the wording of the new Language Policy to ensure that it sets a procedure and criteria that schools are required to comply with?

Following a request from Gwynedd schools' headteachers during the engagement process in the context of amending the Language Policy, a concise document was specifically requested. To this end, therefore, we have drawn up a concise and robust document which outlines the aims of the policy in every phase of a child's statutory education. The policy sets a specific procedure and criteria for schools to comply with. In addition, we have drawn a one-page policy specifically for school staff to provide a quick overview of the policy's aims and objectives.

2. How will you monitor that children act in accordance with the new Language Policy?

It is the responsibility of the schools' Governing bodies to ensure that they comply with Cyngor Gwynedd's policies in the education field. Cyngor Gwynedd will gather data from schools regarding their compliance with this policy annually. Each school and Governing body will present their Welsh language development priorities to the Secondary/Primary Cluster Development Plan. This Plan will be agreed with Cyngor Gwynedd and the Welsh Government in accordance with the WESP Outcomes, as well as monitor it.

In this context, and when considering the Government's wider plans to monitor these developments, it is noted in the Government's guidance:

Individual school development plans are used by Estyn to provide context before inspection and monitoring visits. Ensuring that school plans to increase the Welsh language provision is included in the School Development Plan means that the school's linguistic context and development can be noted and considered correctly as part of Estyn's monitoring processes. This will become even more relevant as Estyn tries to give more attention to assessing the wide range of experiences available for learners in Welsh as part of its assessment framework.