

Complete Agenda

CABINET



CYNGOR GWYNEDD

DATE	Tuesday, 8th April, 2025
TIME	1.00 pm
LOCATION	Hybrid Meeting - Siambr Hywel Dda, Council Offices, Caernarfon LL55 1SH and on Zoom This Meeting will be webcast https://gwynedd.public-i.tv/core/portal/home
CONTACT POINT	Rhodri Jones 01286 679556 / cabinet@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET MEMBERS

Members	
Nia Wyn Jeffreys	Council Leader
Menna Trenholme	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children and Supporting Families
Dilwyn Morgan	Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing
Paul John Rowlinson	Cabinet Member for Housing and Property
June Jones	Cabinet Member for Highways, Engineering and Ymgynghoriaeth Gwynedd Consultancy
R Medwyn Hughes	Cabinet Member for Economy and Community
Dewi Jones	Cabinet Member for Education
Huw Wyn Jones	Cabinet Member for Finance
Llio Elenid Owen	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Legal
Craig ab Iago	Cabinet Member for Environment

AGENDA

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6	GWYNEDD INCLUSION PROVISION	Cllr. Dewi Jones	Ffion Edwards Ellis (Assistant Head of Department, Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion)	15 - 164
7	<p>2025/26 SHARED PROSPERITY FUND IN GWYNEDD</p> <p>Appendix 1 is separate for Cabinet Members only.</p> <p>The Appendix is exempt under Paragraph 14 of Schedule 12 A of the Local Government Act 1972 – Information relating to the Financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that Information).</p>	Cllr. Medwyn Hughes	Dylan Griffiths (Manager, Economic Development Service, Economy and Community Department)	165 - 173

	The contents of the item includes confidential and commercially sensitive Information on a number of projects. This is relevant to the situation of a number of organisations.			
8	FOSTERING OFFER FOR MAETHU CYMRU GWYNEDD FOSTER CARERS	Cllr. Menna Trenholme	Aled Gibbard (Assistant Head Resources, Children and Supporting Families Department)	174 - 182
9	CORPORATE PARENTING CHARTER	Cllr. Menna Trenholme	Aled Gibbard (Assistant Head (Resources), Children and Supporting Families Department)	183 - 207
10	PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMY AND COMMUNITY	Cllr. Medwyn Hughes	Sioned E. Williams (Head of Economy and Community Department)	208 - 223
11	PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND PROPERTY	Cllr. Paul Rowlinson	Carys Fon Williams (Head of Housing and Property Department)	224 - 239
12	<p>EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC</p> <p>The Chair shall propose that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the discussions on the following items due to the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 16 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.</p> <p>There is a recognised public interest in being open about matters of public interest such as the Article 4 Directive. However, legal privilege represents a fundamental right that has a strong public interest around it. When faced with a legal challenge to a decision the Cabinet is required to have access to unfettered and open legal advice on conducting and responding to a case in the same way as any</p>			

	other party. This cannot be achieved within a public forum. This would be contrary to the public interest involved in ensuring the best outcome for the Council.			
13	UPDATE FOLLOWING HIGH COURT JUDGEMENT RELATING TO CONFIRMATION OF THE ARTICLE 4 DIRECTION	Cllr. Craig ab lago	Gareth Jones (Assistant Head of the Environment Department)	

THE CABINET, TUESDAY, 11 MARCH 2024

Present-

Councillors: Nia Jeffreys, Menna Trenholme, Craig ab Iago, R. Medwyn Hughes, Dewi Jones, Huw Wyn Jones, June Jones, Dilwyn Morgan, Llio Elenid Owen and Paul Rowlinson.

Also present-

Dafydd Gibbard (Chief Executive), Geraint Owen (Corporate Director), Dylan Owen, (Statutory Director of Social Services), Iwan Evans (Monitoring Officer), Dewi Morgan (Head of Finance) and Sioned Mai Jones (Democracy Team Leader).

- Item 6: Ffion Madog Evans (Assistant Head - Finance Department)
- Item 7: Dewi Wyn Jones (The Council's Business Support Service Manager)
- Item 8: Lowri Cadwaladr Roberts (Assistant Head - Housing and Property
- Item 9: Department)
- Item 10: Gerwyn Jones (Assistant Head - Environment Department)
- Item 11: Gareth Jones (Assistant Head - Environment Department)
- Item 14: Steffan Jones (Head of Highways, Engineering and YGC Department)
- Marian Parry Hughes (Head of Children and Supporting Families Department)

1. APOLOGIES

Cabinet Members and Officers were welcomed to the meeting by the Leader.

Attention was drawn to International Women's Day that had occurred over the weekend recognising the importance of the day. It was noted that the Council encouraged women's development in the form of important programmes such as the Women in Leadership Programme. Pride was expressed in women in politics highlighting female Cabinet Members, the Council Chair, Beca Roberts and the Leader of the Opposition Party, Angela Russell. The opportunity was taken to state that everyone's thoughts were with the Leader of the opposition. The work of each leading woman in a variety of different fields was recognised.

No apologies were received.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Item 9: Guidance had been received from the Monitoring Officer that the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee was a public body, therefore, those who were members of the Joint Committee were asked to state that but nothing obstructed them from participating in the discussion. Councillors Nia Jeffreys and Craig ab Iago declared that they were members of the Corporate Joint Committee.

3. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

There were no matters arising from overview and scrutiny.

5. MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 11 February 2025 were accepted as a true record. Gratitude was expressed for the minutes and the work of the Democracy team that took minutes, recognising the accuracy of the minutes.

6. ONE-OFF BIDS 2025/26

The report was submitted by Cllr Nia Jeffreys.

DECISION

After setting the Budget at the Full Council meeting on 6 March 2025, it had been agreed that the Cabinet approved the one-off bids of £2,057,260 for 2025/26 to be funded from the:

- £1,557,260 of additional funding in the final settlement announced by the Welsh Government on 20 February 2025.
- £500,000 from the Council Tax Premium for the purpose of temporary accommodation for the Homeless.

Following the Welsh Government's recent announcement that there would be additional funding for the field of care, subject to the details and conditions of this grant, it had been agreed to use the source to fund the bids in the care field.

DISCUSSION

It was noted that the bids were inevitable but unfortunately the Council was currently unable to support developmental or transformational bids. The report was submitted stating that the Council's transformation fund was normally used to fund the one-off bids but there was no money left in this fund to fund any bids this year. It was reported that the Welsh Government had recently allocated additional funding which was available to contribute towards the costs of the one-off bids. It was acknowledged that this funding would be useful but it was expressed that the Welsh Government had not adequately funded Cyngor Gwynedd in the first place.

It was noted that the bids were requests for revenue funding but it was temporary revenue funding, and it was hoped that the temporary demand during the year would either disappear or decrease.

Reference was made to the table in part 4.2 of the report which listed the bids, totalling just over £2 million. Attention was drawn to the costliest bids, namely Education Transport, explaining that this was mainly due to the increase in fuel and vehicle maintenance costs and the increase in the numbers requiring transport to the schools. It was hoped that the cost would be reduced next year following a review in the field.

It was explained that the bid for homelessness emergency accommodation costs was half a million and that there was also a bid for £115,000 for additional workers as a

result of the admission of Asylum Seekers without parents as part of the National Transfer Scheme, which was a sad but very worthy case.

It was reported that options to fund the bids had been considered but there was insufficient revenue funding and that the Council's corporate reserves had been significantly reduced and that they needed to be protected. Although a Departmental fund had been appropriate for the Housing and Property Department's bid, it was noted that appropriate Departmental funds did not exist for the other bids. As a result of this, it was suggested that $\frac{3}{4}$ of the bids should be funded through the additional funding from the Government and the other $\frac{1}{4}$ to be funded from the only appropriate Departmental fund left which was the Council Tax Premium fund.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- Regarding the Education Transport bid, an observation was made that if the Council was unwilling to pay and support the bid then this meant that children did not have access to education. It was acknowledged that there was overspending here but that it may be a matter of underfunding the service. It was believed that spending this money was not an option. It was hoped that the Department would not be in this position next year and that other options were currently being considered in order to make things more efficient and get the best value for money.
- Support for all the bids was expressed by a Member but he expressed that he did not support the use of the Housing Action Plan to fund the Homelessness emergency accommodation costs. There was a concern that taking this money out of the Housing Action Plan was going to mean that the Housing Action Plan could not deliver as well and it was questioned what would then be cut out of the Housing Action Plan. It was added that it was not a financial fund for the purpose of underfunding, noting that homelessness prevention was a statutory service. It was believed that the Housing Department was being treated differently expressing that the Department had succeeded in reducing the costs of Homelessness through preventive work. For the above reasons, the Member decided to abstain his vote.
- There was a concern there would be additional costs in the field of Homelessness in the near future as a result of the Government's publication of the white paper. The Cabinet Member noted that he would be writing to the minister and that Heads of Housing Departments in Wales had written to the Government to express their concerns about the content of the white paper.
 - It was agreed with the comments on the white paper stating that the Council was not aware of the current financial implications of the white paper.
 - Sympathy was expressed with the Member's viewpoint recognising that this was not the ideal solution but that the situation was a difficult one and the Government's additional funds were insufficient to fund all the one-off bids.
 - It was added that when the Housing Action Plan would be reviewed, consideration could then be given to what to take out. It was also suggested that there may be options in the future to repay this money back to the Housing Action Plan fund.

7. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ELECTIONS (WALES) ACT 2021 - PANEL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

The report was submitted by Cllr Dewi Jones

DECISION

A timetable was agreed to undertake a Panel Performance Assessment during the week of 9 March 2026.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted explaining that the panel performance assessment planned for November 2024 had been postponed and, as a result, the Cabinet needed to agree a new timetable for carrying out the assessment. It was explained that the report went on to discuss the scope of the assessment and the membership of the Panel.

The Council's Business Support Manager added that this was a statutory requirement under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. It was explained that the panel assessment would examine the extent to which the Council effectively implemented its functions and used its resources prudently and efficiently.

It was explained that the scoping document had been created during the Summer of 2024 but that the document would now be out of date as the assessment had been postponed. A second visit to the scope document was suggested at the end of the 2025 calendar year. Attention was drawn to page 22 of the report highlighting the areas suggested for the panel to focus on previously. In addition, the Cabinet was reminded that the panel's membership had been agreed back in September 2024 and it was believed that it would be wise to wait until the end of the calendar year to confirm the membership in order to ensure the suitability of the panel members.

It was explained that the panel would visit for a one-week period and conduct workshops and interviews; it was noted that Cabinet Members would be required to be involved in the discussions. It was confirmed that there would be a presentation to Cabinet Members at the end of the week on the main findings of the survey before reporting the findings to the Governance and Audit Committee before submission to the Full Council.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- It was questioned whether there was value to this assessment and whether it appeared to be an additional layer of supervision. It was enquired where the recommendations would be submitted.
 - In response, it was noted that there was little choice to reject the assessment hoping that it would have value. It was suggested that there may be an opportunity in the future for Gwynedd to examine other Councils and receive opportunities to learn.

8. LEASING OF THE FORMER ABERSOCH SCHOOL SITE TO MENTER RABAR

The report was submitted by Cllr Paul Rowlinson

DECISION

It was agreed to use powers under the General Disposal Consent (Wales) 2003 to lease the Abersoch School site directly to Menter Rabar for less than market rent, to realise social, economic and environmental benefits.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted stating that it stemmed from the sad situation of having to close Ysgol Abersoch back in 2021. It was explained that when a school closed the Council had a policy of offering the site to the local community at a discounted price. It was noted that the community of Abersoch had set up Menter Rabar, a multi-purpose hub which would include a community café, heritage exhibition, business units to let, a community garden and a multi-use room to host activities and courses.

It was explained that Menter Rabar had already secured planning permission and had received grant funding and secured additional funding through various sources. It was reported that the Local Member was very supportive of Menter Rabar, as stated in the Member's comments on page 46 of the Agenda.

It was explained why a lease for a period of 99 years needed to be offered, explaining that Welsh Government conditions stated that Menter Rabar needed to receive a long-term lease from the Council before releasing the grant money. The decision not to put the property on the open market and to waive approximately £150,000 was highlighted; it was believed that Menter Rabar would bring significant economic, social and environmental benefits to the community of Abersoch.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- Support was expressed for Menter Rabar stating that projects like this were good for Gwynedd. It was believed that Gwynedd was leading the way in the community sector and that there was potential to attract visitors and income here as well as raise awareness of the culture and heritage of the area.
- Support for the proposal was stated believing that there would be clear benefits to the area and community as a result of this initiative and it was thought that it was great that Abersoch was given this opportunity.
- Such initiatives were believed to work well and draw communities together and provide social opportunities for the residents of the area.
- The above comments were reiterated by expressing congratulations and thanks to Menter Rabar for their work.

9. REGIONAL TRANSPORT PLAN - UPDATE

The report was submitted by Cllr Craig ab Iago

DECISION

Recognition was given of the development of the draft Regional Transport Plan (RTP) and the processes associated with this.

The response (Appendix 5) to the consultation was approved.

DISCUSSION

A political view was expressed that the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee was creating another layer of bureaucracy and there was concern that not much Welsh would be spoken at the Corporate Joint Committee's Transport Sub-Committees. It was questioned whether the Regional Transport Plan offered anything new.

The Assistant Head of the Environment Department added that this Regional Transport Plan would be the first product of the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee. It was explained that the likelihood that the 4 Regional Transport Plans by the Corporate Joint Committees in Wales would be very similar as they needed to meet the same type of criteria from the Government.

Attention was drawn to appendix 1 which listed the Gwynedd Plans stating that Gwynedd had 64 schemes in the Delivery Plan and it was explained that the plans had been prioritised as higher, medium or lower.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- It was enquired whether there was anything Cabinet Members could do to assist the engagement process and highlight its importance.
 - It was confirmed that the consultation was open until 14 April but that it was a very technical and detailed consultation and included a lot of strategic information. It was reported that a press release had already been issued and Gwynedd residents were urged to take the opportunity to share their opinions. It was added that further and more specific consultations would follow.
- Observations were made about the frustration with the area's public transport particularly rural areas of the County. It was noted that not enough buses were running and that they could be expensive to use. It was highlighted that funding had to be received from the Government to correspond with the plans to fund and realise them.
- It was enquired whether this Plan was likely to raise the hopes of residents and it was asked how many of the plans were likely to be realised within the county.
 - It was explained that it was not currently possible to know how many of the plans were likely to be realised. It was emphasised that if the schemes were not set out in this Plan there was no hope of receiving funds to realise them. It was reiterated that it was positive that the plans had been included in this Plan and the Council would have to try to maximise the opportunities.
 - It was noted that the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee and Transport for Wales had a healthy relationship and worked well together.
- The officers of the Department were thanked for their work.

10.PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

The report was submitted by Cllr Craig ab Iago

DECISION

To accept and note the information in the report.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted stating that the attitude and performance of the Department was encouraging. Attention was drawn to the Department's five priorities in the Council Plan noting that the Department was leading throughout Britain on some of the

priorities, for example the work on the management of second homes and short-term holiday accommodation.

Attention was drawn to the waste and recycling service noting that the number of enquiries relating to missed waste collections had decreased over the current year as could be seen in Figure 1 in the report. It was highlighted that the Government's recycling target had been increased to 70% and that it was unlikely that the Department would meet the target this year. Nevertheless, it was noted that the new Waste Strategy for 2025-2030 was currently in draft form and the implementation of this Strategy would mean meeting the target. It was reiterated that the Waste Strategy would be submitted to the Cabinet in May or June.

Reference was made to the challenges in the Food and Safety service as identified in the report, highlighting that there were over 2,000 food businesses in the county. It was noted that many qualified and experienced staff had recently left or retired which had left a gap in the service. As a result of the staffing challenges and the importance of investing in officer training and shadowing experienced staff, it was expressed that the Department was looking for an Environmental Health professional trainee this year.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- It was stated that the recruitment problems were constant themes and the importance of schemes such as the Trainee Scheme was emphasised.
- It was enquired what was the result of not meeting the recycling target.
 - In response, it was stated that failure to meet the target would entail a risk of fines for the Council by the Welsh Government.
- It was believed that there was a need to invest in training and educating county residents on the importance of recycling.
 - It was agreed that this was key and had already been identified as an area in need of attention.
- It was asked what were the next steps in terms of the Waste Strategy.
 - It was explained that the Strategy would be submitted to Cabinet for approval to undertake a public consultation before reporting back on the results of the consultation and asking for the adoption of the Strategy. The Strategy would be implemented following approval.
- Attention was drawn to the 'test purchase' exercises outlined in part 5.2.5 of the report stating that it was encouraging that the team was trying to ensure that shops did not sell fireworks to under-age children. It was enquired whether there were similar regulations relating to the sale of 'vapes'.
 - It was noted that dealing with risks arising from the sale of 'vapes' had been part of a project which was one of the service's priorities and across Wales as well as the sale of illegal tobacco. It was reiterated that the team was trying to stop the sale of the materials to under-age persons as well as trying to prevent illegal material from being sold. It was noted that this involved a lot of day-to-day work for the team; it was also added that businesses as well as consumers needed to be protected.

11. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, ENGINEERING AND YGC

The report was submitted by Cllr June Jones

DECISION

To accept and note the information in the report.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted stating that it would outline what had been achieved within the Department as part of the priorities of Cyngor Gwynedd's 2023-28 Plan and provide an update on the financial position and savings plans. It was reported that significant progress had been made with the Council Plan projects and while the Department continued to face challenges, confidence was expressed that the Department had suitable plans in place to address the situation to the best of its ability.

An explanation was provided on the table in Appendix 1, which provided an update on the progress of the Department's three priority projects in the Council Plan, namely Clean and Tidy Communities, Acting on Flood Risks and Extending Opportunities for Play and Socialising for the Children and Young People of the County. An overview of the projects was provided stating what was in the pipeline and the update up to March 2025.

Cabinet Members were guided through the rest of the report detailing the performance of the Department's services. In conclusion, the Department's financial position was highlighted, noting that an overspend of around £700,000 was forecast this year, which was a combination of factors such as a reduction in income and additional pressure on street cleaning and public toilet cleaning budgets.

It was added that there was a great feeling within the Department where the staff were enthusiastic and genuinely interested in their work. The Department's staff were thanked for their commitment.

The Head of the Highways, Engineering and YGC Department stated that he would like to thank the Cabinet Member for visiting all the Department services in order to introduce herself and learn about the work of the Department. It was added that the Department was facing significant financial challenges but was doing its best to reduce overspend and savings plans and was confident that £278,500 worth of savings would be achieved this year.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- The good work of the Department was recognised and gratitude was expressed.
- With regards to street enforcement and the graph in the report, it was asked how the Council compared to other Councils and asked why there was a significant difference in the Summer figures compared to the Winter figures.
 - In response, it was explained that the team was under pressure in terms of staffing levels. It was explained that the graph on page 102 was specifically on dog fouling and not litter. It was elaborated that it was difficult to penalise dog fouling crimes because it was difficult to catch the person at the time. Attention was drawn to the significant improvement that had been made so far this year.
 - It was noted that the information was not currently available for comparison with other authorities but the Head of Department could obtain that information.

- The lack of investment in playgrounds over the years was highlighted. There was a wish to raise awareness that community groups could apply for grants to improve playgrounds.
 - Members were reminded that there were 131 playgrounds across the County and it was recognised that facilities for wheelchair use in the playgrounds needed to be improved. It was noted that the service was re-examining the strategy but that funds were scarce for this provision. It was added that the service was happy to discuss with Community Councils and that there was an intention to liaise with Community Councils in the future as the work progressed.
- Thanks were expressed to the Ardal Ni tidying-up team, specifically David Charles Williams' team for their work.
- It was asked if there were any plans to extend the 'person and cart' scheme further to the Dwyfor and Meirionnydd areas.
 - It was confirmed that the scheme was currently in place in Bangor and Caernarfon and that it was intended to be extended to the Dwyfor area (Pwllheli and Porthmadog) shortly. It was noted that there were similar arrangements in some areas in Meirionnydd e.g. a traditional town cleaner with traditional early morning starting hours. It was confirmed that discussions were underway to change the hours so that the hours were more visible.
- In response to a question about Natural Resources Wales' financial challenges and whether this had affected collaboration with the Department, it was confirmed that no impact has been seen to date on any joint project nor to suggest any impact on plans moving forward.

12. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND SUPPORTING FAMILIES

The report was submitted by Cllr Menna Trenholme

DECISION

To accept and note the information in the report.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted stating that the Children and Supporting Families Department was responsible for two projects within the Council Plan. An update was provided on these projects namely the Autism Scheme and the Small Group Homes Scheme. They progress that had been made was detailed and the work in progress was noted.

Challenges impacting service performance such as workforce capacity were detailed. Reference was made to the efforts being made to improve the situation noting that the Workforce Planning and WeCare Wales project was carrying out recruitment campaigns. It was also noted that there was an increase in demand and that the nature of cases showed that the needs of children and families were becoming more complex and intensifying. There was concern that the Department's staff workload was high and not sustainable or healthy in the long-term.

To conclude, the Department's financial position, which was now £3.7 million of overspend, as a result of the rising costs of out-of-county placements, was summarised and reference was made to the Department's savings plans. All Department staff were thanked for their work noting that the work was challenging and extensive.

The Head of Children and Supporting Families Department added that the situation of the workforce had improved somewhat over the years but was a persistent concern. It was noted that there were currently no permanent vacancies, only temporary posts as a result of maternity leave. It was added that the Department promoted staff development and was supportive of providing opportunities and experiences to staff within the Department's services.

It was noted that it was difficult to attract qualified Social Workers and that the numbers on the courses had decreased. It was believed that the Care Academy work would make a difference to the staffing problems of some of the services.

The benefits of the Small Group Homes schemes were recognised stating that they would be positive to the budget in meeting needs locally and they looked forward to seeing children returning to their area. The opportunity was taken to thank the community of Morfa Bychan for the welcome and for the special collaboration with Ysgol Eifionydd. It was hoped that this example would be repeated with the other homes.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- The Department was congratulated on the work on the Small Group Homes noting that it was great news. It was noted that the work was having a positive impact on children and they were proud that some had already returned to their area and pride was expressed that other schemes were in the pipeline.
- The excellent work of the Care Academy and the recruitment effort was recognised and Gwenno Williams, Marketing and Care Careers Development Officer was thanked for her work and she was congratulated on receiving an honorary award from Careers Wales.
- There was concern about the reduction in numbers who completed Social Work courses in Bangor and it was asked whether there was a risk of the course being cancelled if there were too many surplus spaces.
 - In response, it was stated that there were no discussions to end the course at Bangor but rather discussions on how to attract more to want to complete the Social Work qualification. It was also reiterated that the Department wanted to appoint three new Social Worker posts as a result of a successful financial bid; it was believed that these positions would benefit the workload and well-being of the Department's existing staff.

The meeting commenced at 1:00pm and concluded at 3:10pm

CHAIR

CYNGOR GWYNEDD - Report to Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet

Title of item:	Gwynedd Inclusion Provision
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Dewi Jones, Cabinet Member for Education
Relevant officer:	Ffion Edwards Ellis Assistant Head of Department - Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion
Date of meeting:	10.4.25

1. Decision sought

Ensuring the best support and provision for children with behavioural needs is one of the Education Department's priorities. Children's behaviour is increasingly challenging and as a result, the number of learners who require support in school and outside school, is increasing. Fixed and permanent exclusions are on the increase, and are causing genuine concern to the Education Department, Headteachers and the Gwynedd schools' community (see Appendix 4 and 8). The need to prioritise this area was also noted as a recommendation by Estyn (see Appendix 1) and within an External Advisory report commissioned following receiving the Estyn report (Appendix 2).

2. The reason why the Cabinet needs to make the decision

The proposed changes require remodelling the service in order to improve on what is being provided currently. Financial investment is required in order to implement the proposed changes. The Department intends to fund the cost of establishing the changes in 2025/26 from current budgets. A process of reorganisation will be carried out during 2025/26, and if there continues to be a funding gap following this process, the Cabinet will need to be prepared for a probable bid for recurring funding from 2026/27.

The following decisions are sought:

1. Adopting the option of creating a Portfolio Pupil Referral Unit Model (multi site)
2. That the Cabinet accept the financial plan outlined.
3. That the Cabinet deputise the implementation timetable and implementation of the plan to the Head of Education, in consultation with the Cabinet Member.

3. Introduction and Rationale

What has led us to this point?

Over the years, we have reduced the inclusion service. Back in 2012, we adopted an ambitious inclusion strategy which led to the closure of two referral units; one in Bangor and the other in Dolgellau, and the closure of Coed Menai special school.

Since then, we have allocated a sum of inclusion funding (£1.2M) to secondary schools in the form of an inclusion grant, with the intention of reducing exclusions and increasing attendance.

We have tried different models to provide for the children who cannot be included in schools with mixed results and limited impact, without the required breadth of provision. More recently, we tried a hubs model where two schools provide, instead of a central unit. Again, this was not an effective model.

All provisions have failed to provide the best experiences for our excluded learners, and this was highlighted by the Authority's Estyn inspection back in the summer of 2023, and in an evaluation carried out by external experts, which was commissioned by the Education Department.

What has already been done about this?

A report was submitted to the Leadership Team back in January 2025 and March 2025, highlighting the possible options. The report elaborated further on the favoured option.

The new plan will bring additional costs to the Department in the short-term, however, we intend to restructure and consider any savings in other areas within the ALN and Inclusion Service in order to fund the additional investment at the end of the first year. As noted in Part 2, if there continue to be gaps in funding at this point, the Cabinet will need to prepare for a probable a bid for recurring funding from 2026/27 onward.

3.1 Background / Introduction

Following the Estyn Report (Appendix 1) and Mrs Caroline Rees's External Review (appendix 2), a multi-agency Project Board was established, including Headteachers, in order to plan for this field. The board considered the reports of Estyn and the external Evaluation, as well as the impact of COVID on our children and young people. The need in this area has intensified, and exclusions have increased (Appendix 8).

It is worth noting that the Gwynedd EOTAS rate is low compared with other counties (EOTAS being the number of children who do not receive their education in a school setting), however, this picture is complicated at a national level, due to the differences in provisions.

Members of the Board visited other counties in order to see various practices, and discuss what works, and what does not work, within various inclusion provisions. There was also

collaboration with other services to map the multi-agency support available to these learners and their families.

As a result of this work, we have planned options for changing the provision, and these were submitted at the Leadership Team's meeting in January 2025 and March 2025. We have started consultation with Headteachers regarding our Strategy for Inclusion, which will give a new focus on reducing Exclusions, with Headteachers and other stakeholders being fully involved.

Appendix 5 provides information about the existing model, and the models we considered.

Equality Act 2010

The Council is subject to public sector duties under the Equalities Act 2010 (including specific Welsh public sector duties). Pursuant to these legal duties Councils must in making decisions have due regard to the need to (1) eliminate unlawful discrimination, (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) foster good relations on the basis of protected characteristics and having due regard to the socio economic duty under Section 1 of the Act. An equalities impact assessment has been prepared and is appended at Appendix 1. The Cabinet will need to have regard to its findings when coming to a decision. The assessment does not identify any particular negative impacts stemming from the decision.

Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

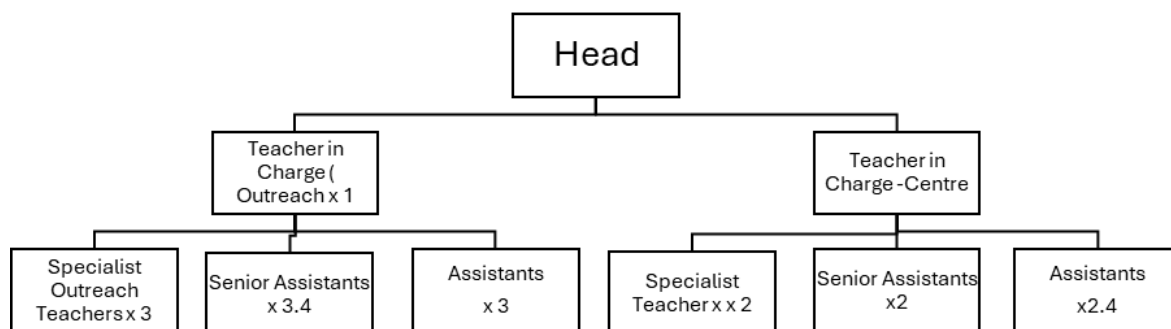
The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act places a 'well-being duty' on public bodies aimed at achieving 7 national well-being goals for Wales - a Wales that is prosperous, resilient, healthier, more equal, has cohesive communities, a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language and is globally responsible. The recommendations have been prepared having regard to these requirements and in accordance with the 5 ways of working.

What is the favoured option?

The favoured option is a Portfolio Registered Pupil Referral Unit (multi-location). This means that the provision will be similar to a small school on more than one site, for children with behaviour problems. We are of the opinion that this is a model that will strengthen accountability, governance resilience and will increase capacity.

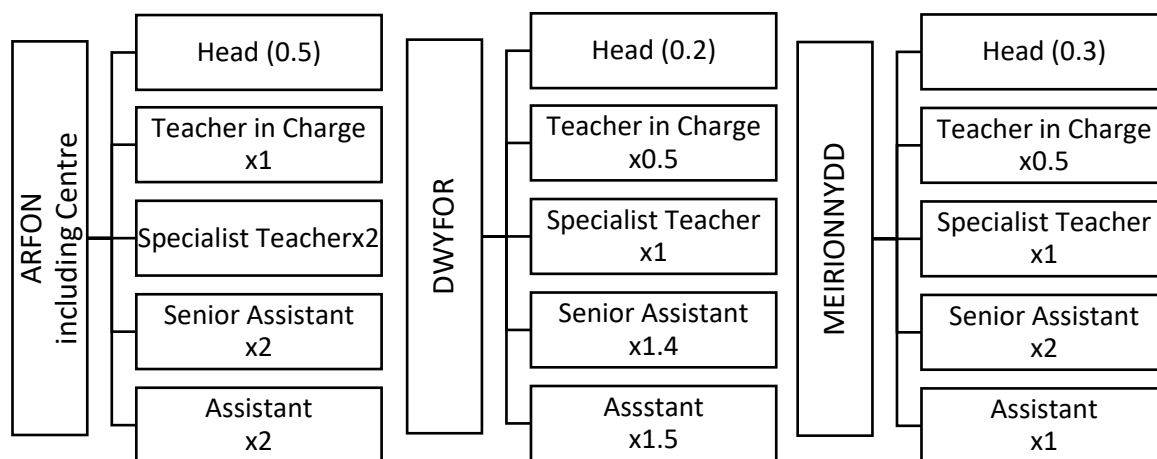
The option will increase the number of jobs in the structure, including the appointment of a leader and more teachers. In addition to creating a specialist provision, the structure would increase the modelling and training outreach for schools.

There will be an impact on some posts within the current model, where a consultation will be needed with existing staff, and job descriptions modified. The Staffing Structure of the Portfolio Pupil Referral Unit will be as follows.



The staff would be distributed in the following way (but with flexibility to move staff according to needs of learners). The rationale behind this structure is:

- The need to strengthen the outreach model
- And to secure adequate staffing for the three centres to run at the same time.



The head, the teachers and assistants will all be able to support children within the provision or within mainstream schools. They will be operational, i.e., work with children and young people, and not advise others about what should be done. This is what the schools have asked for.

There will be a need to strengthen multi-agency collaboration elements to maintain the learners, in terms of their entire personal and family needs. It is critical that we work as a part of a team as there is no expectation for this service alone to have all the answers.

Where will the provision be located?

We have invested capital ALN grant money to upgrade the former Ysgol Felinwnda building; the work will be completed by September 2025. This will be a home for the service and will add to the provision in Penygroes for Arfon/Dwyfor.

Work has commenced on identifying a suitable location to maintain a satellite site for Meirionnydd; a location that will work for the majority. Where transport costs are substantial, we will look at temporary locations that will address the needs and make better use of funding. As can be seen in Appendix 8, the need for this type of provision is smaller compared to Arfon/Dwyfor, therefore the provision will be smaller in size.

What would the difference for the learners within the provision?

The learners attending provision will need an alternative to mainstream classroom provision. The focus will be on more practical activities, therapeutic input, and alternative curriculum and qualifications, with a view to improving their pathway to work, healthy relationships, and community engagement.

What does this mean for the secondary inclusion grant?

As a key part of the plan, there will be a need to formalise the monitoring around Secondary Schools' use of the £1.2 million investment, which has been allocated to create inclusion provision within the schools. At present, this amount is not formally monitored and this must change.

Who will be responsible for the quality of the children's experiences within this provision?

The role of the Head of the Portfolio will be to manage the provision, the quality of the provision, and prepare for scrutiny, e.g., Performance Challenge, Estyn Inspections. The provision would be governed by a 'Management Committee' which is similar to a school's governing body.

Positive Features:

- Strengthen the impact of outreach input - modelling, training, consultation.
- Provide in specific suitable locations with a high-quality learning environment from a qualified and skilled workforce.
- Robust staffing and Governance structure (e.g., Management Committee, Estyn Inspection).
- Specialist central provision for learners with high-level needs.
- Also being able to prepare for other situations, e.g., circumstances where a learner is between schools following the exclusion, to assist with the transfer.
- Specialist provision for Yr 10 and 11, i.e., the most challenging years.

Negative Features:

- A possibility that Transport Costs could increase.
- Successful Schools Inclusion Strategy essential to be able to provide - e.g., monitoring the use of inclusion funding at the schools is an essential part.
- Need for extra funding during the establishment period (see below) and possibly in the long term.

What will be the cost of the favoured model?

A revenue cost of £189,554 will be *additional* to the current expenditure.

In addition, £157,000 in ALN grant funding is being used within the current model. Should the grant be terminated, the future of this service would have to be considered.

We will look at savings in other areas within ALN&I in the future, in order to fund any gap. We will need time to realise these savings; we ask for this to be considered. If a funding gap continues to be present following the restructuring process, there is a risk that the Cabinet will need to prepare for a bid for recurrent funding from 2026/27 onward.

Does this provide the capacity that is genuinely needed?

A discussion was held regarding the capacity of the provision at the last Leadership Team. The need levels we experience in this area are increasing, so there is also a need to be planning for the future.

We will be progressing with our Inclusion Strategy, to describes how the broader graduated response would also be strengthened, to reduce the need for a placement at the Pupil Referral Unit, with Units' staff offering to model, train and provide outreach.

We believe that the model provides sufficient places outside of school. Most learners should be supported within their own mainstream school, with the central provision for a small number of learners requiring provision outside of the mainstream.

3.2 Rationale and justification for recommending the decision

The information presented within this report describes the current situation. We need to work in a different way, and the Project Board present the favoured model following a period of research and modelling to look at improving the offer for Gwynedd learners with significant needs in the areas of social skills, emotional and behavioural skills.

4. Next Steps and Timetable

Consultation with staff and Unions	April – May 2025
Advertise for Head of Portfolio	April – May 2025
Identify location for Meirion/Dwyfor Satellite	March to July 2025

Consulation with Stakeholders	July 2025
Registration of Portffolio Pupil Referral Unit and Establishment of Management Committee	July – Sept 2025
Provision in place	September 2025

5. Observations of the Statutory Officers

5.1 Chief Finance Officer

Finance officers have cooperated with the service with the financial figures presented in the report, and I can confirm their accuracy. We will continue to assist the department over the next year to identify opportunities to fund the cost increases so that any permanent bid commitment for the 2026/27 onwards budget can be avoided or reduced.

5.2 Monitoring Officer

The importance of this issue is underlined in the report. I am satisfied with the propriety of the decision sought

List of Appendices:

- Appendix 1: Cyngor Gwynedd Estyn Report
- Appendix 2: External Evaluation (Author: Mrs Caroline Rees)
- Appendix 3: ALN&I Principles Document
- Appendix 4: Need Data for Gwynedd, 2019 and 2024 compared
- Appendix 5: Current Staffing Models and Options
- Appendix 6: EOTAS Data (Education other than at School) for Gwynedd
- Appendix 7: Impact Assessment
- Appendix 8: Exclusion Data by area

A report on education services in

Cyngor Gwynedd

**Council Offices
Shirehall Street
Caernarfon
LL55 1SH**

Date of inspection: June 2023

by

**Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and
Training in Wales**

This report is also available in Welsh

About Cyngor Gwynedd

Cyngor Gwynedd in north-west Wales has a total population of around 117,000. The local authority maintains 95 mainstream schools. There are 79 primary schools, 12 secondary schools and two all-age schools. The local authority also maintains two special schools. The Chief Executive took up the post in April 2021 and the Head of Education was appointed in November 2017. The Leader of the Council has been in post since May 2017 and the Cabinet Member for Education took up this role in May 2022.

The local authority's last inspection was conducted in 2013. Cyngor Gwynedd is one of six local authorities within the north Wales regional school effectiveness and improvement service (GwE). In 2022-2023, the local authority's net education budget is around £121,488,000. The delegated school budget per pupil in 2022-2023 is £5,277, which is higher than the Welsh average of £5,032.

Inspectors take account of a wide range of information about the local population when evaluating outcomes and the quality of education services. They consider this information alongside information about the national population. Some of the most useful information about children and young people in Gwynedd is noted below:

- Over a three-year-period, 13.5% of pupils aged 5 to 15 have been eligible for free school meals, which is lower than the Welsh average of 23%. Eight point two per cent (8.2%) of pupils aged 5 to 15 come from ethnic minorities, which is lower than the Welsh average of 13.3%
- A total of 275 children are looked after by the local authority
- Eight point two per cent (8.2%) of pupils aged 5 to 15 have additional learning needs or special educational needs (School Action)
- Eight point eight per cent (8.8%) of pupils aged 5 to 15 have additional learning needs or special educational needs (School Action Plus)
- Two point seven per cent (2.7%) of pupils aged 5 to 15 have additional learning needs or special educational needs (Statemented)
- One point one per cent (1.1%) of pupils aged 5 to 15 have additional learning needs or special educational needs (Individual Development Plan)
- One point four per cent (1.4%) of pupils aged 5 to 15 have English as an additional language (A, B or C)
- Sixty-three point four per cent (63.4%) of pupils aged 5 or over are fluent in Welsh, which is higher than the national average of 15.6%

Summary

The aim of the leaders of Cyngor Gwynedd is to ensure the best start for the county's children and young people. Education is a clear priority in the Council's plans and putting the needs of the county's residents at the heart of the authority's work is a core part of the 'Gwynedd Way' of working. The authority's staff embrace the principles of the 'Gwynedd Way' and strive to embed these principles in their day-to-day work.

On the whole and over time, the inspection outcomes of Cyngor Gwynedd's schools and other education settings are strong. The authority works productively with the north Wales regional school effectiveness and improvement service (GwE) to support providers and authority and GwE officers have a good knowledge of them. They have recently strengthened their systems for gathering and sharing information and this has improved the quality of discussions about individual providers. GwE's priorities are based on the priorities of schools in the region. This helps the service to respond suitably to the needs of providers and ensures that professional development provision is appropriate. Overall, intervention to support schools that are a cause of concern is very effective, but in a very few cases, it has not been timely enough.

The well-being of children and young people in Gwynedd benefits from the support provided by the Youth Service. This is especially true for vulnerable pupils who are at risk of not being in education, employment or training after they leave school. Historically, Gwynedd's school attendance rates have been strong, but they do not currently compare favourably with national rates. This is partly because there is not enough of a strategic focus on monitoring or promoting attendance, particularly the attendance of groups such as pupils who are eligible for free school meals.

Provision for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs has strengthened over recent years. There is now more capacity to support these pupils and management arrangements are clearer. However, neither the status of, nor the steps for accessing the behaviour support hubs, are wholly clear. Senior leaders also do not have a strategic overview of the outcomes or nature and quality of this provision.

Promoting the Welsh language is a clear priority for the authority and the education service. The authority is investing heavily to ensure access to Welsh-medium and bilingual education and experiences for all children and young people in the county. The immersion centres are particularly successfully in enabling latecomers to the language to acquire Welsh. The staff in these centres also provide beneficial training for staff within schools and mainstream settings on how to support these pupils.

A strong feature of the authority's work with regard to the Welsh language is the range of valuable Welsh-medium resources that the authority's staff have developed. In response to the general shortage in this area, they have developed Welsh language resources for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) and their families. This includes developing or adapting resources that are appropriate to the authority's context, as well as securing translation rights for international resources. The staff of the immersion system have developed an innovative virtual resource to practise language patterns and vocabulary and dedicated podcasts on the benefits of learning Welsh.

The authority provides a wide range of post-16 courses that respond to the linguistic and economic needs of the county. The Gwynedd and Anglesey Post-16 Education Consortium works together effectively to provide a range of courses for pupils across a variety of locations. This can cause travel challenges for pupils and the authority provides a free travel pass to mitigate this. The authority has been reviewing Arfon's post-16 education arrangements for some years, but this process has been slow.

There are positive examples of leaders implementing beneficial strategies that have led to improvements. These include the authority's digital strategy, work on modernising schools and strengthening immersion provision. However, leaders have not been strategic enough in addressing all aspects of their work. In particular, their improvement work has not been effective enough in terms of provision for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, improving attendance and reviewing the post-16 provision in Arfon.

Safeguarding arrangements within the education service are generally sound. Officers understand their roles and responsibilities in this area and work effectively with children's services officers. Providers are given valuable support in terms of safeguarding and the quality of implementation of Part 5 of the Welsh Safeguarding Procedures is very thorough.

The local authority has a good understanding of the financial situation within the education service. Historically, the authority has succeeded in protecting the service from cuts, but this has proved to be more challenging in light of the current financial challenges.

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that leaders act strategically on all aspects of their work and that they have suitable oversight and full consideration of risk regarding important aspects that have arisen during the inspection
- R2 Improve arrangements for monitoring, evaluating and promoting pupils' attendance
- R3 Strengthen provision to respond to the needs of pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and ensure arrangements for monitoring and improving the quality of that provision

What happens next

Following the publication of the inspection report, the local authority should update its plans to address the recommendations and to take account of shortcomings identified through the inspection process. The local authority should update its plans within three months of the publication of the inspection report.

Estyn will invite the provider to prepare case studies in relation to its work on developing Welsh-medium resources for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) and their families, and for Welsh language immersion. The study will be shared on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Outcomes

We were unable to provide a full evaluation of outcomes. This is as a result of the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused the inspections of schools and most other education providers to be suspended since March 2020. It is also a result of the lack of data on outcomes that can be compared over time because the pandemic caused changes to the way that qualifications were awarded. This also affected most of the other data that we consider when making evaluations, such as school attendance, school exclusions and post-16 learner destinations, but we have recently begun to receive this type of data again. Any evaluations that follow provide context by reporting pre-pandemic outcomes or relate to more recent outcomes where the evidence base is valid and reliable.

On the whole and over time, the inspection outcomes of schools in Gwynedd are strong. Between September 2017 and March 2020, we inspected 46 settings. This included 35 primary schools, nine secondary schools, one all-age school and one special school. On the whole, inspection outcomes were positive, particularly in primary schools. Of the primary schools, follow-up activity was judged to be needed in only three of them. Of the secondary and all-age schools, follow-up activity was judged to be needed in four of them, including statutory follow-up in two of these schools. One school was judged to be in need of special measures, another school was judged to be in need of significant improvement and two schools were judged to be in need of Estyn review. Following improvements, none of these schools are now in need of follow-up activity. From September 2019 (when the procedure for inspecting the sector was changed), we inspected 11 non-maintained settings, but none were placed in a follow-up category.

Since February 2022, when we resumed school inspections following the pandemic, 25 settings have been inspected. This includes nine primary schools, one secondary school and 15 non-maintained settings. Overall, outcomes are positive and no settings were judged to be in need of statutory follow-up activity. There was no follow-up for the nurseries or seven primary schools. Two primary schools and the secondary school were judged to be in need of Estyn review.

Between 2017 and 2019, the performance of a majority of secondary schools in Gwynedd was better than, or similar to, what is expected in many of the performance indicators in key stage 4. The performance of a minority of secondary schools was lower or significantly lower than expected. Pupils in Gwynedd who are eligible for free school meals performed consistently better than the Welsh average in many key performance indicators between 2017 and 2019. The performance of this group of pupils in the indicator for 5 A*-A grades at GCSE or equivalent was slightly lower than the Welsh average over the same period.

The judgement on well-being and attitudes to learning was good or better in most Gwynedd inspections during the inspection cycle from September 2017 to March 2020. Of the 46 schools inspected during this period, well-being and attitudes to learning were good or better in nearly all schools.

Historically and before the pandemic, school attendance rates in Gwynedd were strong. However, the current attendance rates, particularly in most of the authority's secondary schools, do not compare favourably with national rates. This is partly because there is insufficient focus by the authority on the tight and clear processes that were in place to promote attendance prior to the pandemic. The authority has recognised the need to re-establish the strategic work to promote attendance. Overall, leadership has been slow to recognise the need to re-prioritise this work. Officers analyse and report on attendance per school, but they do not analyse or monitor attendance data forensically enough. For example, they do not analyse the attendance of specific groups of learners and, as such, they do not have a secure grasp of the trends and patterns of attendance of groups, such as pupils who are eligible for free school meals.

In three of the five years up to 2021, the rate of permanent exclusions was lower than, or similar to, the national rate. Over the same period, the rate of exclusions for five days or fewer increased gradually from being significantly below the national rate to being very similar in 2021. The rate of exclusions over five days was higher than the national average in three of the five years during this period.

There are occasional opportunities for pupils to contribute to corporate decisions. For example, children were consulted in the recent review of education and children's services. The youth service also seeks the views of young people on their needs and provision that is available to them and adapts and develops the services as a result. The authority's officers have begun to develop more formal and regular methods of seeking the views of children and young people.

The youth service promotes and supports pupils' well-being through a variety of beneficial activities. Through this work, young people make positive contributions to their local communities and their peers. For example, they organised a 'Well-being Festival' to promote the mental health and well-being of young people.

Cameo – The Well-being Festival

In response to the wishes of young people, youth workers supported them to lead on planning a well-being festival to promote the mental health and well-being of young people and provide access to information and support from a range of services. The festival developed to become a week-long event across the county. There were 31 organisations involved with the festival and 49 varied sessions were held during the week. More than 700 well-being boxes were also distributed to young people.

Youth workers are based in each secondary school for specific periods each week. They work with other agencies to identify and support vulnerable pupils by providing access to activities and valuable advice. They support these young people by providing access to more intensive and personal support. Their work contributes to ensuring that pupils in Year 11 progress appropriately to the next steps in terms of their education, employment or training. The number of young people who are not in

education, employment or training at the end of Year 11 has been below the national average in 4 of the last 5 years.

Education services

How thoroughly does the local authority challenge the performance of schools and ensure that they receive appropriate and timely support to help them improve?

Gwynedd education department works closely and effectively with the north Wales regional school effectiveness and improvement service (GwE) to improve provision offered by the authority's schools. There is a shared understanding of everyone's roles and officers work together closely and productively as one team.

Officers from the education department and GwE have a positive mindset based on supporting schools to improve by working alongside their leaders to evaluate provision and plan for improvement. They make effective use of activities that derive from first-hand evidence, such as scrutiny of books and lesson observations to form a view about the quality of provision and identify successes and areas for improvement.

Over time, the authority's officers have received useful information about the performance of schools and, on the whole, have used this information suitably. GwE officers have recently strengthened information-sharing processes by using specific software. This has enabled the authority's officers to have easy access to a comprehensive range of up-to-date information about all schools. As a result, the authority's education officers have a good knowledge of the authority's schools. They identify schools' main strengths and areas for improvement accurately. GwE provides a comprehensive range of relevant support for schools in Gwynedd and there is an individual support plan for each school that draws on this offer. It also organises additional intervention as necessary.

Authority officers and GwE officers meet regularly to discuss individual schools, clusters and overarching themes. They discuss the needs of schools at different tiers during meetings of the Needs Identification Board, the School Support Board and the County Quality Board. They make effective use of specific thresholds and triggers to escalate schools where concerns are increasing. Through the County Quality Board, senior officers and the cabinet member for education contribute to these discussions and challenge officers on the effect of their work to support schools. The new information-sharing arrangements have contributed to a recent improvement in the quality and incisiveness of discussions at these meetings. However, in a very few cases, intervention to support schools that are causing concern has not been timely enough. In addition, authority officers do not always make strategic enough use of information about pupils' attendance, including groups of pupils, to challenge schools to improve this aspect.

GwE identifies suitable high-level priorities through its Regional Business Plan, which is based on its identification of the needs of individual schools. This plan is approved annually by the Joint Committee, which includes the Gwynedd Local Authority

Cabinet Member for Education and the Management Board, which includes the authority's Head of Education. As a result, the authority can ensure that what GwE offers responds closely to the authority's local requirements.

In a very few cases, the authority identifies additional local priorities, which are aspects where it requires additional support beyond what is available through GwE's central offer. In the case of Gwynedd, the authority has identified that the difficulties in recruiting leaders means that it is necessary to identify potential future leaders sooner and plan succession in leadership at all levels and across the sectors. Recently, GwE has planned appropriate actions to support this area, which go beyond the wide range of training for leaders that is already in place.

GwE has a comprehensive professional learning offer for the teaching workforce. It also promotes school-to-school collaboration effectively, for example as primary schools work closely together in clusters and as secondary schools and special schools work together with others across the region in 'alliances' of schools that have a similar context. They have established useful partnerships to develop leaders' evaluation skills, for example as they scrutinise pupils' work jointly with colleagues from other schools.

The authority holds the region to account appropriately for the quality and effect of its work through the Management Board and the Joint Committee. Elected members challenge GwE officers suitably through scrutiny meetings.

How well does the authority support young people to receive suitable post-16 education or training?

The local authority's aspiration is to ensure high quality post-16 education where there is a wide choice of courses and qualifications that respond to the needs of the local, regional and national economy for all learners in Gwynedd. The Gwynedd and Anglesey Post-16 Education Consortium was established to implement this vision. The consortium includes schools with a sixth form, a further education college that has sites in Bangor, Glynllifon, Pwllheli, Dolgellau and Llangeifni, and Gwynedd and Anglesey local authorities. This valuable partnership work means that a wide range of courses are available to learners. Suitable work training is also provided through the work of the further education college to facilitate apprenticeships and job growth schemes. The two special schools work with a range of partners, such as Antur Waunfawr, to meet the needs of their post-16 learners. They organise visits and experiences to support learners to access a range of opportunities, such as opportunities to develop social skills and life skills. In 2018, Cyngor Gwynedd began a consultation process on post-16 education in the Arfon area. Although the authority has resumed this process after the pandemic, the next steps in terms of Arfon's post-16 education systems remain unclear and the process has been slow.

The way in which post-16 education is provided within the consortium varies. Most schools in the Meirion and Dwyfor areas do not have a sixth form. Academic and vocational courses are provided at all levels by the further education college. Ysgol Godre's Berwyn has a small sixth form. It works with 'Esgol' and further education colleges to provide A-level courses and vocational subjects, such as agriculture. All secondary schools in Arfon have a sixth form where A-level courses are provided, in the main. There is valuable partnership work between these schools, the further

education college and Anglesey schools to expand the level 3 offer for their learners. Learners in Arfon who want to study access, level 1 or level 2 courses transfer to the further education college. The variations in provision and the geographical size of the authority mean that some learners have to travel a considerable distance to access their chosen courses. The authority ensures a free travel pass for post-16 learners to facilitate this.

The consortium has a comprehensive management structure. It includes a manager on behalf of the local authority, a lead board which includes representatives from the authorities and the further education college, a strategic group of secondary headteachers and the Arfon, Dwyfor and Meirionnydd curriculum delegate groups. Information is shared effectively between partners by using the consortium's website. For example, once schools have identified the names of pupils for partnership courses, the authority's transport department uses this information to organise transport. The lead board and strategic group evaluate the quality of the courses that are provided through the partnership appropriately. They produce reports that consider learners' outcomes, completion measures and qualitative descriptions of the provision. In the few best examples, reports include comments about the quality of teaching and learning from lesson observations. This information is used appropriately to decide whether a course should be offered or not. However, the consortium does not seek the views of post-16 learners about the quality of provision and their experiences specifically enough.

The authority's schools have appropriate arrangements to help pupils choose their post-16 pathways. They work jointly with partners, including the post-16 education consortium and Careers Wales, to provide independent advice. In the best examples, schools and the college hold a range of valuable activities, such as careers fairs and opportunities to sample courses through visits for the further education college. The consortium also produces a useful prospectus for partnership courses. The authority has recognised that it is difficult to view the complete offer in one place and is working to develop a website to address this.

There is valuable partnership work between the consortium and the youth service's post-16 team to support vulnerable learners to transition to post-16 education. The authority invested money to ensure the continuation of a plan to support young people who are at risk of becoming disengaged from education, training or employment which was originally funded by the European Social Fund. As a result, the youth service's post-16 education team provides dedicated support to help young people move on to education, training or employment. A multi-agency panel meets regularly to broker support for these learners. For example, they ensure practical support to visit the sites of the further education college and well-being and mental health support. As a result, the number who are not in education, training or employment is low.

The authority appointed a post-16 additional learning needs (ALN) quality officer to establish and develop processes to support the implementation of the new ALN Act. The officer works productively with the secondary schools and the further education college to plan support for the first pupils who will transfer to post-16 education within the new procedure in September 2023. Information is shared easily with the college through the authority's dedicated digital platform. This means that any arrangements for supporting post-16 ALN pupils are developing appropriately.

How effectively does the authority meet the needs of learners with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD)?

Over time, the strategic and operational processes of Gwynedd education services to respond to the needs of pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties have improved significantly. The vision of leaders to strengthen provision for these vulnerable pupils is now clear and suitable.

Senior managers have re-organised the additional learning needs (ALN) and inclusion service appropriately. They have identified the need to provide more specifically for supporting vulnerable pupils and to identify relevant managers to lead different aspects of the service. This includes appointing an inclusion manager and increasing the role of ALN quality officers to support pupils with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. The authority has also increased capacity within the outreach behaviour support service to support mainstream schools with pupils from reception age up to Year 11. These changes contribute well to ensuring that the number of pupils who are in education other than at school (EOTAS) is low.

The authority has a range of purposeful procedures to plan provision and review the progress of pupils with ALN. These include the ALN and inclusion panel, the profound panel, the review panel and the ALN and inclusion moderation forum. On the whole, the purpose and remit of many of these procedures, together with the access to services protocol, are clear to schools. However, the steps that should be followed at school or the interventions that should be put in place before applying for a pupil to access the behaviour support hubs are not as clear.

Valuable information about pupils with ALN across the county is freely available to relevant stakeholders through a dedicated digital platform. This enables schools, experts, parents and pupils to play an active role in planning provision, monitoring and reporting on progress.

The ALN and inclusion service provides appropriate professional development opportunities for teachers and learning assistants to support them to provide beneficial interventions for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. This includes training on attachment and the effect of trauma on children and young people. A range of relevant resources and intervention programmes are provided for schools to support the well-being of pupils across the age range. For example, the education psychology service has prepared valuable resources, such as beneficial mindfulness resources, to try to have a positive influence on pupils' well-being. The authority has also invested significantly to ensure that Welsh-medium resources are available to schools and this is a strong feature.

The authority's 'managed moves' protocol and arrangements are appropriate and lead to positive outcomes for pupils in a majority of cases. Arrangements for supporting pupils with serious medical needs are strong.

Suitable support is provided for most pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs within mainstream schools. The local authority provides specific support to meet the social, emotional and behavioural needs of a few pupils in four alternative settings. The status of these settings is unclear as they are not registered as pupil referral units, although that is how they operate. The 'Llechan Lân' Centre in

Penygroes is a short-term education setting for pupils in Years 5-8. Provision at Llechan Lân is purposeful and support for pupils when they return to their schools is very effective. This is because the specialist staff there share their expertise successfully with staff in the mainstream schools to strengthen their ability to support pupils with behavioural difficulties. As a result, pupils who have attended this resource re-engage successfully in their mother school in most cases.

Since September 2021, the authority has improved its provision for older pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties by commissioning two secondary schools to run hubs in three areas across Gwynedd. There are now three alternative education hubs for Year 9-11 pupils in Bangor, Caernarfon and Blaenau Ffestiniog. Overall, pupils who attend the hubs are happy and engage positively with their learning. Staff at the hubs take pride in their work and in the provision offered. They commit themselves to the responsibilities with great purpose and goodwill to provide pupils with positive learning experiences. They foster a positive and supportive relationship with pupils and their parents and this is an excellent feature. They work creatively to try to provide curricular experiences that are of interest to pupils and work purposefully with a wide range of relevant external agencies. This includes Careers Wales officers, youth workers, school nurses and police officers to support pupils and plan carefully for the next steps in their life. Suitable provision is offered, under the guidance of the subject teachers at the commissioning schools, for pupils to continue with their examination courses in Welsh, English, mathematics and some elements of science and a few other subjects or areas. Nearly all pupils in Year 11 sit a GCSE or other suitable qualification in the core subjects and a very few other subjects.

The social, emotional and behavioural needs of pupils who attend the individual hubs vary. As a result, tailoring provision to meet the specific needs of individual pupils within these hubs is challenging. Staff strive to create an appropriate supportive environment for learning and to support pupils to thrive emotionally at the hubs. However, there is too much variation in the suitability of the accommodation and the range of learning resources in the hubs to provide specialist education that supports the well-being and behaviour of vulnerable pupils.

Although a range of relevant officers are part of the initial arrangements for placing pupils in the hubs, there is insufficient contact between them and the hub managers to support their work and provide them with the necessary guidance. This includes inconsistency in monitoring, quality assurance and risk assessment arrangements. As a result, senior officers in Gwynedd education services do not have a strategic overview of the outcomes or the nature or quality of provision at the hubs.

How effective is the authority's Welsh language provision in terms of meeting the needs of learners and in terms of realising the WG vision of a million Welsh speakers by 2050?

The authority has a clear vision in terms of ensuring access to Welsh-medium education for pupils and young people in Gwynedd throughout their time in education. This is based on establishing a 'Welsh and bilingual education system which puts the needs of all of our learners at the heart of our provision'. Gwynedd's Welsh Language Policy, along with a range of other relevant policies, is a cornerstone of all of the authority's work and ensures opportunities for pupils and

young people to be confident bilingual learners. For example, the priorities of the 'Gwynedd Gymraeg' plan and the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) reflect suitable key aspirations and targets over the medium and long term.

The Education Welsh Language Forum meets on a termly basis to monitor progress against the priorities and targets in the WESP and plan for improvement. This helps to ensure that leaders in the education department and elected members have a sound understanding of the priorities. The WESP sets a clear direction for developing the Welsh language across all sectors, which includes providing more opportunities for pupils and young people to learn and use the language confidently and as a normal part of everyday life. The plan identifies appropriate targets for this, which includes identifying challenges for the future. For example, it identifies the need to maintain and develop the Welsh language skills of the workforce by collaborating with a variety of strategic partners and external agencies.

The authority has a good working relationship with external agencies and umbrella organisations such as Mudiad Meithrin. They work together to promote the Welsh language in the early years by ensuring access to education and care. 'Gwynedd Yfory' projects state the importance of working with stakeholders to ensure that best start for all children in the county. For example, the authority has established Welsh-medium Flying Start centres in specific areas to support children and families. Successful co-operation with partners helps to ensure that nearly all children who attend non-maintained settings transfer to Welsh-medium education in schools.

Leaders and officers prioritise developing the Welsh language by investing in improving learning facilities. For example, they use the Gwynedd Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme to invest in new school buildings to provide early education and childcare through the medium of Welsh. They also use Welsh Government capital grants effectively to improve the quality of the Welsh language immersion centre buildings, in addition to building new settings to support primary and secondary pupils who are newcomers to the Welsh language. This also reduces the distance between pupils' homes and these centres and provides them with a good range of resources and facilities.

Fairly recently, the authority revised its Immersion Education system to ensure that the language policy is inclusive and supports latecomers, including pupils who have English as an additional language, to acquire the Welsh language. Under the purposeful guidance of new leaders, the service offers beneficial provision for primary and secondary pupils in six settings across the authority. The intensive ten-week course supports pupils to acquire beneficial linguistic skills that enable them to join their peers in their local schools and use the language formally and informally within their communities. The service also provides useful support and guidance for teachers and teaching assistants to develop pupils' Welsh language skills. For example, it has trained nearly all teachers and teaching assistants who work in foundation learning classes on good practice in terms of immersion methods.

A very positive element of the Gwynedd Immersion Education System's work is the effective use of digital technology to enrich pupils' experiences and motivate them to learn Welsh in a fun way.

Cameo – Using digital technology to encourage use of the Welsh language

Leaders and teachers are working with a local commercial company to create an innovative virtual resource based on their new Welsh language immersion scheme. The scheme is based on the imaginary village of Aberwla and the virtual equipment provides an excellent experience for pupils to practise language patterns and vocabulary. They also make effective use of promoting the benefits of learning Welsh and share good practice through dedicated podcasts, for example by interviewing former pupils from language centres and their families to share their experiences of learning the language.

A clear priority is given to ensuring that provision and services for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) and their families are available through the medium of Welsh. All members of staff within the Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Service are fluent Welsh speakers and are able to provide bilingually. The authority also works effectively with other agencies, such as the Local Health Board, to ensure that specialist support is available in Welsh to meet the needs of ALN pupils and their families.

The use of the Welsh language in informal situations in primary and secondary schools is encouraged appropriately through Welsh Language Charter activities. This contributes to improving pupils' Welsh language skills and Welshness, in addition to supporting cooperation between primary and secondary schools. The regional project, 'Ein Llais Ni', in cooperation with external partners such as Bangor University, helps to develop skills in teaching and learning oracy skills.

Schools provide many GCSE subjects through the medium of Welsh and a large number of pupils sit an examination in GCSE Welsh first language. This reflects the authority's vision and policy to develop pupils who are fully bilingual and promotes the advantages of studying through the medium of Welsh.

The authority has robust procedures to identify the linguistic skills of the workforce. This ensures that it identifies training needs and provides support as necessary. The partnership between the authority and other stakeholders, such as Bangor University and GwE, supports this work by providing specific courses for the full range of staff including teachers, learning assistants and administrative and catering staff.

Leadership and management

The authority's leaders have a clear vision for education in Gwynedd, with the aim of ensuring the best possible start for the county's children and young people. This vision includes a firm focus on ensuring that children and young people have equal access to education through the medium of Welsh.

The Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Education are keen to mitigate the effects of poverty and promote equality in terms of access to education. This is highlighted clearly in the Council's Plan (2023-2028) with priorities which, for example, focus on reducing the cost of sending children to school, extending opportunities for children and young people to play and socialise and expanding the

availability of free school meals for pupils. Leaders are also trying to promote young people's access to post-16 education. For example, after considering the views of young people, the authority ensured travel passes for them so that they could reasonably reach their places of learning.

The Chief Executive believes strongly in the principle of continuous improvement. He has been central to the work of establishing a culture and ways of working that place residents at the heart of the authority's work, namely 'Ffordd Gwynedd'. The vision of 'Ffordd Gwynedd' has been shared effectively with the authority's officers and they strive to uphold 'Ffordd Gwynedd' in all aspects of their work. The Chief Executive promotes and maintains an effective working relationship with officers and staff across the authority and holds regular sessions to welcome their views and listen to their ideas. He also has a beneficial overview of the strengths and areas for improvement in different aspects of the Council's work and has established clear purposes for the work of departments and teams across the authority. Through this, he gives a clear direction to the work of leaders, teams and individuals within the education service.

The Head of Education and other leaders, such as the assistant heads, understand their roles and are aware of what they are aiming for in order to achieve their specific purposes within the education service. They set high expectations for their teams, by modelling and promoting professional values and behaviours that contribute positively to supporting schools and facilitate effective co-operation with other providers and partners. Stakeholders, such as school headteachers and relevant external partners, appreciate the open communication between leaders and officers of the education service. They appreciate the fact that they listen to their ideas and opinions, for example in different forums.

The authority continues to strengthen the alignment between the education service's plans and the revised Council Plan. The alignment is not currently wholly coherent. For example, there is a clear priority in the Council Plan in terms of mitigating the effects of poverty, but the authority does not monitor the attendance of pupils who are eligible for free school meals. Plans with partners, such as the regional school improvement service, are sound and support Gwynedd's ambition for education of the highest standard for its learners.

When planning for improvement, the authority's leaders weigh up the strengths and areas for improvement and identify clear 'purposes' for the education service's main areas of work. These purposes focus partly on the council's corporate priorities and partly on the normal activities of the education service. Metrics that accompany these are set sensibly, on the whole, and reflect the most important areas for improvement, although not all are incisive enough or focus clearly enough on learners' outcomes, where applicable. In some improvement plans, there are productive strategic actions to address priorities, for example as within the school modernisation programme, but they are less prominent in other improvement plans and areas. Leaders have recently provided additional resources in a timely manner to meet the needs of learners in a few areas, for example ALN and the Welsh language. However, the focus on improving learner attendance outcomes across Gwynedd is not firm enough.

On the whole, the authority has a strong track record of implementing beneficial strategies that have a positive influence on learners and improve provision for them. The digital strategies of the education services are a good example of an improvement that resulted from officers responding purposefully to the voice of school practitioners and leaders. The Council has planned purposefully and thoroughly to introduce modern school facilities in Bangor and Bala. There is also successful strategic planning to maintain and extend immersion provision to promote the Welsh language across Gwynedd. Recently, the education service has planned purposefully to agree on intervention thresholds with the regional school improvement service. Leaders have also thought flexibly to offer solutions to challenging situations within the authority. For example, the authority is facing recruitment challenges in different areas of the county and has begun to consider how more attractive jobs could be created.

Despite these positive examples of effective strategic planning, leaders have not been strategic enough in approaching all aspects of their work. They have not been strategic enough in ensuring consistency in provision to meet the needs of learners with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties or ensured sufficient supervision or oversight of the quality of the existing provision. Although the authority has conducted a number of reviews on suitable post-16 education or training, leaders have not yet set a clear enough strategic direction for transforming this provision. In addition, leaders have not resumed the work of promoting and monitoring better attendance in schools purposefully enough.

The authority has recently reinforced its systems for monitoring and challenging performance, by setting firm principles within its self-evaluation system. For example, there are valuable sessions for ensuring timely progress, which include the Cabinet Member. A healthy culture of challenging performance is developing and beginning to lead to further action.

The Council considers risks regularly. Risk assessments cover detailed considerations across a number of services in the education department. Overall, leaders mitigate risks promptly and sensibly. However, the department has not tackled some risks relating to the well-being and success of learners wholly successfully.

Within its work programme, the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee considers a range of relevant issues that face the education service, such as the developments of the new curriculum and the strategy to promote the Welsh language. Joint planning between the Cabinet and the scrutiny committees to co-ordinate work programmes that support decisions is now improving. There is a productive relationship between the authority's leaders and officers and the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee and the information that is prepared and shared with the committee is now more manageable and clearer. However, the scrutiny committee's consideration of the work of the projects within the Council Plan is currently limited.

The Council has consistent procedures and policies for managing staff performance internally. These include the principle of personal responsibility on individuals to develop professionally in a supportive environment. The Council provides a good range of internal training, internal secondments and opportunities to benefit from

leadership development offers and coaching and mentoring programmes from Academi Wales. The authority has introduced a valuable training offer to develop the workforce in relation to Additional Learning Needs (ALN). The regional school improvement service provides well for the professional development of practitioners and leaders in Gwynedd's schools.

The head of education and his senior management team undertake their statutory role to protect and safeguard children robustly and effectively and relevant leaders at all levels understand their roles and responsibilities. There is a robust procedure for strategic and operational meetings in relation to safeguarding issues. The representation of the education services in these processes and as part of the Corporate Parenting Panel is consistent and influential. Leaders at all levels have developed a mutual understanding with corresponding officers in children's services. As a result, they work together intelligently and productively for the benefit of the authority's children.

The corporate safeguarding policy is appropriate and the Education Services department provides a beneficial standardised safeguarding policy for schools, together with a large number of other relevant policies and guidelines. Clear guidance and valuable and beneficial support are given to headteachers and designated persons in schools by relevant officers, such as the designated safeguarding officer for education. Training arrangements for school staff at all levels, including governors, are robust. School headteachers welcome recent developments where the designated officer visits to check the quality and challenge the safeguarding arrangements of their schools. This has had a positive effect on strengthening the culture of safeguarding across schools in Gwynedd.

The quality of implementation of Section 5 of the Wales Safeguarding Procedures, when there are allegations against professional staff, is extremely robust and very thorough. The support and challenge given to schools by other departments in the authority on safeguarding and health and safety issues is valuable and effective. This includes clear guidance from the property and personnel departments on specific issues and risk assessments. However, the authority has not considered risk carefully enough for the inclusion hubs. Safe recruitment arrangements are robust and consistent.

The authority has a good understanding of the financial situation within the education service and officers are aware of the financial risks. The Council has a clear understanding of budgetary challenges but is not using the information sufficiently well to guide the use of its resources in the medium and long term. The local authority does not make full use of comparative data to compare the costs of its education services with other authorities.

The authority has funded the salary settlements of school staff in full, except in 2022-23, when electricity costs and the salaries of support and administrative staff were higher than expected when the budget was initially set. These additional costs were funded from school balances.

In the past, school budgets were protected from cuts compared with other services within the authority, but due to the current financial challenges, schools have been

asked to make a total of £1.966 million in savings during 2023-24 and 2024-25, which corresponds to 2.25% of the annual budget.

The net education budget per pupil was in the highest quartile of authorities in Wales in 2020/21, which is the last year for which data is available. In the same year, the budget per pupil in special schools was in the lowest quartile in Wales. Despite the Council's expenditure being above the Standard Expenditure Assessment, the budgeting of the education services was slightly below the baseline assessment for the education service.

School balances, as in other authorities, increased significantly from £4.3 million in 2019-20 to £16.7 million at the end of 2021-22. Four point eight million pounds (£4.8 million) of balances were used in 2022-23, reducing the balances to £11.9 million. At the end of 2022-23, three of the 96 schools have a deficit in their financial balances compared with the situation in the previous year, when all of the authority's schools had a surplus. Plans are underway to review and respond to the deficit. The authority has arrangements to accept plans from schools for using the surplus balances and recovering deficits.

The authority provides good support for the management and financial planning of schools and schools are positive about the support given. The School Finance Forum considers relevant issues, including setting the authority's annual budget. However, the forum has not discussed funding formulae recently and these have not been reviewed comprehensively since 2014. The authority has a range of service level agreements and, overall, a large number of schools take advantage of these. Service level agreements and contracts are reviewed periodically.

Appendix 1 – Cyngor Gwynedd case study

Cyngor Gwynedd's work in developing Welsh medium resources for pupils with additional education needs and their families, and for language immersion.

Information about the Local Education Authority

Gwynedd Local Education Authority has a clear vision in the context of Welsh-medium education for learners throughout their time in education. Gwynedd's Welsh Language Policy aims to develop confident bilingual learners and citizens. In Gwynedd, the Welsh language belongs to everyone, and the policy sets a direction and clear accountability for all schools.

Cyngor Gwynedd's Education Department is committed to contributing to national strategies and legislation in terms of promoting and increasing the use of the Welsh language. To this end, the department has prepared and introduced a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, which outlines the vision for Welsh-medium education within the authority over the next ten years. In line with the statutory requirement, under section 44 of the Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011, the Council has produced and published county-wide strategies which outline how they will contribute to the national aim set in the Welsh Government's Welsh Language Strategy, Cymraeg 2050, to increase the number of Welsh speakers across Wales and increase the opportunities for people to use the Welsh language on a daily basis. Gwynedd's county-wide Welsh Language Strategy (Welsh Language Promotion Plan for Gwynedd 2018-23) sets the commitment and vision for the whole county, and the work of the Education Department and the aims of the WESP contribute to the objectives of that county-wide strategy.

Developing Welsh-medium resources for learners with additional learning needs and inclusion

The Authority in partnership with Cyngor Ynys Môn have invested in a central Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion (ALN&I) service. This service is available to all education providers within the county to provide support and advice for learners with ALN&I needs or to prevent these needs from developing. This is by providing resources, training and direct input for schools and learners.

The ALN&I service provides a fully bilingual service, with all members of staff within the service being able to provide through the medium of Welsh. The need for provision through the medium of Welsh is emphasised within the recruitment process.

Developing resources through the medium of Welsh is an integral part of this work and the training provided by the team is available through the medium of Welsh. There is a wide range of appropriate resources that are developed continuously to correspond to the identified need and to align with the provision that is offered. This includes areas of behaviour, well-being and mental health support, specific learning needs (literacy and numeracy), communication and interaction, and sensory, medical and physical needs. A specific website has been set up to be used by parents and

carers, and a specific website for school staff which enables them to download resources, in addition to an online classroom for specific learning needs resources. Everything on the website is available bilingually: www.adyach.cymru. The online Individual Development Plan is also fully bilingual so that it can be completed in the family's preferred language.

The above means that ALN&I provision aligns with the ethos and teaching provision within the county and promotes learners' skills and bilingualism from the outset. It also means that parents and carers can contribute to their children's person-centred discussions through the medium of Welsh or English with staff who are able to speak both languages.

The immersion education system

In order for the authority's Welsh language policy to be inclusive, a specialist service is provided within the county, namely the Immersion Education System. Since being established in its new form in January 2023, there are six strategic settings across the county, which provide a service for latecomers to acquire the Welsh language.

To ensure modern and up-to-date opportunities for learners to practise vocabulary and language patterns in our immersion centres, staff at the Immersion Education System have worked with Anni Llŷn and Animated Technologies to create an innovative virtual village. This project has been developed with Welsh Government revenue grant funding. This new scheme is based on an imaginary village called Aberwla and it incorporates specific language patterns within the language continuum in the Curriculum for Wales. It is a scheme that is relevant to the twenty-first century and reflects modern day Wales. The project enables latecomers to step into Aberwla on a virtual platform to practise language patterns in various locations around the village. On this digital platform, learners are given an opportunity to play games with each other e.g., when filling their basket in the supermarket or by reading instructions and following a shopping list. They also meet different characters and creatures from the usual at Tyddyn Swnllyd Farm and stay at the Glamping Ground for a couple of nights. They can also spend time at the leisure centre, the museum or help Ceri the mechanic at the garage. It is also possible to borrow a drone from the gadget shop to fly above the village to practise command patterns and directions e.g., right and left, forwards and backwards.

Welsh Government officials are very keen for Gwynedd to share this resource nationally and have released funding to facilitate this. The local authority is proud of the opportunity to share the resource for the benefit of learners and to support the Government's aim in Cymraeg 2050 across Wales. All authorities in Wales are welcome to use the resource by contacting canolfaniaith@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

Multimedia resources to reinforce language patterns and vocabulary are valuable, particularly virtual digital resources that appeal to children and young people. This resource is a means to reinforce the skills necessary to enable learners to use the Welsh language in a formal and informal context.

What is becoming clear is the interest learners have in the resource. It is very appealing to latecomers from primary to secondary schools. The virtual element is a means of enabling learners to immerse themselves in the activity and, when they

step onto the platform, they are happy to try to communicate through the medium of Welsh. The element of fun and enjoyment attached to the resource certainly has a positive influence on their development and is a means of normalising the Welsh language and making it contemporary in the virtual and digital arena.

Another innovative resource that is worth sharing nationally in the context of Welsh-medium education is the podcast 'Am filiwn', which deals with aspects of the world of a teacher that leads to increasing and developing pupils to become Welsh speakers and aims to create a million Welsh speakers. This podcast goes under the skin of immersion education and what happens in our language centres within our Immersion Education System. In the podcast, some learners and their parents share their experiences of attending the Welsh language immersion units in Gwynedd to learn Welsh. In addition, an experienced teacher also talks about the main immersion principles that have proved successful within the Immersion Education System in Gwynedd. This is a valuable resource for students following a teacher training course, for newly qualified teachers or for teachers at the beginning of their career to raise awareness and learn about effective immersion principles and strategies. The Am Filiwn Podcast (ypod.cymru) was developed in a series of podcasts for ITE, Bangor University in collaboration with Initial Teacher Education institutions in Wales, sponsored by Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol.

Evidence base of the report

Before the inspection, inspectors:

- consulted the local authority on the local inspection questions to be used during the inspection, based on the authority's self-evaluation, strategic plans and relevant data held by Estyn
- analysed the outcomes from open questionnaires, including the views of learners, parents, school staff and governors, local authority staff, regional consortium staff, elected members and general public
- carried out a preliminary visit to the local authority to meet with a range of relevant partners to education services, such as learner representatives, headteachers and governors, and leaders from statutory and third sector agencies working with children and young people

During the inspection, inspectors:

- met with the leader of the council, elected members responsible for education services, elected members responsible for the scrutiny of education services, the chief executive, the director of education, other leaders and managers in education services, other relevant staff in the local authority, the managing director of the regional consortium for school improvement and other relevant staff from the regional consortium
- looked closely at the local authority's self-evaluation processes
- considered the local authority's strategic and operational plans for improvement
- scrutinised a variety of documents, including information on learner outcomes, information on the performance of schools and other education settings, including information from the regional consortium for school improvement, minutes from a range of meetings, reports presented to council or scrutiny, information relating to the safeguarding of learners and other information relevant to the local authority's education services held by Estyn

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- reviewed the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, standardise and ensure the quality of the inspection
- provided a draft copy of the report for the local authority to note any concerns with factual accuracy, and made amendments where necessary

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the local authority and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

The report was produced in accordance with Section 38 of the Education Act 1997, the Children Act 2004 and the Learning and Skills Act 2000.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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Review of the inclusion provision in Gwynedd

**Caroline Rees Ltd.
December 2023**

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

- The Local Authority has been brave in stepping forward to try and create centres to support the most vulnerable pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD).
- Generally, the arrangement has been structured so that it is stronger than the previous programme namely, Pecyn 25.
- The principle of linking such provision with secondary schools has strong potential.
- In terms of what was seen during the review, the relationship between the staff and the young people in their care is robust and has the potential to resolve some of the pupils' difficulties. Some pupils and their parents testify that they have made very good progress when working with hub staff.
- In the cases where pupils have consistently attended, the hubs have managed to secure basic qualifications and progression for the pupil to a destination following their days in the hub.
- The staff succeed beyond what one would expect the conditions, resources and structures to permit.
- The quality assurance systems in place are insufficient.
- Following discussions with the headteachers, it appears that the schools vary considerably in the provision offered to try and restore pupils with SEBD.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The local authority needs to work with school leaders to co-produce an effective county-wide strategy of in-school and out-of-school provision that embraces key principles of clarity of purpose, ownership, quality assurance and progression
- Finding suitable locations for out-of-school provision
- To ensure that the strategy is implemented effectively, we recommend that the formal status of the Pupil Referral Unit is adopted for out-of-school provision for pupils with SEBD who would benefit from such provision.

Background

- During January/February 2020, Mrs Caroline Rees was commissioned to undertake a review of the Gwynedd/Anglesey Additional Learning Needs Strategy (ALN) and Inclusion. The review was conducted over a period of four weeks.
- A comprehensive report was provided, outlining the steps for further development and the outcome of one of the fields noted was the need to develop the provision for behaviour in year 9 and key stage 4, including a better model for Pecyn 25 (namely the alternative provision for learners who could not succeed in main stream education).

Following this work, the Inclusion service was totally reorganised to change the provision. This included:

- Remodelling the Inclusion Service staffing structure to include outreach support and to create one Specialist Resources Centre (Llechen Lân)
- Commissioning two Secondary Schools to provide Hubs for young people in years 9-11 with significant SEBD, with the focus within the Hubs to provide:
 - Pupils with a wider range of subjects
 - For pupils to be taught by qualified teachers

The aim of the revised/new provision was to:

- Improve the continuum of provision offered to children and young people with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- Ensure an appropriate educational provision for learners with social, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.
- Reduce the number of exclusions, especially permanent exclusions
- Reduce the number of children/young people who become known to the Children's Services or become NEET.

Estyn Inspection - June 2023

Estyn noted the following shortcomings:

- *the steps that should be followed at school or the interventions that should be put in place before applying for a pupil to access to the behaviour support hubs are not as clear.*

- *The status of these settings is unclear as they are not registered as pupil referral units, although that is how they operate.*
- *The social, emotional and behavioural needs of pupils who attend the individual hubs vary. As a result, tailoring provision to meet the specific needs of individual pupils within these hubs is challenging.*
- *There is too much variation in the suitability of the accommodation and the range of learning resources in the hubs to provide specialist education that supports the well-being and behaviour of vulnerable pupils.*
- *Although a range of relevant officers are part of the initial arrangements for placing pupils in the hubs, there is insufficient contact between them and the hub managers to support their work and provide them with the necessary guidance.*
- *This includes inconsistency in monitoring, quality assurance and risk assessment arrangements.*
- *As a result, senior officers in Gwynedd do not have a strategic overview of the outcomes or the nature or quality of the provision at the hubs.*

(An excerpt of the Gwynedd Estyn report can be found in Appendix 2).

Estyn (June 2023) made three recommendations:

R1 Ensure that leaders act strategically on all aspects of their work and that they have suitable oversight and full consideration of risk regarding important aspects that have arisen during the inspection

R2 Improve arrangements for monitoring, evaluating and promoting pupils' attendance

R3 Strengthen the provision to respond to the needs of pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and ensure arrangements for monitoring and improving the quality of that provision.

All these are relevant to this review. Although the second recommendation is relevant to attendance across the whole of Gwynedd, attendance in the centres is an area that causes concern.

Following the Estyn inspection, Caroline Rees Ltd. was commissioned to undertake a further review. This brief can be seen in appendix 1.

Nature of the review

The review included.

Team meetings with headteachers/deputy headteachers from the following schools:

- Ysgol Ardudwy – Aled Williams
- Ysgol Tywyn – David Thorp
- Ysgol Botwnnog – Aled Williams
- Ysgol Bro Idris – Jano Owen
- Ysgol Brynrefail – Arwyn Williams
- Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen – Dylan Davies
- Ysgol Eifionydd – Dewi Bowen
- Ysgol Dyffryn Nantlle – Rhian Parry Jones
- Ysgol Glan y Mor – Guto Wyn
- Ysgol Syr Hugh Owen – Clive Thomas
- Ysgol Tryfan – Geraint Jones
- Ysgol y Moelwyn – Eleri Moss
- Ysgol Friars – Martin Williams

Meetings on Teams with staff responsible for the centres:

- Caren Ann Williams (Llechen Lân)
- Dyfrig Jones (Ysgol Tryfan)
- Barry Evans (Ysgol y Moelwyn)

and additional separate meetings with both Headteachers supervising the Hubs, Geraint Jones and Eleri Moss.

Teams meetings with LA officers

- Ffion Edwards Ellis (Senior ALN&I Manager)
- Ellen Rowlands, (Inclusion Manager)
- John Eifion Jones (Welfare and Inclusion Officer)

- Meinir Bolton (Senior Welfare Officer)
- Lora Glynwen Williams (Quality Officer)
- Non Eleri Samuel (ALN&I Quality Officer)
- Elenid Glyn (Deputy Principal Educational Psychologist)
- Dora Wendi Jones (Senior Counsellor)
- Gwyn Tudur (Assistant Head of Department: Secondary Schools)

Visits to the centres and Llechen Lân, including face-to-face meetings with staff

1. Moelwyn – Tŷ'r Ysgol
2. Porthmadog Football Club
3. Chapel in Bangor
4. Caernarfon Football Club
5. Llechen Lân

Talks with pupils, staff and parents and surveys

Scrutiny of documents, including:

- 2023 Estyn Report
- Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Strategy (summary)
- Memorandum of Understanding 'Inclusion Commission' Gwynedd Secondary Schools
- Management Board's Terms of Reference
- Reports to the Management Board
- Minutes of Management Board meetings 16/3/23 and 14/7/23
- Agenda of the Gwynedd Hubs Management Board 14/7/23 - virtual
- The Referral System to Canolfan Llechen Lân and Educational Hubs
- Development Plan for the Arfon Inclusion Hubs 2022-23 and 2023-24
- Inclusion Team Business Plan March 2022 - March 2023 and March 2023 - March 2024
- Hub pupils' timetables
- Monitoring / Management Board Spreadsheet
- Minutes of meeting with Ysgol y Moelwyn's Quality Officer
- Llechen Lân handbook for parents
- Key questions to consider before excluding a pupil
- Managed Moves Protocol (MMP)
- Examples of Risk Assessments
- General Information Booklet for Parents and Pupils - Moelwyn Hub

Findings and Recommendations

Strategic Planning for behaviour by the local authority

- In 2023, Estyn reported that a significant improvement had been made to the strategic planning of services for pupils with SEBD:

Over time, the strategic and operational processes of Gwynedd education services to respond to the needs of pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties have improved significantly. The vision of leaders to strengthen provision for these vulnerable pupils is now clear and suitable.

- One of the key changes was developing secondary hubs, closely linked with two secondary schools. The hubs at Ysgol Tryfan and Ysgol y Moelwyn opened in September 2021. Llechen Lân has been open since 2018. Originally there were three such centres - Tŷ Nantlle, Tŷ Cybi and Tŷ Moelwyn.
- Since September 2021, there has been only one centre namely Tŷ Nantlle.
- Although the hubs allow access from years 9 to 11, year 9 is seen as an exception. This is a weakness in the system that should demand attention. Year 9 is often a critical year in the learner's development.
- The County has a clear strategy for Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion. This explains the range of services available to support children with SEBD, including local authority teams and hubs. The County has a Memorandum of Understanding which is the basis to the Gwynedd Secondary Schools 'Inclusion Commission'.
- The Memorandum of Understanding sets out key roles and responsibilities, including:
 - How learners gain access to the provision
 - What is being provided
 - What will be the learner's registration status
 - Budget
 - Who has Responsibility for the quality and management of the provision
 - Information about the Management Board
- Despite the above, one of the main concerns raised from this review is the lack of clarity regarding roles and responsibilities.

Planning for Improvement

- During meetings with schools and local authority staff, they noted the following points:
- There is a lack of provision for pupils in year 9 - Llechen Lân is for years 5 to 8. The secondary centres are mainly for years 10 and 11. Year 9 pupils attend as an exception only, whilst it is recognised by educators that Year 9 is often a critical year in developing appropriate behaviour for learning.
- The secondary centres are not as effective as they should be.
- Although behaviour is discussed regularly in meetings with deputy headteachers or inclusion managers, headteachers rarely participate in strategic discussions with LA officers on behavioural provision or other initiatives.
- Several headteachers feel that they are told about decisions made by LA officers, but they are not involved in the discussions before the decisions are made.
- A significant number of headteachers feel that their opinions are not sought regularly to develop county-wide strategies which affect their schools and learners.
- There is a view amongst Headteachers that behaviour has become more challenging since the pandemic (this is also reflected outside Gwynedd).
- Many headteachers feel that it is time to have a county-wide conversation to introduce a comprehensive plan to improve behaviour and support those learners where their behaviour undermines their own education and the education of others.
- The LA has a series of development plans. One of these plans given to the review team is the Inclusion Team's Business Plan which states some of the areas where improvement is needed. However, this plan should be improved in the following ways:
 - In several cases, the actions are too broad e.g. 'Planning purposeful support for the County's most vulnerable pupils' and 'Continue to develop the KS3 (Y9) provision Programme underway'. This makes it difficult for officers to know what needs to be done. The actions need to be broken down into smaller steps.
 - Often, the target dates are not specific enough e.g. 'Ongoing.'
 - There is no evidence in this document to show that progress has been made against the 22/23 plan and that it has been monitored or evaluated. A column should be added where progress against each action is recorded and monitored.
 - This plan notes the steps to be achieved by the Inclusion Team, but it is unclear how the plan links with the plans of other teams.

- To ensure an improvement, a general development plan is required dealing with the SEBD field, which includes the required actions by a range of services and schools.

The LA reports that they have improved the monitoring processes compared to what was noted above.

Recommendations:

Establish a group to develop a clear strategy to support SEBD pupils, which includes senior school leaders and the LA officers.

Develop an ethos of co-production where school leaders and LA officers work together to ensure improvement, rather than the LA informing the schools about what will happen.

Addressing the gap in the provision for year 9 pupils.

Provision for pupils with SEBD in mainstream schools

- The ability of secondary mainstream schools across Gwynedd to satisfy the needs of SEBD pupils varies. The senior managers of some schools could describe a wide range of interventions and alternative curriculum options used to engage with and retain pupils. Others were less aware of the possibilities. These include curricular adjustments (half-day release), engaging with external providers, counselling support, developing settings on school sites to have a break and tranquillity. Referrals to the panel reflect this difference as schools are asked to provide evidence of what they have done in terms of interventions.
- There is a general feeling that the additional learning needs of some young people contribute significantly to their behavioural difficulties, but sometimes the schools focus on their behaviour more than the educational needs that contribute to their behavioural difficulties. It would be good to model the obvious link between Inclusion and ALN.
- The LA offers training to every school in, for example, the trauma-informed schools' scheme. However, every school does not take broad advantage of the offer. Although the local authority cannot force schools to agree to training, the interviews with the headteachers strongly suggest that there is a desire to have an agreed way forward in terms of behaviour, and it would be timely for the LA to take advantage of such a consensus.

- When school staff attend training, the information they receive is not always transferred effectively to other staff. Ideally, whole-school training should be undertaken. However, it is recognised that this is not always practical.
- School leaders and authority staff in general recognise that provision should be provided in the mainstream, every time this is possible. However, when an arrangement breaks down, it is sometimes necessary for a pupil to move to another school. The managed moves (MM) protocol clearly describes the steps to be taken. In 2023, Estyn reported:

The authority's 'managed moves' protocol and arrangements are appropriate and lead to positive outcomes for pupils in a majority of cases.

- However, every school does not follow the protocol. LA officers state that the LA is used to taking part in every MM. However, by now, officers state that headteachers are more likely to pick up the phone to another school to ask them to take a pupil.
- It is suggested, sometimes, that schools persuade parents to allow their child to move schools to avoid a permanent exclusion.
- The number of MM reported to the LA by schools is likely to be incorrect as schools do not always follow the agreed protocol. The local authority notes that they have raised this concern many times with the schools.
- The lack of correct data noted in the previous point means that it is difficult for the local authority to monitor patterns and the seriousness of the situation.
- Some schools take a high number of MM pupils. This places pressure on these schools.
- The provision across Gwynedd is mainly through the medium of Welsh, and pupils are expected to be completely bilingual. However, every pupil moving from Ysgol Friars to other schools or the Hubs do not have a sufficient grasp of the Welsh language to be able to participate fully in a Welsh-speaking atmosphere and therefore the hubs operate with a high percentage of the work in English.

Recommendations:

To tackle the variations between schools, there is a need to develop a system to share good practice in terms of managing inclusion.

The local authority needs to work with the headteachers to have ownership for any agreed way forward. This may mean an agreement in terms of strategy and a wide training programme for all the county's schools.

Working with the schools to ensure that the MM protocol is honoured fully by every school.

Impact of the strategy on behaviour/exclusions, attendance and those who are not in education, employment or training (NEET).

Exclusions

- It is reported that the behaviour of most pupils is better in the hubs than in their previous settings. However, there are no formal systems in place to track behaviour and to note trends.
- It is usual for behaviour settings such as these centres to have an electronic recording system which allows staff to analyse data, note the tendencies and use the information to plan as well as to appraise the effectiveness of the provision and the interventions.
- Llechen Lân measures the progress of pupils in relation to their behaviour and social interaction by using the Boxall Profile and 6-week and 12-week reviews. However, they would also benefit from an electronic system as mentioned above.
- Similarly, there is no system in place to analyse or to show the general effectiveness of the provision e.g. the percentage of pupils who successfully return to school.
- The LA has produced useful guidelines for schools. including key questions to consider before excluding a pupil.
- The Inclusion Welfare Officer works with schools to ensure that consistent processes are adopted.
- The number of permanent exclusions from secondary schools in Gwynedd was significantly higher in 2022/23 than in previous years, as shown by the following table:

Year -	Secondary	
	Permanent	Fixed Period
2017/18	4	282
2018/19	13	349
2019/20	13	410
2020/21	6	418
2021/22	8	504
2022/23	44	736

This is the case, despite the fact that one of the aims of the hub provision was to 'Reduce the number of exclusions, especially permanent exclusions'. **This is a subject that requires immediate significant attention by the authority and the schools.**

Recommendation:

Working urgently to review the significant and rapid increase in permanent exclusions from secondary schools and agree on a way forward.

Attendance

- There are examples where engagement and pupil attendance has improved significantly, but this is not true of all pupils.
- Generally, attendance at the hubs is low, although it should be acknowledged that many pupils come from very challenging backgrounds, and some have lost considerable periods of education prior to being placed in the hubs.
- There is no system to analyse the patterns in attendance or punctuality.
- In Bangor and Caernarfon, the attendance figures reported only represent the sessions that individual pupils are expected to attend, e.g. a pupil allocated 12 hours a week will be noted as 100% attendance if they attend those 12 hours. This gives a misleading impression to the management board.

Recommendations:

Develop systems to track the behaviour and attendance/punctuality of pupils in the hubs and Llechen Lân.

Use the data to note and evaluate trends and plan interventions.

Ensure that the attendance figures recorded and reported are correct, for example, if a pupil only has two days' provision every week, his attendance cannot be more than 40%.

Explain when registers should be closed during morning and afternoon sessions. The LA should monitor attendance.

Centres should record punctuality, as well as attendance, to note patterns and put patterns and strategies in place to improve punctuality.

Young people not in education, employment or training - NEET

From Careers Wales data, of year 11 destinations having left school, the figures are as follows.

Numbers and NEET %

2019

Gwynedd 25 (2.2%)

Wales 537 (1.8%)

2020

Gwynedd 14 (1.2%)

Wales 527 (1.7%)

2021

Gwynedd 18 (1.5%)

Wales 365 (1.1%)

2022

Gwynedd 23 (1.8%)

Wales 664 (2.1%)

- As there are a comparatively small number in the County, it is difficult to come to meaningful conclusions on what the data says. However, it can be seen that the Gwynedd figure is annually within the limits and fairly close to the Wales figures.
- When chatting with the young people in the hub, it became evident that some had managed to identify their target career, and they noted that it was the hub that had encouraged them. Without this encouragement, it is probable that these would be NEETs. According to the evidence submitted by the hubs, their pupils have managed to get educational progression, a job or training following their time in the hub. However, concern was expressed about 2023-24 pupils who appear to be more challenging, and their attendance is poorer.
- It is early to track hub pupils through their further education/career but it would be valuable for the hubs to try and retain such data.

Support for Secondary Schools

- Schools turn to a range of people to support the children in most need in terms of SEBD e.g. educational psychologists, Outreach team, social workers, counselling service, children services, welfare services, youth workers and charities.
- The services that were questioned have noted that they tend to work in isolation, without integration with other services.
- The headteachers state that not all schools are clear on to how to get hold of the different services, or how they can be used most effectively.
- Recently the Outreach team has been expanded to support secondary schools as well as primary schools. Reports are written following every visit. School staff appreciate the fact that they now have someone to talk to. However, there is no system in place to enable the team to analyse trends or to evaluate the value of the visits.
- Llechen Lân have recorded evidence (Boxall Profile) which indicates that secondary pupils who receive a provision from Llechen Lân generally make good progress in terms of behaviour during their comparatively short stay and return to the mainstream.
- Concern was expressed that children are returning to school following a period at Llechen Lân but that support is inconsistent once they return to their own school.
- The Llechen Lân Outreach work is more developed in the primary sector, and there are capacity challenges in terms of the secondary sector.
- Educational psychologists have provided trauma and attachment training to the schools. Calls for them to work in the hubs are rare, and the team would like to offer therapeutic interventions for hub pupils.

Recommendation:

In partnership with school leaders, the Local Authority should ensure that the clear map published from the graded responses to support SEBD pupils has been understood and received by every school. This includes the journey from school action, initial referral, professional learning for staff, direct engagement with the learner, curricular adjustments, external agencies activities etc.

LA Strategic Planning of the hubs provision

Status of the centres

- Because the hubs are managed by individual schools rather than the local authority, they have not registered as Pupil Referral Units (PRU). Consequently, they are not subject to full Estyn inspections or to protocols and guidelines received as the norm nationally across that sector. This in itself would not be a problem, if robust systems were in place to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the hubs. However, these systems have not been established.
- An Estyn inspection would probably have highlighted shortcomings of note, including:
 - the lack of teaching by qualified teachers
 - part-time provision for many of the pupils
 - low attendance
 - alternative curriculum and limited enrichment activities
 - safeguarding issues
- The potential advantages of linking the hubs with individual schools are substantial. They include:
 - enabling pupils, where relevant, to follow specialist courses at the school
 - allowing staff to provide a specialist input at the centre
 - providing access to pupils to facilities and resources that are not available in the hub itself
 - enabling centre staff to get access to mainstream training
 - allowing staff to be part of the schools' performance management system and other aspects on school life, in terms of support and career direction
- However, most of the centres are not on a school site. The one hub that is on the Ysgol y Moelwyn site at the time of this review was operating with only one pupil.

Recommendation: The hubs need to be registered as Pupil Referral Units to ensure that pupils receive the provision they require and that the hubs are managed and monitored in accordance with national expectations.

Funding the Hubs

- There is no cheap option to provide education for pupils outside mainstream schools, and residential provision can cost more than £250k a year per pupil.
- The memorandum of understanding sets out the arrangements to fund the hubs - £158k for each HUB for the 2023-2024 financial year (inflation of £11k from 22/23). The funding is delegated to the school's finance.
- Although the money is delegated to the school's budget, the LA should have responsibility for monitoring the hubs, and their budgets.
- As far as we can see, the LA does not monitor the use made of finance by the schools in their hubs.
- There is a lack of joint understanding regarding whether the funding is sufficient to provide high-quality education to the pupils in the hubs.
- The local authority has allocated funding for the hubs to the schools to develop them as required. Consequently, there is no evident consistency in the staffing structures. The head of the hub in Bangor/Caernarfon is employed as a deputy headteacher of a secondary school.
- An experienced senior manager of a secondary school could be expected to lead on the teaching and give examples of effective pedagogy to the support staff. This is not currently part of the hub head's role.
- Only a little is spent on alternative curriculum activities or on enrichment programmes which are essential for these pupils.
- The two schools who have taken responsibility for managing the hubs feel that the resource allocated by the LA is insufficient. However, authority officers take a different view on this matter. An evaluation should be undertaken on the exact nature of what the authority expects from the allocated budget.
- The colleges (and possibly the employers) are aware of the needs of these pupils, and they often expect a member of staff to attend the college with the pupil. This is only realistic as attendance is low in the hubs. Should attendance improve within the hubs, the Authority and the hubs will need to discuss how to staff access to the College, while also maintaining the teaching of groups back in the hub

Recommendations:

That the local authority and the two hub schools work together to evaluate the use and size of the finance provided to schools to sustain the hubs.

The appraisal of posts required to ensure the management, pedagogy and effective support for the pupils within the hubs.

Staffing

The three centres have very different staffing structures:

Y Moelwyn:

- 1 Inclusion Officer
- 2 assistants
- initial support from the Ysgol y Moelwyn head of well-being and inclusion

(at times, one member of staff works in Tŷ'r Ysgol at Ysgol y Moelwyn with only one pupil, as the rest are in Porthmadog).

Caernarfon and Bangor:

- Head of the Hub (deputy headteacher at Ysgol Tryfan)
 - 3 Senior Assistants in Bangor
 - 2 Senior Assistants in Caernarfon
-
- To move on effectively, consistency in practice would be beneficial.
 - It should be recognised, although they are not qualified as teachers, the support staff are completely committed to their work and have developed very positive and trusting relationships with the pupils.
 - The job description for Senior Assistants in Arfon hubs includes the following roles and responsibilities:
 - Plan, prepare and present elements of the core subjects, wider curriculum together with therapeutic curriculum for individuals or groups.
 - Monitor, assess, record and report on the successes of these elements.
 - Thoroughly record progress and achievement and provide evidence of the range and level of progress and attainment.
 - Assess, record and report on pupils' progress.
 - The above is more appropriate to a teacher's job description. In addition, the Moelwyn Hub leader works to the same job description as the Senior Assistants in Tryfan, although the full time deputy headteacher of the secondary school leads the Tryfan Hub.
 - We have not seen the job description for the Arfon hub head.
 - In the case of Ysgol y Moelwyn, a senior teacher at the school was involved in the development of the hub, however, by now involvement in the hub has reduced.

Recommendations

Appraisal of the roles required to run the hubs and review the job descriptions of existing staff to ensure that salaries and responsibilities are in keeping with each other.

Create an appropriate staffing structure for each of the hubs, including the possibility of a general manager for the county.

Professional development for hub staff

- There is a lack of consistency in the training received by staff at the centres
- All the staff who spoke stated that they had received Management of Actual or Potential Aggression training (MAPA).
- Staff in Caernarfon feel that they have received a great deal of training, but also benefit from being two former teachers.
- Staff in Bangor say that overall the training they have received has been targeted to staff dealing with primary age pupils.
- Although training such as ELSA is offered to all staff at the centres, not all staff members take advantage of the opportunity.
- Very recently, quality officers organised ALN training for hub staff, and it was acknowledged that many of the pupils in the centres had learning needs as well as SEBD needs.
- Some of the support staff in Bangor reported that they were expected to mark pupils' work, but they had not been trained to do this. They are not aware of significant aspects such as assessment for learning.
- Not all members of staff in the hubs have received the appropriate level of recent safeguarding training.
- Apart from the Arfon hub head, who has visited the referral units across the north, staff have very few opportunities to visit other settings to observe good practice.
- It is noted that the Arfon hub head has represented the Authority on the PRU regional working group.

Recommendations:

Authority officers should work with the Hubs/schools to establish a professional learning programme.

This should include mandatory training (such as safeguarding as required to correspond to the needs of staff and pupils. A training programme would be expected to include aspects of learning and teaching, ALN, behaviour management, safeguarding, supporting pupils with emotional needs.

Develop induction training for new staff.

Ensure that there is consistency in the training provided to staff across all the hubs.

Provide opportunities for the staff of every centre to visit other settings to observe good practice.

Strengthen links and networks with national behaviour groups and Pupil Referral Units.

The Locations

- None of the locations are ideal, as shown in the tables below.
- School headteachers say that it their responsibility to find appropriate accommodation.

Tŷ'r Ysgol at Ysgol y Moelwyn

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Plenty of rooms and a huge potential</p> <p>The proximity to the school means that pupils can attend mainstream lessons where appropriate and teachers can come over to teach more specialist subjects – and give advice on the curriculum</p> <p>Work can be displayed on the walls as the building is not usually used by others</p>	<p>The proximity to the school means that hub pupils can get into trouble with pupils in the school</p> <p>A cold, hard, unattractive location down the stairs. Pupils' work is on the walls upstairs. Need substantial investment to improve the building and to achieve the desired purposes.</p>

Porthmadog Football Club

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Classroom, kitchen and a good-sized office. A door to other areas is locked when others are in the building.</p> <p>A warm, attractive location.</p> <p>Pupils can use some of the sports facilities.</p> <p>A volunteer in the Football club is very supportive to hub staff and pupils.</p>	<p>Only one room for the pupils. Staff feel that it is too close to the town and that makes it easy for pupils to disappear.</p> <p>Pupils' work cannot be exhibited on the walls.</p> <p>The equipment must be put away at the end of every session</p>

Bangor – Capel Berea Newydd

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>A modern building with plenty of space, with rooms of various sizes, including a kitchen.</p> <p>Chapel members are supportive and very sensitive e.g. when a window was broken</p>	<p>No outdoor areas for learners.</p> <p>The building is used by members of the public - pupils do not like this. e.g. <i>there is</i> when there is a funeral, a session must be cancelled</p> <p>The children's work cannot be displayed on the walls.</p> <p>Pupils and staff feel a lack of ownership</p> <p>The equipment must be put away at the end of each session.</p>

Caernarfon - Football Club

Strengths	Weaknesses
A fairly purposeful location.	One classroom only, with hard acoustics. Work cannot be displayed on the walls. The equipment must be put away.

- Suitable risk assessments have been completed for some of the sites used, including Capel Berea and the provision off the site for the pupils of Moelwyn hub. However, it does not appear that there is a risk assessment for Tŷ'r Ysgol at y Moelwyn.
- There are examples of suitable risk assessments for individual pupils.
- Some risk assessments are more suitable for mainstream pupils and are not specific enough for the hub provision. For example, for the Arfon hubs there are two assessments called 'Use of the school's mini bus' and 'Challenging behaviour' These are not specific enough for the circumstances or the nature of the hubs.

Recommendations:

The LA should prioritise and urgently secure appropriate accommodation that provides a suitable learning environment that is safe for every pupil. This could entail expenditure on the existing sites to overcome some of the difficulties.

The LA and the school hubs should ensure that there are suitable risk assessments for all the buildings used, including the outdoor areas.

The LA and the school hubs should ensure that there are suitable risk assessments for all the relevant aspects of hub life, which are specific to the needs of the pupils in question.

How to refer pupils to the centres and to Llechen Lân

- The Local Authority has formulated clear guidelines on the steps to be taken prior to making a referral. These are based on what a school should do prior to referring a pupil, except for times of emergency, these are appropriate. These steps can be found in Appendix 3.
- Notwithstanding the above, several headteachers state that they do not know how to procure a place for a pupil in one of the hubs. Others say, when pupils are refused, the school does not receive an explanation why.
- Membership of the panel who make decisions on the placements in the centres include Local Authority officers and the Headteachers of Moelwyn and Tryfan, but does not include other Headteachers. Many Local Authorities include a wider range on their relevant panels e.g. every secondary Headteacher will be there on a rota, to ensure that they all understand the procedure. In many Local Authorities who do this, the headteachers say that panel attendance makes them realise how thorough applications are considered. In addition, they see the variance between schools in terms of what they provide before making a referral.

Recommendations:

Meet with schools to discuss the existing access criteria to ensure that everyone has an agreed understanding.

Invite the headteachers or secondary senior managers to sit on panels on a rota, so that they get a better understanding of the processes.

Quality assurance

- There is some ambiguity about the responsibilities of the authority and the responsibilities of the schools in terms of protecting quality and monitoring standards in the hubs. Thus far, significant responsibility has been given to schools in terms of monitoring teaching quality practices and the quality of the settings. Point 6.6 of the Memorandum of Understanding states "As this is a provision commission the authority will have clear responsibility for quality, consistency and the management of the provision, jointly with the provider schools". Clear action is required on point 6.6
- Commissioning an independent review is a positive step.
- A Management Board was established to supervise the work of the hubs. There are clear terms of reference for the Management Board, including the requirement to meet every quarter.

(with additional meetings if required). However, it has only met once in March 2023 and once in July 2023. There have been no meetings since July.

- Overall, Board membership is appropriate. However, it would be useful to include secondary Headteachers except for Moelwyn and Tryfan (possibly on a rota), to ensure that schools across Gwynedd take ownership of such an important aspect of provision.
- Minutes of the Management Board 16/3/23 reflect the information provided in the reports by the centre leaders. There is no evidence of challenge from the Board.

Concerns are noted but without any clear actions, or action timetable nor officers to take responsibility. As a result, it is difficult to see how the improvements will be made.

- Draft minutes for the July meeting were produced in December. The reason for this delay is unclear. They are in draft form only, without any record of who was present, on what date. The minutes are not detailed enough to show what was discussed or what steps are required. There is no evidence from these minutes that the minutes of the previous meeting have been agreed or any reference to them, as would be expected in management board meetings. The template does not make it easy to record the agreed actions or progress made against previous actions.
- The management board receives reports from the hubs. Although these provide some useful information, on the whole they are too positive, and they do not reflect concerns as those raised by Estyn or in this report.
- There are development plans that are relevant to the hubs, but they are inconsistent. In Arfon there is the Development Plan for the Arfon Inclusion Hubs. The plan does not note specifically enough what needs to be done by specific dates to ensure improvement. On the other hand, there is no specific development plan for the Moelwyn hub, however; very limited consideration is given to the hub in the school's development plan.
- The Arfon development plan has been RAG rated. Where actions are scored green, information should be recorded about exactly what has been done. When actions are rated amber or red, an analysis is required as to why these actions have not been completed.
- Since September 2023, the two County quality officers have been asked to support the hubs. This is a very positive step. However, their work has only just started. Sufficient time needs to be set aside for these members of staff to get to know the hubs well, understand their strengths and the areas for development as well as their ability to provide suitable input.
- The quality officers say that the two members of staff who manage the hubs welcome their contribution. They have noted that not many pupils have full-time provision; the current qualifications offered in the hubs are not suitable for every pupil; and many of the pupils an ALN as well as behavioural issues. In response to this, they have started to look at provision maps, discussed the qualifications of Agored Cymru and have established ALN training.

It would also be good for them to facilitate cross-departmental collaboration within the county.

Recommendations:

There is a need to review the purpose of the management board and formalise this in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding, ensuring that every member has a clear understanding of its purpose.

Ensure that reports to the management board highlight any concerns and that the board discusses these robustly, providing support and challenge.

Ensure that report templates are fully completed by the hubs.

Produce clear minutes which reflect the discussions that take place and the agreed actions.

Consideration should be given to inviting secondary headteachers (possibly on a rota basis) to attend Management Board meetings to promote ownership of inclusion services.

Create a full development plan for the hubs, which are separate to the schools' development plans, with obvious areas for improvement.

Make the roles and responsibilities of the hub schools and the LA clear in relation to the quality assurance of the centres.

Ensure that appropriate processes are in place, e.g., performance management/supervision, lesson observation, learning walks, scrutiny of pupils' work.

Develop systems for self-evaluation with quality officers to facilitate planning improvement which enables staff to note the areas for development and the strategies required to make the required improvements.

Collaboration between the Centres

- Although the two hub leaders meet or talk informally, thus far the contact between the two centres has been scarce, which means that there is not much sharing of good practice and benefiting from learning from each other.
- All in all, the two hub leaders were left to develop the hubs in their own way.
- The Memorandum of Understanding and the Terms of Reference for the Management Board describe an operational group that meets three times a term in the first year, and then to be reviewed in the subsequent years. There is no evidence that things have been happening as expected.

Recommendations:

The arrangements for the Operational Group need to be formalised

Quality Officers should work with the Hubs to establish methods to share good practice, co-planning and professional learning.

Partnership work

- There is a general feeling that the hub staff have been left to get on with matters with various support from partners.
- In Caernarfon, staff say that they have sought to engage with youth workers but have been told that there is insufficient capacity within the service to support them.
- The County has senior counsellor, with a team of 12. It appears that the involvement with the hubs is very scarce. The assistants say that they feel that they undertake the counsellor's role as well as teaching.
- There is little evidence that teams within the education directorate nor across the wider council work together to support the hubs.
- A number of those questioned referred to the fact that they felt that social workers should work with them more effectively to address the complex issues for young people. There are some more positive narratives, but generally it is mentioned that the high turnover of social worker staff makes collaboration more difficult.
- Although a very small number of hub pupils attend college courses, there is room to improve links with the college at a strategic level. However, very recently a very positive report about Coleg Menai engaging with a learner via the hub to support a clear progression path was very relevant for the young person.

Recommendation:

The local authority should take the opportunity to look at strengthening cohesion within the council and with other agencies (including Further Education) to support these pupils' education.

Other matters that became evident during the review

The review's main focus was to look at the hubs and support services at a strategic level. However, it would be beneficial for the Local Authority to consider the following matters, moving forward.

Safeguarding

- Conversations with pupils and information from the latest surveys for parents and pupils suggest that pupils feel safe in the hubs.
- Generally, the staff we spoke with knew what to do should the pupil make a disclosure or make an allegation against a member of staff. However, there are no safeguarding policies that are specific to the hubs and there is no information on the walls to show the identity of the Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) and their deputy (where relevant).
- In the case of an allegations being made against the DSP/Headteacher, it is unclear exactly who staff or pupils should go to. The fact that the hubs are not on school sites means that contact phone numbers should be clearly exhibited.
- When visiting Ysgol y Moelwyn, we signed in at the school and received lanyards. There was safeguarding information on the paper inserted in the lanyard and we were requested to read its contents.
- When visiting other sites, we were not asked to sign in and we did not receive lanyards or safeguarding information.
- During the visits, no one asked for information about our DBS, although on one site a meeting took place with pupils without any member of staff present N.B. Both of us had the appropriate DBS.
- There were glass panels in the doors of all the buildings we visited. However, in Tŷ'r Ysgol, Ysgol y Moelwyn, 1:1 work occurs without any other adult or pupil in the building. The centre leader stated that he had been told that this was acceptable because of the proximity of Tŷ'r Ysgol to the school itself.
This is an important matter that causes concern.
- When staff members were asked whether they had received safeguarding training, everyone did not understand what this meant. Some mentioned that they had received this training in a previous post, but not while in their current post.

- It is easy for pupils to escape from each of the sites - this aspect of safeguarding has not been covered adequately in risk assessments.

Recommendations:

Produce a specific/bespoke safeguarding policy for each of the centres and every setting used.

Ensure that all hub staff have received the appropriate level of safeguarding training.

Ensure that visitors are asked to sign in and wear a lanyard in every setting.

Ensure that information regarding the identity of the designated safeguarding person in every location is clearly displayed (although posters cannot be displayed in certain settings).

Produce risk assessments which include guidelines on what to do when a pupil escapes.

One-to-one working with a child should not be undertaken without another adult present who can witness the safety of the child and the member of staff.

Learning and Teaching

- Every pupil has an individual timetable tailored for their optional curriculum.
- There is considerable variation in the number of teaching and learning hours offered to the pupils. Some receive 25 hours a week but some receive as little as 8 hours.
- In one of the hubs, whole mornings were set aside for one subject e.g. numeracy or literacy. It would be good to see more variety throughout the day, with shorter sessions.
- The opportunities to follow the full curriculum is narrow (partly due to the nature of the sites) and pupils lose out considerably on aspects such as practical science and physical education.
- In most cases, the curriculum is provided by staff who do not have teaching qualifications. Consequently, there is a heavy reliance on workbooks. Although the content overall was suitable, only a few of the 27 pupils are motivated by sitting at a desk for extended periods.

- There is a lack of opportunities for the pupils to undertake very important elements such as practical subjects and physical education.
- Differentiation to satisfy the needs of individual learners does not always happen. For example, pupils of different abilities within a class all work from one workbook, regardless of their literacy or numeracy levels.
- Only very few pupils attend lessons in the school hub where this is possible. However, this happens less often than what was hoped. This is partly due to the fact that pupils find it difficult to reintegrate to the school environment. Moving to hubs off the site also makes this more difficult.
- The intention was that pupils from Ysgol Tryfan and Ysgol y Moelwyn attend the hubs to offer lessons where relevant. This has happened in some cases, but it is not consistent across the centres. Moving from Tŷ'r Ysgol on the Moelwyn site to a football club means that it is more difficult for school staff to give direct input to the hub.
- Although arrangements had been made with the Military College, the further education college, and some work experience, only a small number of pupils in the hubs are given these opportunities, and the time set aside for these is often comparatively short.

Recommendations:

Ensure that more teaching work is undertaken by qualified teachers.

Ensure that assistants are used appropriately.

Develop a wider and relevant curriculum, more practical, offering differentiation and a wider range of experiences.

Parents' Opinion

In a survey of parents conducted at the centres in Bangor and Caernarfon, parents praise their experience of the hubs. The reasons for this include:

- smaller groups

- relaxed environment
- how the staff treat the young people
- child more comfortable and happier
- flexible hours
- very supportive staff
- kindness and understanding of the child's personal situation and circumstances
- helping the child with anger issues
- less conflict between learners

In talks with parents during the review, one person noted that the hub had transformed the young person's attitude and had created a sense of hope for a better future. A foster parent noted that the child's needs were so profound, neither a mainstream school nor a hub such as this could satisfy the child's needs, and the provision would need to be fully reviewed very soon.

Every parent questioned did express that hub staff had made a very significant contribution to help to restore the young people's situation and had created a deep trust.

Pupils' opinions

In a survey of pupils conducted at the centres in Bangor and Caernarfon, pupils also talk positively about their experiences:

- more support
- suitable timetable
- flexible timetable
- one-to-one support
- smaller groups
- quieter
- less conflict and patient staff
- less pressure to undertake work
- staff make life easier
- staff more pleasant to me
- no other children bother me
- they have not been excluded
- like cooking and going to the college
- like to do half-days
- come in at 10am because I have trouble waking up
- not too many subjects all at once

A group of pupils we talked with at the Bangor hub talked sensibly and maturely about their experiences. Each individual was keen for us to know that they felt that they were different people to those who were admitted to the centre at the start and they had matured significantly in a short term.

Appendix 1 - The Brief

Gwynedd Brief – Inclusion Provision

- Evaluate the Impact of the Hub provision (Provision for learners who are experiencing behaviour/emotional and social difficulties) within Gwynedd
- Evaluate the wider Inclusion provision map of the Secondary Schools in Gwynedd
- Evaluate the central service provision for Inclusion
- These will be part of the LAs response to the recent Estyn report

1. BACKGROUND

Aim of the study:

During January/February 2020, Mrs Caroline Rees was commissioned to carry out a review of the Gwynedd/ Môn Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Inclusion Strategy. The review took place over a period of 4 weeks.

A comprehensive report was provided outlining actions for further development and as a result one of the areas identified was the need to develop provision for behaviour in year 9 and key stage 4, including an improved model for Pecyn 25 (which was the alternative provision for learners who were not able to succeed within mainstream Education).

Following from this work, the Inclusion Service as a whole was reorganised to change the Inclusion provision. This included:

- Re-modelling the staffing structure of the Inclusion Service to include additional outreach support and 1 Specialist Resource Base (Llechen Lân)
- Commissioning two Secondary Schools to provide Hubs for young people in year 9-11 with significant emotional, behaviour and social needs, with a focus within the Hubs of providing:
 - Pupils to access a wider range of subjects
 - Pupils being taught by qualified teachers

The aim of the revised /new provision was to:

- Improve the continuum of provision offered to CaYP with social, emotional and or behaviour difficulties.
- Provide an appropriate educational provision for learners with social, emotional and/or behaviour difficulties.
- Reduce the number of exclusions especially permanent exclusions
- Reduce the number of children /Young People becoming known to Children's Services or becoming 'NEET'.

Management and Quality of delivery

- The ALN and Inclusion Management Board has strategic oversight over services provided centrally.
- The Hub Management Board has the strategic oversight over the commission for providing the Hubs. This Board meets every school term. The Management Board reports to the LA Quality Board.
 - The Hub Inclusion team meets every half term where the operational side is discussed.
 - Gwynedd Secondary Schools receive an annual Inclusion allocation in order to meet the needs of pupils. This is in addition to the ALN funding.

2. THE COMMISSION

1. To evaluate the use of Inclusion Funding by the LA's Secondary Schools, and its impact on inclusion (e.g. exclusions) and use of higher level services (e.g. referrals to other services), and recommendations for further development.
2. To evaluate the range of inclusion services provided by the ALN and Inclusion Service centrally, and provide recommendations in terms of further development.
3. To summarise the current Hub provision and the investment to date, and make recommendations for further development.
4. To evaluate how effectively the local authority assesses the benefits of the provision including outcomes for the:
 - Learners
 - The public sector (including the schools, the Education Authority, Children's services.)

The local community and society as a whole

- and make recommendations for improvements.

Approach

- Face to face visits (e.g. Hubs, Llechen Lân)
- Interviews with providers and stakeholders
- Exploring Year 11 destinations of pupils in the Hubs
- Evaluating referral processes
- Evaluating the curriculum offer
- Evaluating monitoring and quality assurance processes.

Appendix 2 - Paragraphs from the Estyn report

How effectively does the authority meet the needs of learners with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD)? Over time, the strategic and operational processes of Gwynedd education services to respond to the needs of pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties have improved significantly. The vision of leaders to strengthen provision for these vulnerable pupils is now clear and suitable. Senior managers have re-organised the additional learning needs (ALN) and inclusion service appropriately. They have identified the need to provide more specifically for supporting vulnerable pupils and to identify relevant managers to lead different aspects of the service. This includes appointing an inclusion manager and increasing the role of ALN quality officers to support pupils with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. The authority has also increased capacity within the outreach behaviour support service to support mainstream schools with pupils from reception age up to Year 11. These changes contribute well to ensuring that the number of pupils who are in education other than at school (EOTAS) is low. The authority has a range of purposeful procedures to plan provision and review the progress of pupils with ALN. These include the ALN and inclusion panel, the profound panel, the review panel and the ALN and inclusion moderation forum. On the whole, the purpose and remit of many of these procedures, together with the access to services protocol, are clear to schools. However, the steps that should be followed at school or the interventions that should be put in place before applying for a pupil to access the behaviour support hubs are not as clear. Valuable information about pupils with ALN across the county is freely available to relevant stakeholders through a dedicated digital platform. This enables schools, experts, parents and pupils to play an active role in planning provision, monitoring and reporting on progress. The ALN and inclusion service provides appropriate professional development opportunities for teachers and learning assistants to support them to provide beneficial interventions for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. This includes training on attachment and the effect of trauma on children and young people. A range of relevant resources and intervention programmes are provided for schools to support the well-being of pupils across the age range. For example, the education psychology service has prepared valuable resources, such as beneficial mindfulness resources, to try to have a positive influence on pupils' well-being. The authority has also invested significantly to ensure that Welsh-medium resources are available to schools, and this is a strong feature.

The authority's 'managed moves' protocol and arrangements are appropriate and lead to positive outcomes for pupils in a majority of cases. Arrangements for supporting pupils with serious medical needs are strong. Suitable support is provided for most pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs within mainstream schools. The local authority provides specific support to meet the social, emotional and behavioural needs of a few pupils in four alternative settings. The status of these settings is unclear as they are not registered as pupil referral units, although that is how they operate. The 'Llechen Lân' Centre in Penygroes is a short-term education setting for pupils in Years 5-8. Provision at Llechen Lân is purposeful and support for pupils when they return to their schools is very effective. This is because the specialist staff there share their expertise successfully with staff in the mainstream schools to strengthen their ability to support pupils with behavioural difficulties. As a result, pupils who have attended this resource re-engage successfully in their mother school in most cases. Since September 2021, the authority has improved its provision for older pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties by commissioning two secondary schools to run hubs in three areas across Gwynedd. There are now three alternative education hubs for Year 9-11 pupils in Bangor, Caernarfon and Blaenau Ffestiniog. Overall, pupils who attend the hubs are happy and engage positively with their learning. Staff at the hubs take pride in their work and in the provision offered. They commit themselves to the responsibilities with great purpose and goodwill to provide pupils with positive learning experiences. They foster a positive and supportive relationship with pupils and their parents and this is an excellent feature. They work creatively to try to provide curricular experiences that are of interest to pupils and work purposefully with a wide range of relevant external agencies. This includes Careers Wales officers, youth workers, school nurses and police officers to support pupils and plan carefully for the next steps in their life. Suitable provision is offered, under the guidance of the subject teachers at the commissioning schools, for pupils to continue with their examination courses in Welsh, English, mathematics and some elements of science and a few other subjects or areas. Nearly all pupils in Year 11 sit a GCSE or other suitable qualification in the core subjects and a very few other subjects.

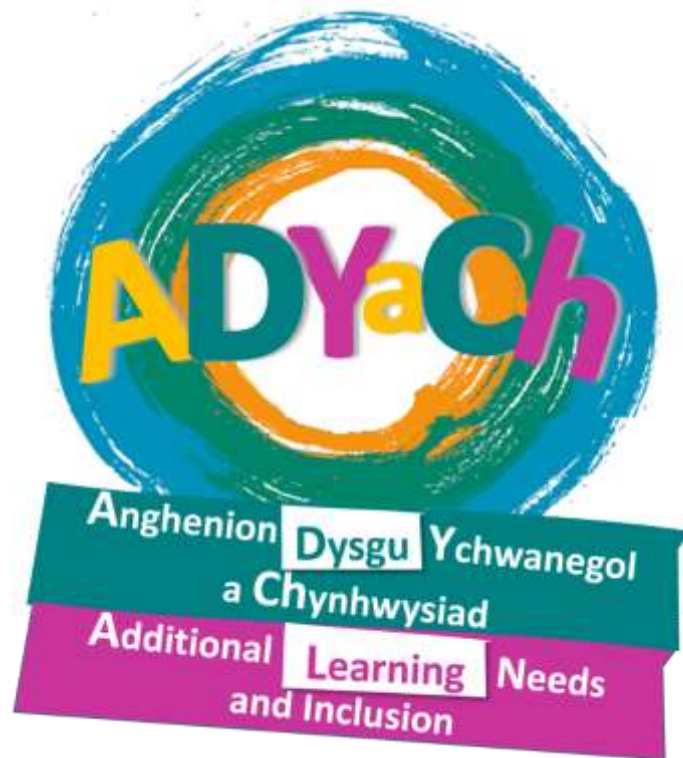
The social, emotional and behavioural needs of pupils who attend the individual hubs vary. As a result, tailoring provision to meet the specific needs of individual pupils within these hubs is challenging. Staff strive to create an appropriate supportive environment for learning and to support pupils to thrive emotionally at the hubs. However, there is too much variation in the suitability of the accommodation and the range of learning resources in the hubs to provide specialist education that supports the well-being and behaviour of vulnerable pupils. Although a range of relevant officers are part of the initial arrangements for placing pupils in the hubs, there is insufficient contact between them and the hub managers to support their work and provide them with the necessary guidance. This includes inconsistency in monitoring, quality assurance and risk assessment arrangements. As a result, senior officers in Gwynedd education services do not have a strategic overview of the outcomes or the nature or quality of provision at the hubs.

Appendix 3 - The Referral System to Canolfan Llechen Lân and Educational Hubs

- 1) The School identifies the individual
- 2) Whole-school intervention:
 - Internal Behaviour Support Procedures
 - Targeting individuals/groups by the School
 - School / Authority IDP
 - Boxall
 - Pastoral Plan
- 3) Considerations prior to deciding to refer:
 - What has already been offered?
 - Who has been supporting?
 - What are the difficulties?
 - Is a Centre/Hub the most beneficial location for the individual?
 - What can the Centre/Hub do differently to what has been offered already?
- 4) THE SCHOOL IDENTIFIES THE NEED FOR AN ALTERNATIVE LOCATION
- 5) A discussion with the Welfare Officer and the Inclusion Manager to agree on:
 - the application's suitability
 - to inform the parent
- 6) Review or adapt the child's Individual Development Plan (IDP)
- 7) Refer the IDP for the attention of the Moderation Panel
- 8) Moderation Panel assessing and discussing individual applications.
- 9) DECISION:
 - to approve
 - to refuse stating the reasons
- 10) Inclusion Manager to inform the schools of the decision
- 11) Llechen Lân/ Education Hub to create an individual provision map
- 12) Formal review of the child's provision every half term
- 13) Report on progress to be presented to the School
- 14) Monitor the entire provision.

Gwynedd and Anglesey

Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Principles Document



January 2024



CYNGOR SIR
YNYS MON
ISLE OF ANGLESEY
COUNTY COUNCIL



Introduction

The Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales states how local authorities in consultation with schools and others, should establish and publish, a set of principles they will apply when determining whether it is reasonable for a school to secure the Additional Learning Provision (ALP) required by a pupil or whether the authority ought to do so.

Section 12.44 of the ALN Code states

Principles should relate to:

- (a) the extent and duration of advice from external specialists that is likely to be unreasonable for a school to secure;
- (b) the equipment that is likely to be unreasonable for a school to provide;
- (c) the intensity and duration of support and scale of internal engagement of staff (including the ALNCo) at the school that is likely to be unreasonable for a school to provide.

This document describes the principles which Gwynedd and Anglesey local authorities and schools will apply when deciding about appropriate ALP to support children and young people with additional learning needs.

Legislative context : Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018

In Wales, children and young people with Additional Learning Needs requiring Additional Learning Provision, have an **Individual Development Plan (IDP)**.

The ALN legislative framework in Wales is created by the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 (the ALN Act), the Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021 (the ALN Code) and regulations made under the Act.

Legislation to create a new approach to supporting learners with additional learning needs (ALN) was passed on 24 January 2018 - that is the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Act (Wales) 2018.

The principles underpinning the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) system in Wales are:

- children, their parents and young people's views, wishes and feelings are listened to when decisions are being made about how to help children and young people
- the right support is put in place quickly to help children and young people with ALN
- everyone works together to help children and young people with ALN, including education and health services
- most children and young people with ALN can go to their local nursery, school, or college, if it is right for them
- children, and their parents, can access learning support even before they start school or nursery
- children, their parents and young people understand the additional learning provision being offered
- children and young people with ALN get help in Welsh, wherever possible, if they need it
- central to the planning and provision of support from local authorities, schools, and colleges will be the application of a person-centred approach

Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Strategy: Gwynedd and Anglesey

Gwynedd Council and Isle of Anglesey Council collaborate on an overall ALN and Inclusion Strategy for both LEAs.

The **Integrated Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Service** has been operational from September 2017.

The aim of our Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Strategy is:

‘To ensure that children and young people who have additional learning needs take advantage of opportunities and gain experiences that are planned effectively for them, in order to allow them to make progress according to their ability.’

Whole school approach to inclusive education

Inclusive education where children and young people are supported to participate fully in mainstream education, wherever feasible, and where a whole setting approach is taken to meeting the needs of learners with ALN, is one of the principles of the ALN system. That is, most children and young people with ALN can go to their local nursery, school, or college, if it is right for them

There should be an inclusive ethos at whole school level. Providing for children and young people with additional learning needs is a priority for the whole school community of all schools in Gwynedd and Anglesey. Meeting the additional learning needs of pupils is not solely the responsibility of the ALN co-ordinator, teaching assistants and senior management team; the whole school community plans and provides appropriately for them.

Graduated response

A graduated response is required as stated in section 20.23 of the ALN Code:

Schools and local authorities should adopt a graduated response in relation to children and young people with ALN, making use of a wide range of strategies. This means that the ALP made should be at the lowest level necessary to meet the child or young person's identified needs. In particular, schools should make full use of their available resources before, where necessary, bringing specialist expertise to bear on the difficulties that a child or young person may be experiencing.

See *Provision Map Gwynedd and Anglesey*. The provision map is arranged according to a graduated response approach:

- Universal Provision
- Targeted Universal Provision
- Additional Learning Provision (ALP) – If Additional Learning Provision is required, an Individual Development Plan (IDP) must be in place
 - o Individual Development Plan (School IDP)
 - o Individual Development Plan (School IDP) School Input + Forum Input
 - o Individual Development Plan (Authority IDP)

Access to support for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) – Gwynedd and Anglesey

Gwynedd and Anglesey have a skilled Integrated Team which includes specific teams of expertise in fields in additional learning needs and inclusion. These teams advise and support schools and ensure consistency in providing individuals with appropriate interventions and support.



Gwynedd and Anglesey Integrated Team
ALN and Inclusion specialist teams

Universal Provision

It is a clear responsibility within the ALN Code – and also with regard to the Equality Act – that every school must provide effective differentiated teaching. Effective differentiated teaching for ALL PUPILS is an integral part of any good teaching and learning. Universal Provision is the general strategies and interventions that have been identified as good classroom practice to enhance learning experiences.

Targeted Universal Provision

The school identifies needs and provides provisions; this can be through specific evidence-based strategies or interventions (for example, target groups) within a school to respond to specific areas. If there is a specific strategy or intervention, clear entry and exit criteria are required. All schools are expected to deliver targeted provisions, and this is stated in section 20.14 of the ALN Code: Where progress is not adequate, it will be necessary to take some additional or different action to enable the learner to learn more effectively. The first response to inadequate progress would often be teaching targeted specifically at a learner's areas of weakness. **All education settings are expected to put in place differentiated teaching or other targeted interventions designed to secure better progress where appropriate, for all learners.**

Such differentiated teaching does not, itself, constitute ALP and just because a child or young person requires a differentiated approach does not mean that they have ALN. **ALP encompasses additional or different educational or training provision, which goes beyond that generally made available.**

Individual Development Plan (School IDP)

School secures the Additional Learning Provision (ALP)

ALP encompasses additional or different educational or training provision, which goes beyond that generally made available.

Individual Development Plan (Authority IDP)

Local Authority secures the Additional Learning Provision (ALP)

ALP encompasses additional or different educational or training provision, which goes beyond that generally made available.

The circumstances of the school (i.e. its location, size, budget, experience etc.) could affect the school's view on whether it would be reasonable for it to secure the ALP. For example, any of the following circumstances might affect that view:

- (a) the child has a low incidence or rare condition which requires specialism that the school cannot provide;
- (b) to meet the child's needs, the school requires regular advice and support from external agencies which is over and above that which can be reasonably arranged and accessed by the school;
- (c) the child requires equipment which can only be used by one pupil or cannot be reused or is beyond the reasonable resources of the school;
- (d) the child requires very intensive daily support which cannot be reasonably funded or secured by the school's budget.

Children and young people in specific circumstances

Gwynedd and Anglesey local authorities will prepare and maintain IDPs for children and young people with ALN who are

- looked after (where Gwynedd or Anglesey is the responsible authority)
- dual registered
- receive Elective Home Education
- attend an Independent School

Keeping ALN under review

The ALN system in Wales requires local authorities to review the ALP available and other arrangements to support the identification of ALN and to meet the needs of pupils with ALN. This document describes Gwynedd and Anglesey's principles regarding children and young people with ALN. This document offers an explanation to schools when it is reasonable for a school to secure the ALP required by a pupil or whether the authority ought to do so.

Contact details

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Appendix

ALN and Inclusion Specialist Teams Criteria

- criteria for input from the ALN and Inclusion Specialist Teams

- Visual Impairment Team
- Hearing Impairment Team
- Physical Medical Team
- Specific ALN Team
- Communication and Interaction Team
- ABC – Early Years Team
- Inclusion Team

Visual Impairment Team Input

Medical information :-

School Input?	<u>Evidence</u>
Information about Vision Impairment in the IDP/Profile Vision Impairment Outcome and targets are a priority in the IDP	
Access to appropriate and regular input at school (e.g. resources have been modified appropriately, 1:1 work on the IDP targets)	
Has the school previously received input from the team? Are previous strategies recommended by the Service suitable for the pupil in question? Is there evidence of this in the IDP?	
Have school staff members attended the OLT training?	
Effective use of designated hours by the Authority – number of hours:	

Further comments:-

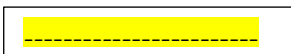
Vision Information non-clinical BEO:

Distance Vision:

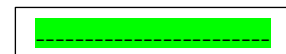
Near Vision:

Vision - General

Today -



Targets to be implemented-



	E	Dd	D	Ch	C	B	A
Access to work – long term programme	The pupil is dependent on staff members to prepare relevant work which has been modified for the pupil	The pupil is dependent on staff members to prepare relevant work which has been modified to the correct print size	Is able to work on a modified task, with support	Is able to work independently on some modified tasks	Is able to work independently on most of the modified tasks	Is able to access some aspects of the work independently	Is able to access work independently
	The pupil is dependent on staff members to be responsible for preparing/presenting specific resources for the pupil	The pupil is dependent on staff members to remind the pupil/ encourage the pupil to locate/ return the specific equipment.	Dependent on staff members to prepare/switch the specific resources on for the pupil.	The pupil switches on the specific resources with guidance.	The pupil switches on the specific resources independently.	The pupil ensures he/she has located/returned the specific resources independently.	The pupil ensures he/she has located/returned the specific resources independently. The pupil ensures the resources are ready to be used. Does not need access to specific resources/equipment
	Not yet started using print. Receives printed reading books which have been modified to the correct print size (on paper)	The pupil is dependent on staff members to ensure that modified printed reading books for him/her/ RNIB Bookshare is used to ensure he/she has access to reading books in the correct print size	Receives support from staff members to ensure the reading books (paper) have been modified/ RNIB Bookshare is used to ensure he/she has access to reading books in the correct print size	Uses RNIB Bookshare with guidance to choose reading books/ work books.	Uses RNIB Bookshare with support to choose reading books/ work books.	Uses RNIB Bookshare independently to choose reading books/ work books.	Uses RNIB Bookshare independently to choose reading books/ work books, to download them, and to save them. Does not need Access to modified print
Self-advocacy	Dependent on staff members to recognise if modification/ specific resources/ specific location is needed	Dependent on staff members to advocate - if modification/ specific resources/ specific location is needed	Beginning to develop self-advocacy skills– has developed confidence to ask for specific modification/resources/ location if needed in some situations	Self-advocacy skills are developing – can ask for specific modification/ resources/ location if needed in some lessons/with some members of staff	Displaying good self-advocacy skills – asks for specific modification/ resources/ location when needed	Displaying strong self-advocacy skills – confidently asks for specific modification/ resources/ location when needed	Does not need modified work/ specific resources/ location in class

Further comments :-

Typing

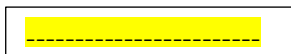
Today -

Targets to be implemented-

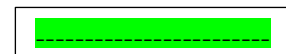
	E	Dd	D	Ch	C	B	A
Access to work – long term programme Based on Typing Club	Long term programme (touch typing) has been introduced	Long term programme (touch typing) has been introduced	Long term programme (touch typing) has been introduced	Long term programme (touch typing) has been introduced	Long term programme (touch typing) has been introduced	Long term programme (touch typing) has been introduced	A long/short term programme is not needed
	Is able to position and use correctly: f, j, k, d	Is able to position and use correctly: s, l, a, ;	Is able to position and use correctly: r, u, e, i, w o, g, y, p, a, t	Is able to position and use correctly: v, m, c and coma x full stop, z a /	Is able to position and use correctly the Numbers from 1-10. Is able to position and use correctly all the letters.	Use touch typing correctly in order to record class work.	A long/short term programme is not needed
	Typing accuracy 0-50%	Typing accuracy 51-69%	Typing accuracy 70-80%	Typing accuracy 81-94%	Typing accuracy 95-99%	Typing accuracy 100%	A long/short term programme is not needed
	Typing Speed 1-5 wpm	Typing Speed 6-10 wpm	Typing Speed 11-15 wpm	Typing Speed 16-19 wpm	Typing Speed 20-24 wpm	Typing Speed 25 – 30 +wpm	A long/short term programme is not needed
	Typing shortcuts 0-20%	Typing shortcuts 21-40%	Typing shortcuts 41-60%	Typing shortcuts 61-80%	Typing shortcuts 81-100%	Use shortcuts consistently and accurately	A long/short term programme is not needed
Further comments :-							

Pre-Braille

Today -



Targets to be implemented

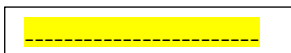


	E	Dd	D	Ch	C	B	A
Access to work – Pre-Braille long term programme	Long term programme (pre-braille) has been introduced	Long term programme (pre- braille) has been introduced	Long term programme (pre-braille) has been introduced	Long term programme (pre-braille) has been introduced	Long term programme (pre-braille) has been introduced	Long term programme (pre-braille) has been introduced	A long/short term programme is not needed
Sensory/ Motor Development	Can recognise everyday 3D objects	Can match everyday objects	Can sort according to size- large/small Can sort according to shape Can sort according to location Can sort according to relation	Stacking activities – Can sort 3 -5 blocks Can sort 3-5 beakers	Can place beads on a nail Can place beads on a chord/ elastic Can place beads on a thin string	Can create a line of pegs on a pegboard Can handle/manage play doh Can pinch a clothes peg to the side of a tin/ in a bag Can screw/ unscrew tops	Ready/ happy to open hands Hands are open Hands are happy to investigate Hands are happy to touch pictures/objects Hands investigate pictures/objects Can recognise individual fingers on each hand
Tactile Perception	Arranging textiles: Able to match and differentiate between hair and plastic Light and detailed touch of the fingers: Can move light tickets Matching 4 objects – through touch Distribute/classify Can classify to a sorting tray by touching four 2D objects / touching four 3D objects	Arranging textiles: Able to match and differentiate between visual cards Light and detailed touch of the fingers: Can feel fine objects/materials with the fingers Matching 3 objects – through touch Classify Can classify to a sorting tray by touching three 2D objects/ three 3D objects	Arranging textiles: Able to match and differentiate between cylinders and similar textures Light and detailed touch of the fingers: Can understand how light you can touch the braille paper Matching 2 objects – through touch Classify Can classify to a sorting tray by touching two 2D objects/ two 3D objects	Arranging textiles: Able to match and differentiate by using textured puzzles correctly Light and detailed touch of the fingers: Can take paper clips out of a small pot Able to identify left and right			

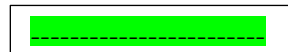
<p>Auditory differentiation (Starting Braille Reading)</p> <p>Linguistic/conceptual development (Start Reading Braille)</p>	<p>Following a line from left to right: Able to follow a line from left to right</p>	<p>Following a line from left to right: Able to 'go back' to a new line (use the scissor method/touch)</p>	<p>Following a line from left to right: Able to follow a line of braille dots</p> <p>Hand placement: Correct Posture Sits correctly</p>	<p>Following a line from left to right: Able to follow a piece of string, across Happy to follow a wire/string from right to left Is able to discover a space in a line of full cells</p> <p>Hand placement: Curling of fingers.</p>			
		<p>Using braille dots: Is able to recognise one dot pattern that is different to the other dot patterns</p>	<p>Using braille dots: Is able to move from left to right</p>	<p>Using braille dots: Is able to match</p>			
	<p>Is able to recognise and respond to familiar sounds. Is able to recognise and respond to the direction of the sound.</p>	<p>Is able to imitate and repeat sounds</p>	<p>Is able to repeat simple phrases. Shows understanding (appropriate response)</p>	<p>Is able to repeat rhymes sung. Is able to attend for up to 3 minutes.</p>	<p>Is able to respond to/differentiate between sounds. Can copy claps/ simple rhymes</p>	<p>Is able to follow a sequence of directions Can reiterate a simple story</p>	<p>Is able to recognise consonant sounds at the beginning of simple words. Is able to exchange sounds in simple words</p>
	<p>Similarities/ Differences: e.g. Matching spoons and forks Clothes Parts of the body Doors plants</p>	<p>Small/medium/large: e.g. A set of toys Saucepans and pans Crocery Clothes Shoes Toys</p>	<p>Large/ small: e.g. People Clothes Toys Chairs Sizes of food</p> <p>Shapes: e.g. Circles- glasses, cups, bowls Squares- Windows, cushions, carton bottoms Triangles – carton tops, dolls house roofs Rectangles- doors, Windows, toys</p>	<p>In/ Out: e.g. Boxes Set of toys Spoons in a pot Climbing into a car Out of the house In the garden Foot in the shoe</p> <p>Up/ down: e.g. Stairs Up on the shelf Walking downstairs</p>	<p>Top/ bottom: e.g. Clothes Drawers Shelves Doors</p> <p>On top/ under: e.g. Over a puddle of water Under the trees Toys Physical Education resources</p>	<p>Fat/ Thin: e.g. Materials in clothes Sausages Crayons/ pencils/ books</p> <p>Wide/ narrow: e.g. Hallway Ribbons Sleeve holes/ necklines in clothes mugs</p>	<p>Time sequence and respbite: First, last, middle Days of the week e.g. Wait on a walk Races with toys</p>
Further comments :-							

Braille

Today -



Targets to be implemented-



	E	Dd	D	Ch	C	B	A
Access to work – Braille long term programme	Long term programme (braille) has been introduced	Long term programme (braille) has been introduced	Long term programme (braille) has been introduced	Long term programme (braille) has been introduced	Long term programme (braille) has been introduced	Long term programme (braille) has been introduced	Long term programme (braille) has been introduced
	Has completed pre-braille requirements	Recognise 'page back' on the Perkins	Familiarise with 6 letters Welsh Alphabet -Reading -Writing	Familiarise with 4 last letters -Reading -Creating	-Recognise OF/OW -Reading -Creating	-ST/AR/IN/EN operational whilst recording	Use the Braille Code relevant to the need Grade 1 Grade ½ Grade 2
	Fingers correct on the Perkins	Familiarise with 6 letters Welsh Alphabet -Reading -Creating	Learn and remember the rest of the AEUS	Start using the Perkins to record in class -Recognise exclamation mark -Reading -Creating	-Recognise the dot 5 words P – Y -Reading -Creating	Recognise first letter combinations with dot 4-5-6	Welsh Mathematics French Science Music
	Load paper	Recognise the capital letter sign -Reading -Creating	Recognise full stop -Reading -Creating	Recognise Question Mark -Reading -Creating	-Recognise speech marks -Reading -Creating	-Reading -Creating	
	Recognise 'page up'	Recognise the number sign -Reading -Creating	Recognise numbers 1-10 -Reading -Creating	Recognise 'to bach' -Reading -Creating	-Recognise last strong group signs ST -Reading -Creating	-Recognise last letter group signs -Reading -Creating	
	Familiarise with 5 Welsh Braille letters -Reading -Creating	Learn and remember 6 Welsh AEUS		Recognise strong word sign ED/ER -Reading -Creating	AR -Reading -Creating	-Understand the meaning of short word forms	
	Learn and remember 5 Welsh AEUS			Recognise dot 5 words CH-O -Reading -Creating	Recognise lower group signs EN -Reading -Creating	-Interpret short word forms whilst reading	
					IN -Reading -Creating	-Using relevant short word forms in pieces of work	

Further comments :-

Wider impact of the difficulty	
The pupil is making progress in terms of outcomes/ curriculum levels.	
The pupil has developed adequate skills in order to complete differentiated tasks appropriately and independently most of the time.	
The level of the need has decreased and as a result effect less on the access to the educational opportunities provided.	

Further points to consider	
The lack of progress over a specific time period (year) following the targets and the specialist input of the Visual Impairment Team suggests the need to re-consider our understanding of the main needs of the pupil. It is not appropriate to continue with the provision given by the Visual Impairment Team. Re- submit the case to the Forum/ School to discuss with the Educational Psychologist in a Planning Meeting.	
Another diagnosis/ different understanding of the main primary needs of the pupil has been submitted, and continuing with the provision offered by the Visual Impairment Service is not appropriate. School to discuss with the Educational Psychologist in a Planning Meeting.	
The pupil has expressed regular discontent to receive input from the Visual Impairment Service.	
The school has up-skilled adequately to be able to satisfy the additional needs of the pupil without further guidance. It will be possible to ask for advice from the Visual Impairment Service in future, if needed. However the functional vision monitoring visits will continue.	

Hearing Impairment Team Input

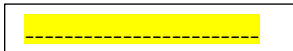
Input from the school	Evidence
Hearing Impairment Outcome and targets are a priority in the IDP	
Access to appropriate and regular input in the school (e.g. resources have been modified appropriately, 1:1 work on the IDP targets)	
Has the school previously received input from the team? Are previous strategies recommended by the Service suitable for the pupil in question? Is there evidence of this in the IDP?	
Have school staff members attended the OLT training?	
Effective use of designated hours by the Authority – number of hours:	

Further Information:-

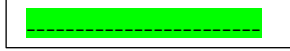
	E	Dd	D	Ch	C	B	A
Degree of Hearing impairment	Profound hearing loss in both ears. Uses BSL as a main form of communication 95+dBHL	Severe/Profound hearing loss in both ears. 80-95+Dbhl	Severe hearing loss in both ears. Moderate hearing loss with conductive overlay. 71-95dBHL	Moderate hearing loss in both ears or long term moderate conductive hearing loss. 41-70dBHL	Moderate hearing loss in both ears or long term moderate conductive hearing loss. 41-70dBHL	Unilateral hearing loss or fluctuating conductive hearing loss.	No Hearing loss. Under 20dBHL

USE OF EQUIPMENT

Today -



Targets to implement-



	E	Dd	D	Ch	C	B	A
Being able to use equipment to access school work	<p>Refusing to wear equipment that has been recommended by health/education (e.g. a hearing aid)</p> <p>Constantly removing the hearing aid</p>	<p>Understand how the aids help and use them with encouragement.</p> <p>Age appropriate removal/placement of equipment</p> <p>Happy to ask for help in dealing with aids</p> <p>Take part in the daily Maintenance (according to age) with the help of an adult</p>	<p>Receive and use aids regularly - in accordance with adult recommendations</p> <p>Notify when equipment is not working. Know why a battery change is necessary.</p> <p>Developing independence when maintaining equipment</p> <p>Change batteries appropriately for age. Aware of battery disposal needs.</p>	<p>Be able to explain why equipment is not needed in certain situations</p> <p>Use the 'volume' button correctly.</p> <p>Start Naming and understanding the function of Main pieces of equipment correctly</p> <p>Independent in maintenance.</p>	<p>Use equipment programmes – P1 P2 Loop etc</p> <p>Self-sufficient in equipment maintenance and monitoring</p> <p>Be able to initiate problem checking sensibly.</p> <p>Understand the benefit that equipment offers in various situations</p> <p>Understanding hearing aids from other individuals CI , BAHA etc</p>	<p>Can change tube etc</p> <p>Check problems sensibly</p> <p>.</p>	<p>Be able to describe how equipment works.</p> <p>Understand various equipment options - in various situations e.g.. Loop , OA</p> <p>Gallu defnyddio offer clyw ar y cyd a OA yn hyderus</p> <p>Able to use hearing aids and OA jointly confidently</p> <p>Discuss confidently in an audiology appointment. Share feedback sensibly.</p>
Specialist equipment – FM, soundfield etc				<p>Understand that specialist tools can be used to support listening</p>	<p>Use OA with confidence and support</p> <p>Developing independence in using OA.</p> <p>Identify situations when OA can help and use the equipment</p>	<p>Explain how OA works</p> <p>Understand the implications of not using equipment.</p> <p>Confident and independent when handling equipment.</p> <p>Being able to connect a piece of equipment to classroom technology etc</p> <p>Start using apps / accessibility settings</p>	<p>Fully independent with equipment</p> <p>Understand various equipment options - and the benefit in specific situations</p> <p>Aware of the latest tools and their benefits.</p> <p>Use accessibility apps/settings effectively</p>
Self awareness and negation skills	<p>Dim yn derbyn fy nghollol clyw</p> <p>Anfodlon gwneud unrhyw addasiadau i gefnogi gwrando.</p>	<p>Aware that I have a hearing loss.</p> <p>Happy to show my hearing aid / hearing loss to a friend.</p>	<p>Aware of different levels of hearing loss Know the specific level / impact of my hearing loss</p>	<p>Be able to name the main parts of the ear.</p> <p>Being able to tell someone close that I have a hearing loss and</p>	<p>Be able to name the main parts of the ear and their function</p> <p>Being able to tell a stranger that I have a hearing loss.</p>	<p>Be able to understand a simple audiogram.</p> <p>Being able to explain my hearing loss - and explain strategies to support me</p>	<p>Being able to understand an audiogram in terms of 'language sounds' access</p> <p>Be able to explain different types of hearing loss with the specific effect of this.</p>

	Not accepting my hearing loss Unwilling to make any adjustments to support listening.	With support to follow simple strategies to support my listening	Understand where is the best position to sit in order to listen. Aware of how an environment can be a barrier to listening	how to help make listening easier for me. Understand why I haven't heard / understood Understand the impact of barriers to my listening	Identify barriers and offer ideas on how they could help make listening easier for me.	or ask for adjustments.	Confident to explain the nature of my hearing loss and the impact of this in my daily life. Being able to identify and explain barriers to my communication with confidence.
Futher comments :-							

COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

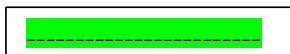
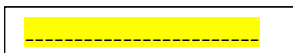
Today -

Targets to implement-

	E	Dd	D	Ch	C	B	A
Communication	Able to express needs using individual sounds or words.	Being able to express needs using 2 words or signs together,	Able to express needs using clauses/ simple sentences. Able to follow simple instructions.	Able to give and follow instructions within a 1:1, small group and social level.	Start using varied sentences.	Able to use a variety of sentences to communicate. Able to respond to instructions in a variety of situations.	Able to respond and talk about events, and manages to reason when responding to a question. Use language for a variety of social purposes.

	E	Dd	D	Ch	C	B	A
Language Development	Start responding to simple questions like Where is...? What is...? Respond by looking at, pointing/signing or using a word.	Respond firmly to the questions What? and Where? Understand linguistic concepts such as size and colour.	Starting to respond to the question Who? is appropriate. Beginning to be able to sort and categorize simple objects eg toys.	Be able to tell a simple story or event. Be able to arrange pictures in a sequence.	Able to predict. Being able to summarize a story in 1 sentence.	Be able to organize a story using purposeful language such as... First, then, finally with help.	Being able to organize a story independently and reason why things don't happen.

	Respond to 1 step instruction - e.g Go get the ball.	<p>Begin to understand how objects are different.</p> <p>Begin to express using two words/2 signs. e.g. a sleeping teddy bear.</p> <p>Show awareness of basic feelings such as sad and happy.</p>	<p>Able to communicate at 3 word/sign level.</p> <p>Be able to describe a scene.</p> <p>Able to express feelings with support.</p>	<p>Be able to explain how some objects are similar.</p> <p>Able to express themselves at 4 word/sign level Identify more categories and the function of different objects.</p> <p>Able to express feelings independently.</p>	<p>Being able to think about what a character in a story is saying or feeling.</p> <p>Be able to define individual words.</p> <p>Beginning to become aware of other people's feelings.</p>	<p>Being able to communicate a story or event using the link of words.</p> <p>Be aware of other's feelings and begin to understand why.</p>	<p>Able to communicate confidently using full sentences.</p> <p>Able to express feelings and reason why.</p>
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	E	Dd	D	Ch	C	B	A
<p>Languages connect</p> <p>us</p>	<p>I am beginning to be aware of a link between language(s) and culture and am developing a sense of belonging.</p> <p>I am beginning to understand that there are different languages in my environment.</p> <p>I am beginning to talk with my peers in the language of the setting/school.</p>	<p>I can recognise that there is a relationship between languages, culture and my own sense of Welsh identity.</p> <p>I can understand that people use different languages.</p> <p>I am beginning to understand that there are similarities and differences between our languages..</p> <p>I am beginning to draw on information presented in one language and convey it in my own words in another.</p>	<p>I can understand that there are connections between language, culture and identity and that these differ within Wales and around the world.</p> <p>I can communicate in a growing range of languages.</p> <p>I can recognise and discuss connections, commonalities and differences between the languages I speak and those that I am learning.</p> <p>I can understand how and why languages have evolved and are continually evolving.</p> <p>I can recognise and respect different accents and dialects.</p> <p>I can receive information in one language and adapt it for various purposes in another language.</p>	<p>I can understand how languages can give a sense of belonging to a local and global community.</p> <p>I can explore and analyse how languages affect identity and culture and understand that learning them offers better opportunities in Wales and in international contexts.</p> <p>I can use my knowledge of connections, common features and differences between languages to support my language learning skills.</p> <p>By examining the process of language evolution and etymology, I can improve my knowledge of language architecture.</p>	<p>I can show an open attitude towards learning different languages and learning about different cultures in Wales and the world.</p> <p>By learning about languages, I can express how the connection between languages and culture prepares me for Welsh and global citizenship.</p> <p>I can use my knowledge of how languages work to further support language learning.</p> <p>I can apply my translinguaging skills to support my learning in familiar and new languages.</p> <p>I can adapt and be sensitive to diversity within languages and understand that diversity occurs within different social, regional and linguistic groups</p>	<p>I can apply my knowledge of connections, commonalities and differences between languages to improve my communication.</p> <p>I can independently identify translinguaging opportunities to improve my learning and communication in my languages</p>	<p>I can communicate, interact and mediate in several languages and identify myself as multilingual.</p> <p>I have a positive attitude towards different accents and dialects and welcome language diversity. I can use my knowledge of language evolution and etymology to deepen my understanding of language architecture</p>

	E	Dd	D	Ch	C	B	A
<p>Understanding</p> <p>languages is key to</p> <p>understanding the</p> <p>world around us</p>	<p>I am beginning to distinguish between phonologically similar signs.</p> <p>I am beginning to recognise some BSL lip patterns and mouthings</p> <p>I can understand a range of signs across different contexts.</p> <p>I can experiment with vocabulary.</p> <p>I can recognise non-manual features in emotion signs.</p> <p>I am beginning to recognise fingerspelled words, particularly for familiar names.</p> <p>I can recognise and follow multi-step instructions about familiar topics and routines.</p> <p>I can engage with BSL users with growing attention, making good use of eye contact.</p> <p>I can follow storytelling and descriptions of past events.</p>	<p>I can recognise similarities in meaning across signs that share features, for example handshape and location.</p> <p>I can recognise signs, including those for verbs associated with cognition (for example 'think', 'know', 'understand', 'sense') and signs that express time references and abstract concepts.</p> <p>I understand how individual signs can be modified to change meaning.</p> <p>I can develop my vocabulary through interaction with other BSL users and with BSL texts, and use these new signs in a variety of contexts.</p> <p>I can understand the use of manual and non-manual modifiers.</p> <p>I can understand the difference between signs and fingerspelling and that fingerspelled letters represent</p>	<p>I can understand when phonology is being used creatively in BSL poetry, prose and songs.</p> <p>I can understand some regional BSL variants, such as signs for colours and numbers.</p> <p>I can engage with other BSL users and with BSL texts to build my vocabulary and to develop my understanding of BSL grammar.</p> <p>I can understand an increasing range of general and subject-specific vocabulary.</p> <p>I can understand increasingly complex common words regarding a specific subject.</p> <p>I can recognise and understand common patterns in fingerspelling.</p> <p>I can engage empathetically with different people's viewpoints on various subjects.</p> <p>I can use inference and deduction to understand BSL texts and to consider their reliability.</p> <p>I can understand the gist of what is being signed.</p>	<p>I can recognize signs that are derived from forms that are fingerspelled.</p> <p>I can understand words spelled with the fingers at a natural pace.</p> <p>I can understand questions about BSL text and in time I can respond to them. I can understand information in BSL about a variety of subjects, and I can summarize the main points</p> <p>I can follow more complex narratives that incorporate role shift and different referents.</p> <p>I can understand signs, including signs that time relations, abstract concepts and verbs associated with cognition, and signs associated with feelings.</p> <p>I can understand how both manual and non-manual features can be used to modify the meanings of individual signs.</p> <p>I can understand the use of manual and non-manual features, for example to show prominence.</p>	<p>I can understand a wide range of regional variations of BSL</p> <p>I can understand a range of general vocabulary and vocabulary relating to specific subjects.</p> <p>I can understand and analyse the general meaning and ideas implicit in BSL texts.</p> <p>I can understand and respond to a range of questions and multi-step instructions in a variety of familiar and unfamiliar contexts.</p> <p>I can interpret meaning</p>	<p>I can understand complex vocabulary relating to specific subjects and I can understand sophisticated use of general vocabulary.</p> <p>I can engage in BSL conversations and texts to reinforce and develop my vocabulary and signing structures</p> <p>I can understand increasingly complex morphological constructions, including features without the hands, and adjustments to the speed and length of signs, which add to or change meaning.</p>	<p>I can engage in BSL conversations and texts to develop a wide range of general and subject-specific vocabulary, and I can use them accurately in different contexts. I can relate empathetically to different people's views on various topics, using those views to come to my own conclusions.</p>

		<p>letters in written words.</p> <p>I can recognise fingerspelled words for names and places.</p> <p>I can understand information about a variety of topics, identifying main points.</p> <p>I can engage with others and recognise that they may have a different perspective from my own.</p>	<p>I can use context and cues to help me understand BSL in a range of familiar and unfamiliar contexts.</p> <p>I can follow narratives and descriptions of past events, including some authentic narratives, for longer periods of time.</p>				
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	E	Dd	D	Ch	C	B	A
<p>Expressing ourselves through languages is key to communication</p>	<p>I am beginning to form letters correctly.</p> <p>I can describe objects and events, building and extending my vocabulary.</p> <p>I am beginning to use the non-manual features of individual signs consistently.</p> <p>I am beginning to use signs to indicate time.</p>	<p>I can express BSL signs and individual letters that are fingerspelled correctly.</p> <p>I can express numbers correctly. I can use an increasingly creative and varied vocabulary.</p> <p>I can vary meaning by including non-manual features.</p> <p>I can use increasingly varied and imaginative vocabulary.</p>	<p>I can sign clearly, using appropriate expression and non-manual features to communicate my ideas.</p> <p>I can use single and multi-clause sentences, making choices to meet the intended audience and purpose.</p> <p>I can review my signing and modify it to improve my BSL narratives.</p>	<p>I can adapt and manipulate language and make appropriate choices about vocabulary, idiomatic language and syntax in order to express myself with fluency and clarity.</p> <p>I can explain where and why I have made changes or corrections in a BSL text.</p>	<p>I can respond to other people's views, asking for clarification, structuring arguments, summarizing and explaining what I have seen.</p> <p>I can use a variety of strategies to participate effectively in conversations. I can interact with others, conveying my</p>	<p>I can express the aspect through a variety of grammatical devices. I can use body part classifiers. I can choose appropriate language for different audiences and purposes</p> <p>I can reflect on my signing and use a range of strategies to improve</p>	<p>I can use spatial verbs and classifiers appropriately. I can reflect critically on my use of language and</p> <p>I can objectively consider the impact of my sign language across different genres. I can evaluate and respond critically to BSL conversations and texts .</p>

	<p>I am beginning to use fingerspelled signs, for example for familiar names.</p> <p>I can combine signs to form sentences.</p> <p>I can use manual and non-manual features when asking questions.</p> <p>I am beginning to show negation and affirmation using manual and non-manual features.</p> <p>I am beginning to modify spatial verbs to show movement or manner.</p> <p>I can use directional verb agreement.</p> <p>I can use a range of handling classifiers.</p> <p>I am beginning to use size and shape specifiers.</p> <p>I can use classifier repetition or numbers to show plurals.</p> <p>Rwy'n dechrau cymryd fy nhro mewn sgysiau, gan ddilyn y pwnc a'r normau diwylliannol Byddar priodol (e.e. ar gyfer cael sylw a rhoi adborth).</p> <p>I am beginning to take turns in conversation, following the topic and following appropriate Deaf cultural norms (for example for</p>	<p>I can use signs that have directly associated lip patterns or mouthings.</p> <p>I can fingerspell accurately at my own pace.</p> <p>I can use single and multi-clause sentences.</p> <p>I can use manual and non-manual features to modify spatial verbs in order to show manner and/or movement.</p> <p>I can show consistency in referent location.</p> <p>I can link sentences to develop meaning and to build a whole BSL text.</p> <p>I can indicate when things happen in the past, the present and the future through use of signing space and timelines.</p> <p>I am beginning to ask and answer questions.</p> <p>I can share ideas and feelings, and express what I like and dislike.</p> <p>I am beginning to use digital technology to communicate.</p>	<p>I can vary how I communicate depending on context and audience.</p> <p>I can ask and answer questions, and exchange ideas and information.</p> <p>I can use familiar strategies to engage in conversations effectively.</p> <p>I can explain information and share ideas, opinions and feelings.</p> <p>I can plan and organise my BSL narratives in a logical sequence for different purposes and audiences.</p> <p>I can use both hands to represent verbs happening simultaneously.</p> <p>I can use size and shape specifiers, and whole entity classifiers.</p>	<p>I can topicalise through use of manual and non-manual features.</p> <p>I can fingerspell accurately and at a natural pace.</p> <p>I can use BSL variants from other regions, as appropriate for the audience.</p>	<p>thoughts, feelings and views, showing empathy and respect. I can use familiar idiomatic language and an appropriate tone when communicating</p>	<p>my BSL across different registers and contexts.</p>	<p>I am able to convey my thoughts, my feelings and my views in challenging and controversial contexts by, showing empathy and respect.</p> <p>I can use sophisticated idiomatic language and appropriate tone in a range of contexts</p>
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	gaining attention and giving feedback).						
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Wider implications of difficulties	
The pupil is making progress in terms of outcomes/ curriculum levels.	
The pupil has developed adequate skills in order to complete differentiated tasks appropriately and independently most of the time.	
The level of the need has decreased and as a result effect less on the access to the educational opportunities provided.	
Further considerations	
The lack of progress over a specific time period (year) following the targets and the specialist input of the Hearing Impairment Team suggests the need to re-consider our understanding of the main needs of the pupil. It is not appropriate to continue with the provision given by the Hearing Impairment Team. Re- submit the case to the Forum/ School to discuss with the Educational Psychologist in a Planning Meeting.	
Another diagnosis/ different understanding of the main needs of the pupils has been discussed, and the Hearing Impairment Service will collaborate with the relevant Service. The school to discuss with the Educational Psychologist in a Planning Meeting.	
The pupil has expressed regular discontent to receive input from the Hearing Impairment Service.	
The school has up-skilled adequately to be able to satisfy the additional needs of the pupil without further guidance. It will be possible to ask for advice from the Hearing Impairment Service in future, if needed. Visits will continue if/when requested.	

Physical/Medical criteria for school age

Fine motor skills	I can close my hand to make a fist I can close my hand around a finger	I can hold a small toy	I can pick an object and move it from one hand to the other	I can turn the pages of a book I can paint with a brush	I can turn and open a tap or door handle I can use a pencil to write	I can write age appropriately I can close buttons and zips	I can use a laptop (mouse and keyboard) I can tie shoe laces
Gross motor skills	I can throw a ball I can catch a ball	I can stand and balance for a short period -In a stander -Independently	I can walk with a walking frame or splints	I can walk independently on even ground	I can walk up and down stairs -one step at a time -with supervision	I can run safely in a straight line I can walk up and down stairs independently	I can participate in physical activity *with reasonable adjustments*
Mobility	I need adult support when transferring and using specialised equipment	I can transfer with adult supervision to use specialised equipment	I can transfer independently to use ordinary equipment (toilet, chair)	I can move my wheelchair with adult support	I can move my manual or powered wheelchair independently	I occasionally use a wheelchair or crutches	I do not need any specialised equipment for mobility
Personal care	I need adult support with every aspect of my personal needs	I can express when I have soiled or wet myself through sound, crying or language	I can use the toilet when an adult reminds me	An adult can recognise the signs when I need to use the toilet	I can communicate when I need to use the toilet	I can control the need to use the toilet	I am competent to take care of my own personal needs
	I need adult support to wipe and change I need adult guidance to take care of my personal needs I need additional equipment e.g. seat, handrail, step, frame						
Drinking and eating	i am tube or peg fed	I am reliant on an adult to feed me	I can eat food with my fingers	I can use a spoon with adult support	I can use a spoon independently	I can eat independently but am reliant on an	I can eat and drink independently

						adult to cut my food	I can carry my own tray to the table
	I drink from a beaker I can drink with a straw I can drink from a regular cup I use specialised cutlery						
Medication	I am reliant on an adult to administer my medication	I need adult support with my medication	I can follow adult guidance to take my medication	I can take my medication with adult supervision	I am aware of the key person to support me with my medical needs	I understand that taking my medication is part of my daily routine	I know where my medication is kept
Medical Condition	My medical condition is not stable with medication	My medical condition can fluctuate quickly	I rely on an adult to recognise symptoms of my condition	I can recognise signs and triggers of my condition	I can respond and react appropriately to signs or triggers	My medical condition is stable with medication	I do not need medication
Emotional wellbeing	I cannot recognise / cope with my condition	I am starting to ask questions about my conditions	I am starting to understand and accept my condition	I understand that my condition has limitations and restrictions	I can discuss my feelings and my condition with a familiar adult	I can manage my emotions when faced with challenges	I show emotional resilience
Clothes	I rely on an adult	I can cooperate by following simple commands	I can follow step by step instructions	I rely less on adult guidance and support	I can open and close buttons and zips independently	An adult or friend will check that I have dressed correctly	I can dress myself independently

Comments

Adaptions / Additional equipment

Specific ALN Team Input

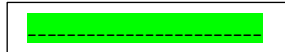
Input from the school	Evidence
Does the school use and implement the strategies referred to in the Schools' ALN-Friendly Self-assessment document?	
Has the school used "I can" to assess needs and to set specific learning objectives?	
Are SpLD targets evident in the school's IEP/IDP, and have they been monitored over a minimum two months?	
Does the pupil receive regular support e.g, multi-sensory resources, visual cues, small group or 1/1 lessons based on the targets noted in the IEP/IDP?	
Has the school discussed the pupil in a Planning Meeting with the educational psychologist, and have the recommendations given been implemented?	
Has the school already received input from the ALN Team and made use of recommended strategies/ resources with the pupil? Are these recommendations included in the IDP?	
Have members of staff attended SPLD presentations / training?	
Do the standardised scores (<75) reflect the evidence showing the under-achievement of the pupil in terms of outcomes/ levels?	

Further comments:-

Today -



Target -



	ACTIVITY LEVEL 7	ACTIVITY LEVEL 6	ACTIVITY LEVEL 5	ACTIVITY LEVEL 4	ACTIVITY LEVEL 3	ACTIVITY LEVEL 2	ACTIVITY LEVEL 1
Phonological/Phonemic Skills	Identifies initial sound in CVC words Segments and blends multi-syllable words	Identifies final sound in CVC words Segments CVCs into onset and rime	Identifies middle sound in CVC words Segments CVCs into onset and rime	Blends individual sounds to create CVC words	Blends individual sounds to create CVC words	Segments CVC words into individual sounds	Segments and blends individual sounds in CVC and CCVC word (blends)
Reading	Recognises some letters and familiar words (mam, dad, own name) Matches letters & sounds 7 letters 14 letters 21 letters	Matches all letters of the alphabet to their sounds. Recognises digraphs SH, CH, TH, CK, WH ch ll rh ff th ph	Reads regular words CVCs CVCs + Digraph <i>e.g. PHONICS 1/ Ffoneg 1 Lists 1 - 4</i>	Reads regular words Initial consonant blends <i>e.g. PHONICS 1/ Ffoneg 1 Lists 5 – 8</i> <i>Words beginning with si</i> <i>Words ending with -ng</i> <i>High Frequency Words e.g. mae dyma roedd ei yw</i>	Reads regular words Final blend CK Initial consonant blends <i>e.g. PHONICS 1/ Ffoneg 1 Lists 9</i> <i>Words with the apostrophe: a'r i'r a'i i'w mae'r</i>	Reads regular words Initial digraph QU <i>e.g. PHONICS 1/ Ffoneg 1 Lists 10-11</i>	Reads regular words Final consonant blend 2-syllable regular words <i>e.g. PHONICS 1/ Ffoneg 1 List 12</i>
			Reads some of the first high frequency words HFW Booklet/ Geiriau Cyffredin – List 1	Reads up to 20 of the first HFW HFW Booklet/ Geiriau Cyffredin – List 2	Reads up to 30 of the first HFW HFW Booklet/ Geiriau Cyffredin – List 3	Reads up to 40 of the first HFW HFW Booklet/ Geiriau Cyffredin – List 4	Reads most of the first 50 HFW HFW Booklet/ Geiriau Cyffredin – List 5
			Reads sentences containing target words.	Reads sentences containing target words.	Reads sentences containing target words. Beginning to use word attack skills to	Reads and understands a short text containing target words. Reads a short text with some guidance	Reads a short text independently Decodes and self-corrects

					decode unfamiliar words	Uses word attack skills with increasing confidence	
Reading Comprehension	Can tell what the subject of the text is by looking at the illustrations	Answers Who and What questions	Answers When and Where questions	Predicts events and characters' actions	Answers questions about how characters are feeling	Relates the content in correct order	Answers Why questions. Draws inference from text
Spelling	<p>Spells regular words VC and CV words</p> <p><i>e.g. PHONICS 1/ Ffoneg 1 List 1</i></p>	<p>Spells regular words CVC words</p> <p><i>e.g. PHONICS 1/ Ffoneg 1 Lists 2</i></p> <p>Spells up to 5 HFW</p>	<p>Spells regular words CVCs + Digraph</p> <p><i>e.g. PHONICS 1/ Ffoneg 1 List 3-4</i></p> <p>Spells up to 10 HFW HFW Booklet/ Geiriau Cyffredin – List 1</p>	<p>Spells regular words CVC + final CK Initial QU</p> <p><i>e.g. PHONICS 1/ Ffoneg 1 List 5 - 8</i></p> <p>Spells up to 20 HFW HFW Booklet/ Geiriau Cyffredin – List 2</p>	<p>Spells regular words Initial consonant blends + final CK</p> <p><i>e.g. PHONICS 1/ Ffoneg 1 List 9 - 10</i></p> <p>Spells up to 30 HFW HFW Booklet/ Geiriau Cyffredin – List 3</p>	<p>Spells regular words Two-syllable words</p> <p><i>e.g. PHONICS 1/ Ffoneg 1 List 11</i></p> <p>Spells up to 40 HFW HFW Booklet/ Geiriau Cyffredin – List 4</p>	<p>Spells regular words 1-syllable words + final consonant blend</p> <p><i>e.g. PHONICS 1/ Ffoneg 1 List 12</i></p> <p>Spells most of the 1st 50 HFW HFW Booklet/ Geiriau Cyffredin – List 5</p>
Writing	<p>Forms and repeats a series of lines/shapes</p> <p>Records some letters (5-10) correctly and tries to write familiar words e.g. Mam</p>	<p>Builds a full sentence with some help (oral work)</p> <p>Records an increasing number of letters correctly (10-20)</p>	<p>Records a dictated sentence correctly e.g. "The dog is big"/ "Mae dad yn y fan".</p> <p>Writes on the line and uses spaces between words</p>	<p>Records a sentence with the help of resources e.g. word bank.</p>	<p>Thinks of own sentence to write e.g. to describe picture.</p> <p>Checks for capital letter and full stop</p> <p>*Rhys Bys</p>	<p>Thinks of and records more than one sentence independently.</p> <p>Consistent letter size and placement</p> <p>Self – corrects</p>	<p>Writes a sequence of longer sentences containing connectives.</p> <p>Correct punctuation</p> <p>Consistent handwriting</p>

Wider implications of difficulties	
The pupil is able to make progress in terms of outcomes and curricular levels (SS of 80+)	
The pupil has developed adequate skills to complete suitably differentiated work in class.	
The level of need has decreased so that it no longer has an impact on access to educational opportunities provided in school.	
Further considerations	
A lack of progress over a period of some 12 months, despite working on specific targets and input from the SLD Team, suggests that our understanding of the pupil's difficulties needs further consideration. Continuing with the SpLD service is not appropriate. The case should be referred back to the Forum.	
A new understanding or diagnosis of the pupil's difficulties means that continuing with SpLD input would not be effective. The school to discuss further with the educational psychologist.	
The pupil is continually reluctant to receive input from the service.	
The school and staff are sufficiently upskilled to meet the needs of the pupil without further guidance for the moment. Advice from the Team may be sought if needed again and the school may apply to the Forum if necessary.	

Communication and Interaction Team

Input from the school	<u>Evidence</u>
Language/communication/interaction outcomes and targets are a clear priority on the School IEP/IDP (and have been reviewed over a period of at least two terms).	
Access to appropriate and consistent intervention at the School (e.g. visual resources, Narrative/Sequencing/Talkabout group work, 1:1 work on IEP/ICP/IDP targets).	
Has the school received the team's input previously? Have the strategies previously recommended by the service been applied in the case of the child in question? Is there evidence of this in the IDP?	
Have members of the school attended training by the Communication and Interaction Team?	
Effective use of designated hours by the Authority - number of hours -	

Further comments:

Today -

Targets to be implemented -

Language	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Blank (Elklan)	Working towards Blank 1 (<60% accuracy)	Blank 1 (80% accuracy)/ Working towards Blank 2 (<60% accuracy)	Blank 2 (80% accuracy)/ Working towards Blank 3 (<60% accuracy)	Blank level 3 (organise and recite a story, including feelings and/or dialogue) (60-80% accuracy)	Blank level 3 (80% accuracy)/ Working towards 4 (<60% accuracy)	Blank level 4 (60-80% accuracy)	Blank level 4 (80% accuracy +)
What	Begins to name objects	Begins to describe a with visual choice/categorisation/ function	Description/Categorisation /Function	Begins to share information – start and continue dialogue.	Repeats a story and Begins to reason by reaching a conclusion	Begins to reason	Reasoning - able to answer questions why and 'How do you know?'
Sequencing	Able to name objects in picture	Visual ability only (using word to label with prompt)	Sequences 2/3 steps following a practical activity and can recite the narrative.	Sequences 3 steps and repeats what happens	Sequences 4 steps and repeats the story. Able to say what is going to happen next	Sequences more than 4 pictures and is able to orally say what happens in the sequence - using the vocabulary of first, then, finally.	Able to sequence without a visual stimulus – organise an event / experience.
Expression/Narrative	Able to communicate at a 1 word level/with Makaton	Able to communicate at a 2 word level - who, verb	Able to communicate at a 3 word level - person, verb, object	Able to communicate at a 4 word level - person, verb, object, where	Able to communicate at a 5 word level - person, verb, object, where, when	Able to communicate using meaningful and coherent sentences.	Able to communicate fluently using sentences confidently.
Follow instructions	Follows 1 step instructions	Follows 2 step instructions on a 1:1 level.	Follows 2 step instructions in the classroom /3 steps on a 1:1 level	Follows 3 step instructions in the classroom / 4 steps on a 1:1 level.	Follows 4 step instructions in the classroom.	Follows introductions / simple instructions and responds appropriately. Can ask for help if needed.	Follows instructions and introductions without support.
Organisation	Follows a routine (i.e. morning) with support / visual cues.	Follows a routine (i.e. morning) by following others.	Follows and remembers the classroom routine independently.	Knows what is needed for different tasks / times of the day.	Understands daily time concepts. (morning, afternoon and evening.)	Understands weekly time concepts (today / yesterday / tomorrow / days of the week).	Is able to organise themselves independently.

Further comments:

(see Communication and Interaction Team – Language activities to support the above targets)

Interaction	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Communication	Uses emotions to communicate	Expresses needs through gestures (leads, holds hand, points, sounds).	Able to express needs using words / symbols.	Able to express needs using sentences. Able to follow simple instructions	Manages to give and follow instructions on a 1:1, small group and social level	Able to use a variety of sentences to communicate. Able to respond to instructions in a variety of situations	Able to respond and talk about events, and manages to reason when responding to a question. Uses language for a variety of social purposes
Interaction	Begins to follow 'Can I join you' strategies with an adult	Plays alongside others	Able to share space and toys on occasion	Participates interactively (taking turns, sharing) in social games with adults and peers.	Shows two sides to a speaker and listener role in order to share information	Follows social conventions when initiating and conducting conversations	Understands and solves social problems that arise naturally on a daily basis
Emotional tolerance	Uses emotions to communicate	Makes choices within time constraints (now/next)	Starts to show emotional control in response to situations that arise from day to day	Asks for help/a rest in the form of symbols or orally	Understands and uses words to convey emotions. Able to provide reasons for personal emotions	A need for occasional emotional support to cope with every day routine	Able to use appropriate strategies and behaviour when feeling frustrated
Flexibility	Likes to follow his/her own agenda	Is able to follow whole class routines (sitting on the carpet, lining up, retrieves coat and bag etc).	Is confident in making everyday choices; with symbols, words or gestures. Able to stay on task for short periods (minutes).	Able to use strategies to organise time and cope with times of change independently by using visual cues e.g. visual timetable, now/then, selection board	Able to use appropriate strategies to plan and organise time and resources during focus tasks (task cards, checklists, etc.)	Able to use strategies to plan and cope with change	Able to plan and prepare ahead in order to be able to cope in new situations/day to day situations
Self-care (excluding medical factors)	No interest in using the toilet independently	Has started using the toilet independently - still needs support	Uses the toilet independently but needs reminding	Dresses and undresses independently. Feeds independently	Able to undertake self-care tasks with some support (showering, brushing teeth)	Aware of physical changes and how to respond appropriately	A good awareness of personal hygiene and safety
Sensory	Unable to cope in situations that are not within his/her control	Starting to cope with situations where there is a lot of sensory stimulation	Uses the strategies and techniques introduced with support	Able to share when feeling overwhelmed	Chooses a resource or adaptation to their environment which will help	Uses appropriate coping strategies independently to cope	Copes successfully in various situations

Further comments:

Wider impact of the difficulty	
The pupil is now able to make progress in terms of outcomes/curricular levels.	
The pupil has developed sufficient skills to be able to independently complete appropriately differentiated tasks most of the time.	
The level of needs has fallen and consequently this has less impact on pupil's access to the educational opportunities provided.	
Further points to consider	
The lack of progress over a period of time (one year) following the Communication and Interaction Team's specialist input and targets suggests that our understanding of the pupil's main area of difficulty needs to be reconsidered. Continuing with the Communication and Interaction team's provision is not appropriate. Resubmit the case in the Forum/School to discuss with its Educational Psychologist at a Planning Meeting.	
Another diagnosis has been made/there is a different understanding of the pupil's main area of difficulty, and continuing with the Communication and Interaction team's provision is not appropriate. The school to discuss with its Educational Psychologist at a Planning Meeting.	
The pupil has displayed constant discontent at receiving input from the service.	
Staff from the school have not been in contact with the team, there have been no concerns from the school for over a year.	
The school in question has been sufficiently upskilled to meet the pupil's additional needs without further guidance. Advice can be sought from the Communication and Interaction team in the future, if necessary.	

Access Criteria / Indicator for ABC Service

Classroom observations	What strategies have been used in the setting?

Recommended Strategies and Resources	Date set	Responsibility

Further Comments:

The School to contact the Specialist Teacher for further advice.

Access Criteria / Indicator for ABC Service

Today



Targets to implement



1: Personal and Self-care Skills	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
1a: Eating	Liquids and puréed food.	Starting to eat mashed solids.	Eats chopped food. Drops food out of mouth when chewing.	Eats chopped food. Eats more varieties.	Eats more varieties. Start to show clear likes and dislikes of some foods.	Eats a variety of food. Prepared to try new things.	Eats a variety of food. Prepared to try new things. Swallow food well with good lip control and no loss of food.
1b: Feeding	An adult to spoon feed.	Eats food with fingers. Attempts to hold a spoon to feed.	Eats food with fingers and handles a spoon.	Self-feeds with a spoon.	Starting to hold a fork.	Starting to stab at food with a fork.	Uses a spoon and fork.
1c: Drinking	An adult holds a bottle.	Holds a bottle.	Uses a beaker.	Starting to learn to drink from an open cup with assistance.	Drinks from an open cup. Able to put it back on the table.	Drinks from a variety of items including an open cup. Uses two hands to lift it and sometimes one hand.	Able to place a straw in a drink. Able to fill a cup of water on his/her own.
1ch: Toileting	Wears a nappy - an adult deals with every aspect.	Starting to show signs of wetting. Starting to sit for a short time on the toilet/potty while dressed and with an adult present.	Sitting on the toilet/potty while undressed. Uses the toilet after being reminded. Able to stay there with an adult for a short time.	Asks to go to the toilet in reasonable time. Sits on the toilet for a short time without an adult being present throughout.	Asks to go to the toilet in reasonable time. Self-toilets (is able to pull his/her underwear down and up). Needs support to fasten buttons. Needs to be	Asks to go to the toilet. Uses the toilet on his/her own. Understanding is increasing but needs to be reminded to wash	Aware of personal hygiene and able to do this himself/herself.

				Sometimes goes but has accidents.	reminded to wash hands after using the toilet.	hands after using the toilet.	
1d:Dressing Skills	An adult helps with getting dressed.	Starting to recognise his/her clothes and puts an arm out. Takes socks off.	Able to remove an item of clothing.	Able to put on a simple item of clothing.	Able to get dressed and undressed.	Able to get dressed and undressed and is starting to zip and button.	Able to change on his/her own.

Access Criteria / Indicator for ABC Service

Today



Targets to implement



2:Play and Social Skills	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
2a: Play Skills	Investigates objects with the senses, e.g. licking, watching and listening.	Seems to enjoy the impact of what he/she is doing and understands that he/she can make something happen, e.g. a toy popping up, hitting a drum.	Appears to understand the conventional purpose of objects, e.g. filling and emptying, building a tower.	Plays a role within his/her own experiences, e.g. feeding a doll, brushing hair.	Uses real-life objects to be something, e.g. a box as a car.	A series of imaginative play outside his/her personal experience, e.g. playing at 'Frozen' and superheroes.	Uses language to enrich his/her play.

2b: Emotional Well-being	Dependent on Mum or a key person in another setting.	Finds it difficult to leave Mum.	Able to let go and understand that Mum is coming back.	Starting to recognise simple feelings - happy, sad.	Able to deal with emotions with adult support.	Able to ask for help in any way.	Able to recognise and express their simple feelings - happy, sad, angry, excited.
2c: Awareness of danger	Totally dependent on an adult to keep him/her safe.	Totally dependent on an adult to keep him/her safe.	Learning to understand about 1-2 dangerous situations in the home. Able to respond appropriately with support. Needs supervision.	Learning to understand about dangerous situations in the home. Able to respond appropriately with support.	Understands some dangerous situations in the home. With support, he/she remembers and responds appropriately.	Understands some dangerous situations in the home and outside. Able to remember, and responds appropriately to some.	Understands and begins to sense dangerous situations around him/her. Remembers and responds appropriately.
2ch: Order and flexibility	Depends on order and routine.	Depends on order and routine to cope and understand what is happening.	Benefits from order and routine to understand what is happening.	Benefits from order and routine but is developing the ability to be flexible.	Able to be flexible and does not depend on order/routine.	Able to be flexible and accept new events as a matter of course.	Totally flexible.

Access Criteria / Indicator for ABC Service

Today



Targets to implement



3: Language Development	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
3a: Non-verbal	Reaches.	Makes sounds.	Points to ask and share an interest. Raises a hand to say goodbye. Shakes the head.	Eye contact to communicate need. Draws and uses an adult for what he/she wants.	Gives someone else an object. Turns away/pushes away to mean 'no'.	Appropriate non-verbal skills.	Appropriate non-verbal skills.
3b: Attentiveness	Attention diverts from one thing to another. Takes notice of a familiar voice (parent). Startled by loud noises.	Pays attention for short periods to things of his/her choice, ignoring things around him/her.	Pays attention to things of his/her choice and starts sharing attention with an adult.	Pays attention to things of his/her choice and is able to divert attention between tasks with support.	Pays attention to something an adult has chosen, e.g. listening to a story, taking part in a greeting circle.	Able to pay attention to an adult while doing something else. Able to concentrate for short periods.	Flexible attentiveness skills and able to concentrate for a period of time.
3c: Understanding	Does not understand words. Does not understand gestures.	Understands familiar routines when seeing real objects, e.g. shoes mean going outside, keys mean going in the car. Responds to simple gestures,	Responds to familiar instructions, e.g. come here, using a visual card for support.	Understands everyday words, e.g. body parts, names of toys.	Understands 'doing' words/verbs.	Understands and follows instructions that include two key words.	Understands and follows instructions that include three key words. Understanding of - Adjectives Prepositions Pronouns.

		e.g. waving a hand to say goodbye.					
3ch: Use of Language/Communicating a need	Sounds including crying and shouting are made to express a need.	Imitates the sounds made by a familiar person.	Uses his/her own language and simple Makaton signs.	Uses initial sounds to name/label objects.	Names objects.	Word bank develops, bringing words together.	Word bank develops, including simple sentences.
3d: Interaction with others	Does not appear to notice others.	Starting to accept an adult joining in and following the child's lead for short periods.	Starting to enjoy an adult following his/her play. Interacts at a simple level.	Enjoys an adult joining in and following his/her play. Interaction developing.	Enjoys adult attention jointly playing for long periods. Starting to accept other children interacting with him/her.	Enjoys adult attention jointly playing for periods of time. Starting to interact with others.	Plays alongside others. Able to share space and toys with support.

Access Criteria / Indicator for ABC Service

Today



Targets to implement



4: Motor skills	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
4a: Gross Motor	Able to sit without help/assistance. Able to crawl or bottom-shuffle.	Able to walk unsteadily/clumsily.	Able to carry out movements including running, jumping, able to make a large toy move with their feet.	Able to go up and down stairs with two feet on each step. Able to pedal backwards.	Able to go up and down stairs with one foot on each step. Able to pedal forwards.	Able to change direction safely whilst running.	Able to imitate physical shapes. Able to jump safely over a low-slung rope.
4b: Fine Motor	Able to close his/her hand when you hold out your finger. Able to grip large objects, e.g. blocks.	Holds items of his/her choice and changes hands.	Able to lift small objects.	Fist-grips marking equipment, with a tendency to change hands at times.	Able to turn the pages of a book - several pages at a time.	Handles small equipment correctly, including gripping marking equipment with a tripod grip.	Handles small equipment correctly, including gripping marking equipment with a tripod grip.

Inclusion Team Input

Input from the school	Evidence
Behavioural outcomes and targets are a priority in the IEP/IDP (and have been reviewed over a period of at least two terms).	
Has had access to appropriate and consistent interventions in school (i.e. visual resources, ELSA group work, TalkAbout, 1:1 work on the targets in the IEP/IDP.	
Has been discussed in a planning meeting with the school's Educational Psychologist and recommendations have been followed.	
Has the school had Input from the team previously? Have previous strategies that have been recommended by the Inclusion Team been implemented? Is there evidence of this in the IDP?	
Have staff members from the school attended 'Safety Intervention' training?	
Do the standardised scores match with the evidence that the pupil is under achieving with regard to the Outcomes/Targets?	
Effective use of the designated hours of support from the Authority – number of hours -	

Today -

Targets to implement-

Behaviour	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Emotional regulation	Can recognise limited emotions and express what they like/dislike. Unable to control strong emotions.	Can name basic feelings/emotions. Starting to show some emotional regulation when reacting to situations/experiences that are not pleasing.	Can express and name more complex emotions.	Can give reasons for personal emotions and the emotions of others.	Can ask for help/a break when frustrated/angry. Can apply a feeling to an experience.	Can regulate emotions in a way that is not dangerous to himself/herself and/or others.	Shows empathy towards himself/herself and others. Can use appropriate behaviour strategies when frustrated/angry.

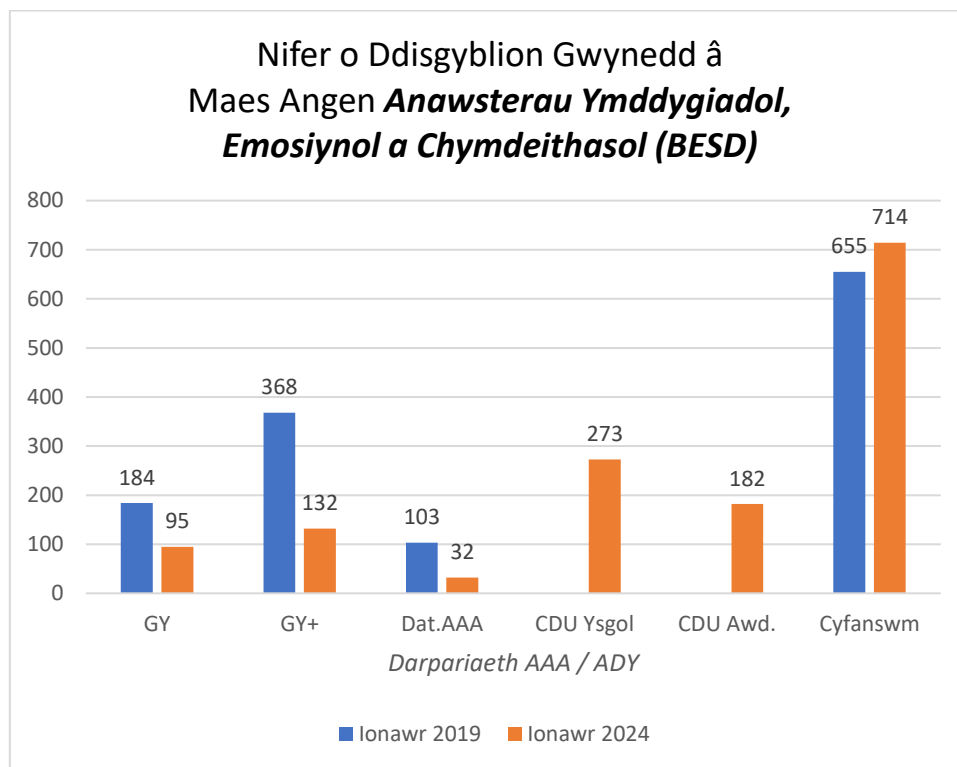
Coping with change	Unable to accept change at all.	With assistance, is beginning to accept change.	Beginning to accept small changes.	Accepts change.	Accepts unexpected changes without over reacting.	Shows flexibility and compromise when facing change.	Shows resilience following change most of the time.
Coping with disappointment	Unable to accept disappointment at all.	With assistance, is beginning to accept disappointment.	Beginning to accept disappointment	Accepts disappointment.	Accepts unexpected disappointment without over reacting.	Shows flexibility and compromise when facing disappointment.	Shows resilience following disappointment most of the time.
Accepting consequences	Unable to accept that they've done wrong and unable to accept the consequence.	Beginning to accept that they've made a mistake but can't accept the consequence.	With support, is beginning to accept that there are consequences to actions.	Beginning to accept that there are consequences to actions and can discuss incidents.	Accepts consequences and with support, beginning to understand the effect on others.	Shows flexibility and compromise when discussing incidents and accepting consequences.	Shows resilience following an incident most of the time and can discuss/offer a solution.
Interaction with others	Beginning to follow interaction strategies lead by an adult.	Works and plays side by side with others.	Can share space, equipment and toys occasionally.	Can take turns, share during social games with an adult and peers. Can work together in a small group.	Shows 'two sides' in the role of the speaker and the listener in order to share information and to play.	Follows social convention's when starting and maintaining a conversation.	Understands and solves social problems that arise day to day.
Structure and flexibility	Likes to follow their own agenda.	Can remain on task for short periods with the support of an adult.	Can remain on task reasonably independently using strategies under the guidance of an adult.	Can begin and end a task and cope with periods of change using specific strategies.	Can use appropriate strategies in order to plan and time manage and prepare equipment during an activity.	Can make decisions/choices without difficulty and without relying on an adult.	Can concentrate and persevere for extended periods of time appropriate to their age and ability.
Risk behaviours	Behaves in a way that the individual or others could	Behaves in a way that the individual or others could be	Behaves in a dangerous manner but calms down	The pupil behaves in a way that causes concern to	The pupil can step back before injuring themselves,	The pupil can step back before injuring themselves,	The pupil can control their behaviour.

	suffer serious injury.	injured or property damaged.	with the support of an adult.	others but doesn't injure or damage property.	others or damaging property with support.	others or damaging property.	
Attachment difficulties	Hyper vigilant Constantly 'on edge' Needs to control every situation.	Anxious. Feels uncomfortable even in familiar situations.	Beginning to start to settle and accept that others are in control.	Beginning to accept rules, consequences and praise. Beginning to accept small changes.	Beginning to trust and invest in a relationship with adults. Beginning to accept big changes with the support of an adult.	Beginning to trust and invest in relationships with adults. Beginning to show perseverance when facing a challenge.	Can trust and share experiences with an adult/peers that they don't know very well and put in place clear boundaries in relation to others. Copes well with difficult situations.
Self-esteem/ Self awareness.	Constantly critical of themselves. Often spoils their own work. Has negative feeling towards themselves	Unable to accept attention/praise. Over reacts to outward criticism.	Beginning to accept personal praise.	Beginning to accept public praise.	Feels positive about the things he/she does well and accepts themselves for who they are.	Recognise and accept when things are difficult. Can move on following disappointment.	Recognise and accept when things are difficult and accept strategies in order to face the challenge.

Further Comments:

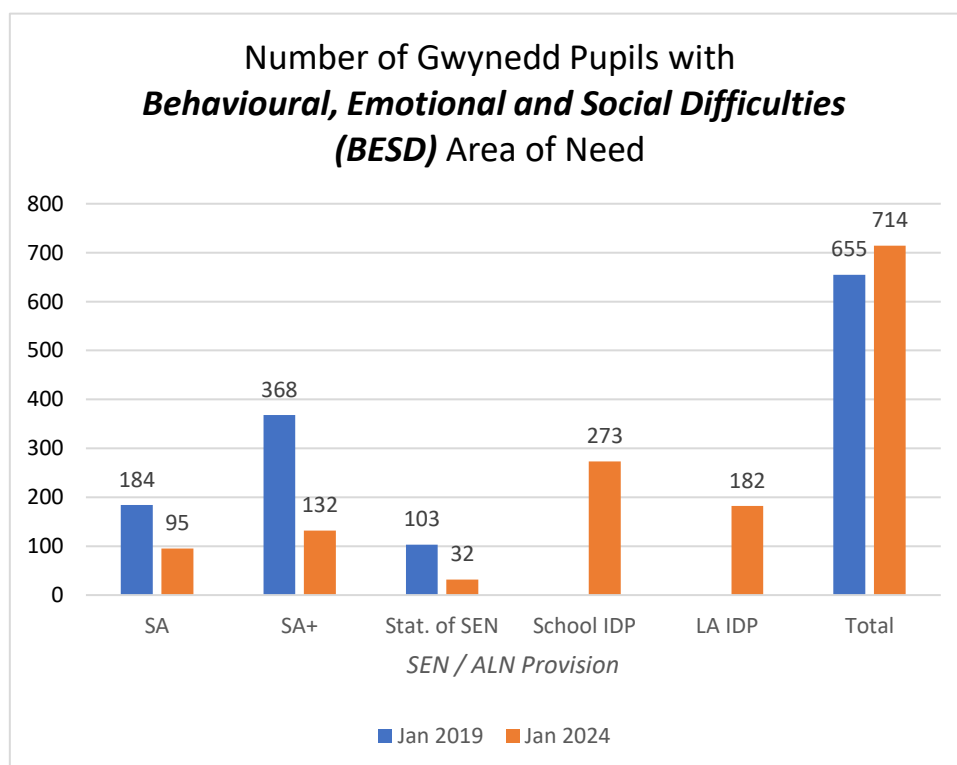
Wider implications of difficulties	
The pupil can now show progress in the outcomes and targets of the curriculum.	
The pupil has developed appropriate skills most of the time to be able to complete tasks independently which have been differentiated..	
The level of difficulty has reduced and as a result has less impact on his/her access to the educational opportunities provided.	
Further considerations	
A lack of progress over a period of time (a year) following targets and specialist intervention from the Inclusion Team suggests that we should re consider our understanding of the pupils main difficulties. It is therefore not appropriate to continue with input from the Inclusion Team. Re-refer the pupil to the Forum/School to discuss with their Educational Psychologist at a planning meeting.	
Another diagnosis/understanding of the pupils main difficulties has been made. It is therefore not appropriate to continue with input from the Inclusion Team. School to discuss with the Educational Psychologist in a planning meeting.	
The pupil has consistently shown an unwillingness to receive support from the Inclusion Team.	
The school has successfully up-skilled in order to meet the additional needs of the pupil without requiring further guidance from the Inclusion Team. The school can ask for further advice from the Team in the future should they require.	

Nifer o Ddisgyblion Gwynedd â Maes Angen Anawsterau Ymddygiadol, Emosiynol a Chymdeithasol (BESD) yn Ionawr 2024 o gymharu â Ionawr 2019.



Ffynhonnell Data: Cyfrifiad ysgolion blynyddol ar lefel disgyblion (CYBLD)

Number of Gwynedd Pupils with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) Area of Need in January 2024 compared with January 2019.



Data Source: Pupil level annual school census (PLASC)



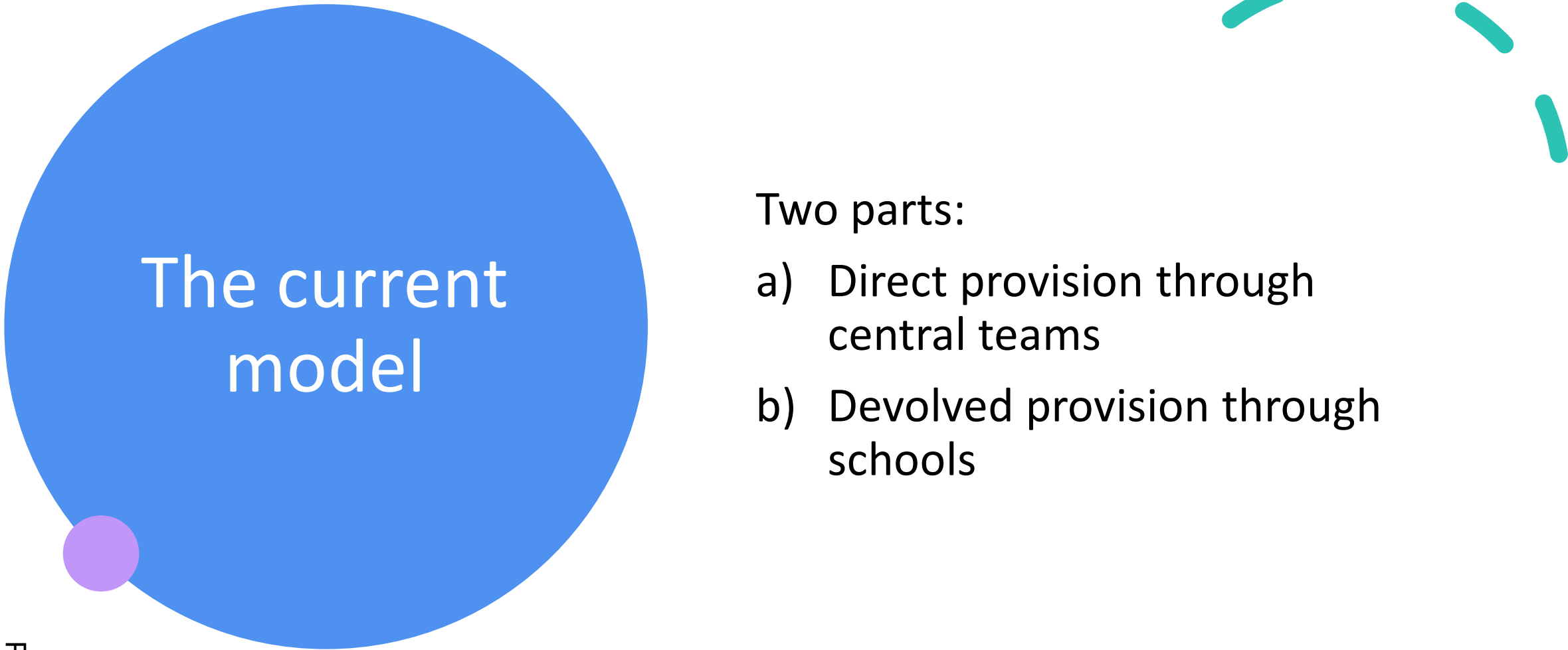
Remodelling the Education Inclusion Service

Ffion Edwards Ellis, Senior Gwynedd and
Anglesey Additional Learning Needs and
Inclusion Service Manager



Aim

To satisfy the requirement to provide suitable, full-time education in a timely manner to those who require different support

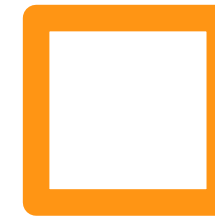
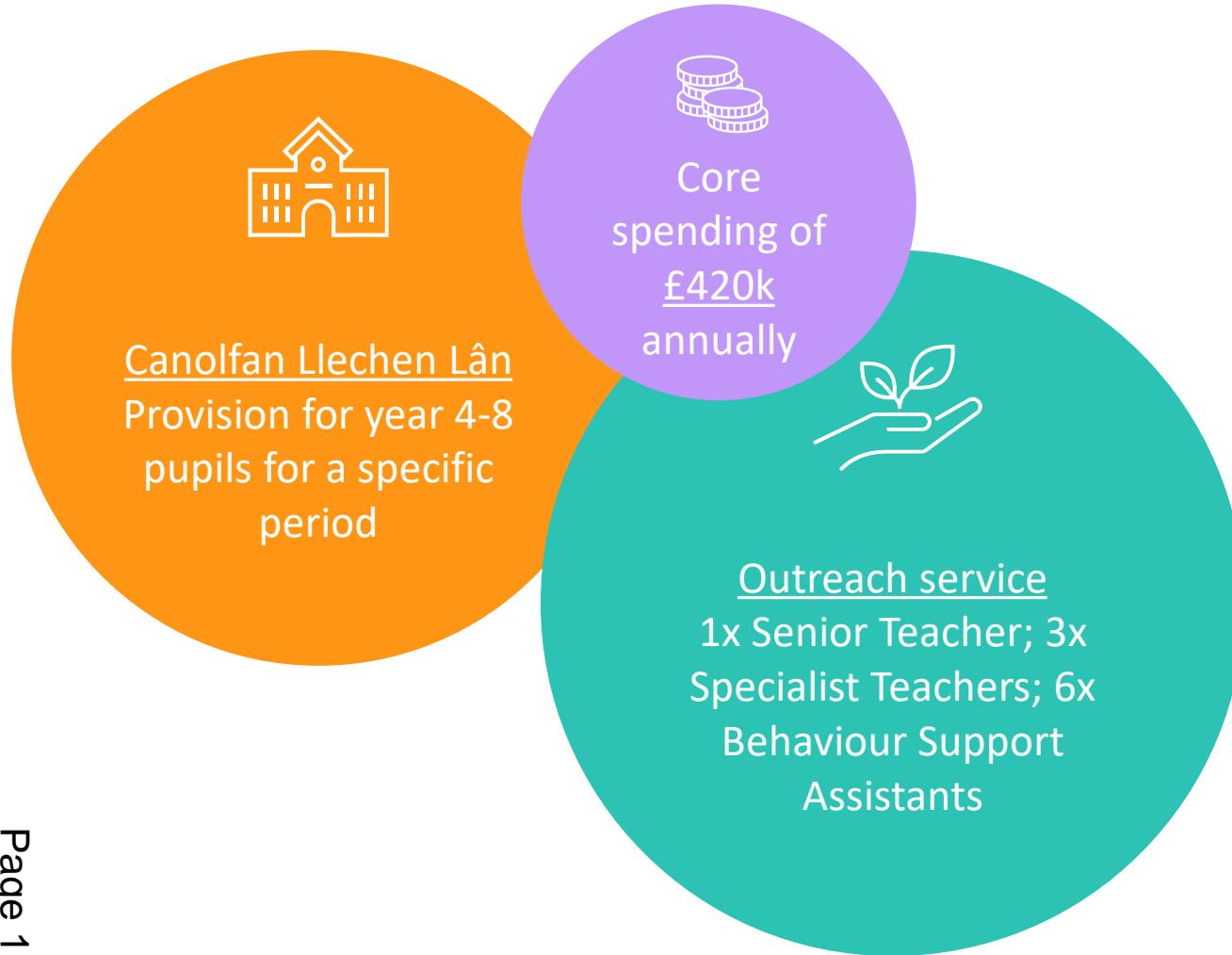


The current model

Two parts:

- a) Direct provision through central teams
- b) Devolved provision through schools

a) Central provision – Canolfan Llechen Lân and the outreach service



a) Central provision – Canolfan Llechen Lân



Canolfan Llechen Lân
Provision for year 4-8
pupils for a specific
period

A specialist centre
to support
behaviour, which
functions as a
temporary centre



Intense specialist support for a
small number of pupils who have
needs beyond what the school is
expected to respond to

A specific support
package over a
period of 8 weeks



a) Central provision – outreach service

Provide expert guidance to enable schools to tailor specialist interventions within the school's resources

Current offer

- Extension of the Llechen Lân provision
- Provision and support to maintain behaviour within schools for pupils, including spending periods in the classroom observing, modelling and monitoring
- Guidance to enable schools to tailor specialist interventions within the school's resources
- Training package

What needs to be strengthened

- Provision for year 9 pupils (*Lack of provision in the current model*)
- Extend pupils' time at Llechen Lân
- Specific provision for primary (year 4-6) secondary (year 7/8) (*the current offer is provision every term for a particular age*)
- Wider support in the period after returning to school

b) Central provision – Devolved provision through schools

Education provision commissioned to hold educational hubs for year 10/11 (pupils who are unable to cope in mainstream schools)

- Arfon (Ysgol Tryfan)
- Bangor-Ogwen (Ysgol Tryfan)
- Meirionnydd / Dwyfor (Ysgol y Moelwyn)



£480k (including WG Grant and income from schools) to commission two Schools to support the most vulnerable / behavioural pupils through specific hubs for year 10 and 11 pupils

b)£1.2M is allocated annually to secondary schools to maintain inclusion provision within the school as the first tier of support

Purpose

- Pre-provision budget to support behaviour outside of Gwynedd mainstream
- Schools support pupils through bespoke support

Weaknesses

- Lack of consistency
- Some schools have internal hubs (and, as a result, there is a small number of exclusions from these schools)
- More scrutiny is required on the use of the funding
- A percentage of the funding is now being used to support emotional well-being

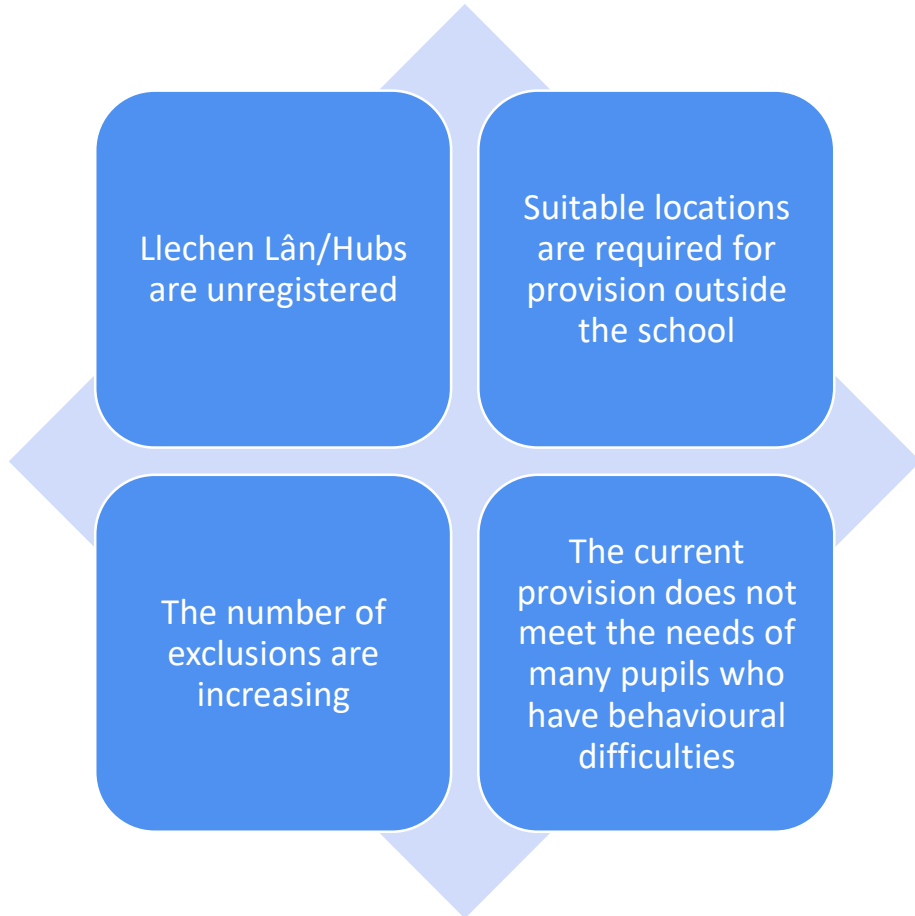
Risk

- Withdrawing the funding leads to more exclusions and a further impact on attendance

The background features several abstract geometric elements: a large blue circle on the right, a purple circle in the upper left, an orange square outline on the left, and an orange L-shaped line at the top. Teal dashed lines are scattered in the lower left and top left areas.

Remodelling

Why is the change needed?



- Accountability – need to adopt a formal Pupil Referral Unit status
- Current locations are unsuitable
- Need bespoke provision for year 9
- Need to strengthen and reconcile the provision
- Reduce the number of exclusions
- Review the staffing structure
- Identify opportunities in the field to improve the provision

Current Staffing/Locations

Llechen Lân/Outreach/Hubs-current model

Ysgol Dyffryn Nantlle Site

- 1 x Senior Teacher/ 3 Teachers
- 4 x Senior Assistants/ 3 Assistants

Hubs

- Ysgol Tryfan Deputy
- 5 x Senior Assistants

Weaknesses in the current model

Lack of teaching from qualified teachers

Alternative curriculum and limited enrichment activities

Need...

Appraisal of the roles required to run the Hubs/Llechen Lân

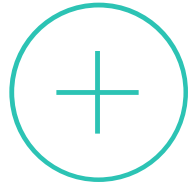
To create an appropriate staffing structure for the provision.



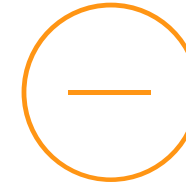
OPTIONS

Option 1- Continue with the current model

Llechen Lân/outreach/educational hubs through schools



- No change to school budgets for inclusion
- Staffing structure and support remain the same

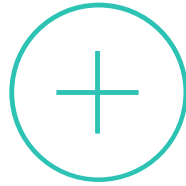


- Lack of response to Estyn recommendations
- Too weak to address the need
- Vulnerable pupils receive education at unsuitable sites
- Lack of accountability from hubs / schools continue
- Unable to get to grips with the low results of our most vulnerable pupils
- Exclusions remain high
- Long-term cost (more demand on services in the future)

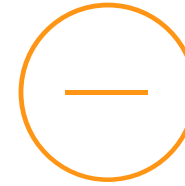
Option 2 (the ideal option)

Adapt and evolve the current model:

Reconsider the central provision by strengthening the Llechen Lân model, scrutinise on the use (£1.2M) of schools' devolved funding, increase staffing structure, develop a specialist team to support year 9 and establish a registered Specialist Centre for a small number of pupils



- Provide in specific locations with a high-quality learning environment from a qualified and skilled workforce.
- A robust staffing structure
- Central provision focusing on learners with the most serious needs
- A specialist centre for a small number of year 10 and 11 pupils



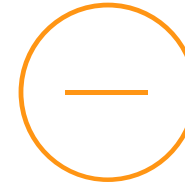
- Transportation costs
- One Specialist Centre
- Budget

Option 3

Strengthen the current model, increase the staffing structure, outreach work, support within schools.



- The needs of the majority of learners with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties are fulfilled through mainstream education
- New provision: a new model with the aim of providing specialist support within schools
- A robust staffing structure



- Reduce the sum of school inclusion
- One specific provision

Amended Staffing Model

Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Senior Teacher –x 0.6 Teachers x 3 Senior Assistants x 2.4 Assistants x 2.4 Hubs – x 7 Allocation £480K	Head of Portfolio x 1 Senior Teachers x 2 Teachers x 5 Senior Assistants x 5.4 Assistants x 5.4 Therapeutic worker x 0.5	Senior Teachers x 4 Teachers x 4 Senior Assistants x 5 Assistants x 7 Therapeutic worker x 0.5

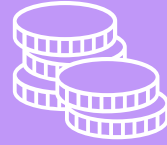
Anticipated costs

Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
No additional revenue costs	£189,554 revenue in addition to the current expenditure. Capital investment of the ALN grant (£500K available)	£259,008 revenue in addition to the current expenditure Capital investment of the ALN grant (£500K available)
	<i>Methods to meet the additional cost</i> Adapt the staffing structure Reduce the sum of school inclusion funding Reduce the range of provision	<i>Methods to meet the additional cost</i> Adapt the staffing structure Reduce the support Reduce the sum of school inclusion funding Reduce the range of provision
Financial risk Welsh Government Grant £157K is disappearing	Financial risk Welsh Government Grant £157K is disappearing	Financial risk Welsh Government Grant £157K is disappearing

Advantages of change



Improve outcomes
for the most
vulnerable
children and
young people



Reduction in long-
term costs –
Permanent
exclusion
quantitative costs
for the public purse
is significant

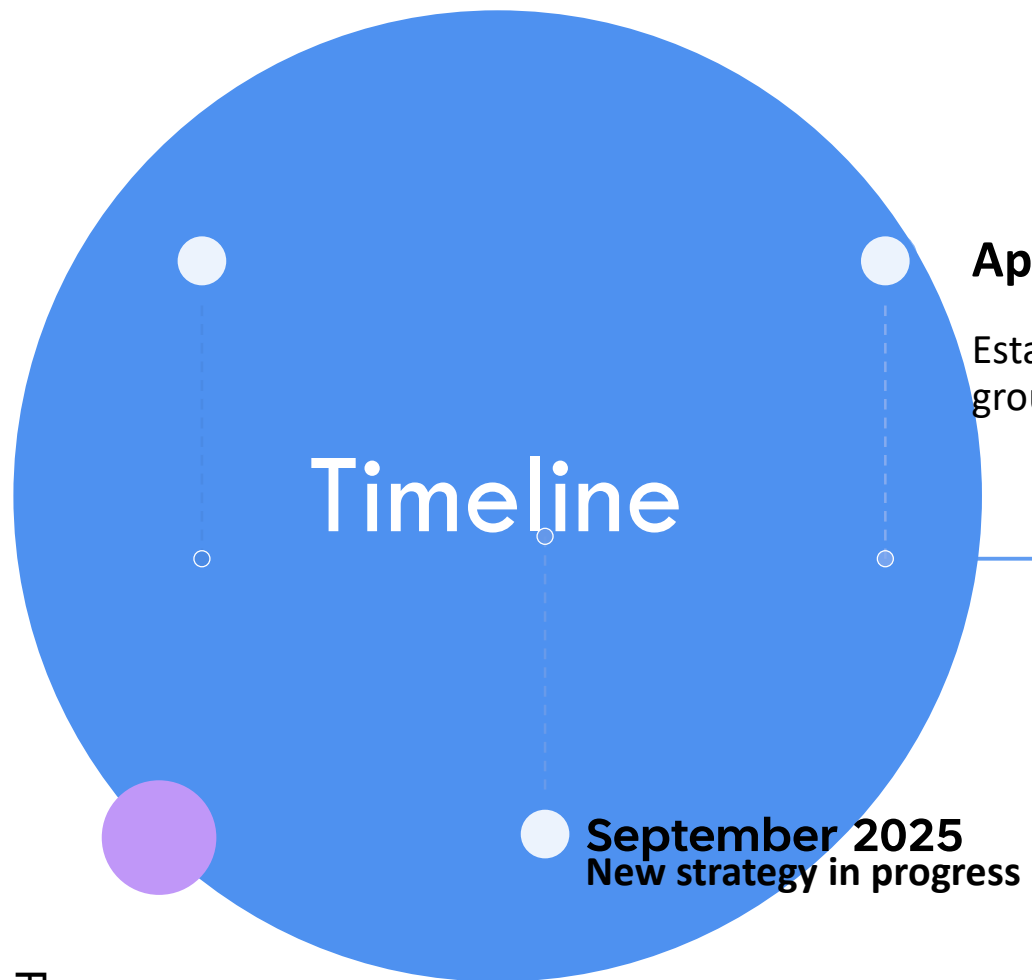


Effective partnership
with all the
stakeholders. Effective
strategy to support
behaviour, well-being
and social difficulties
of our learners

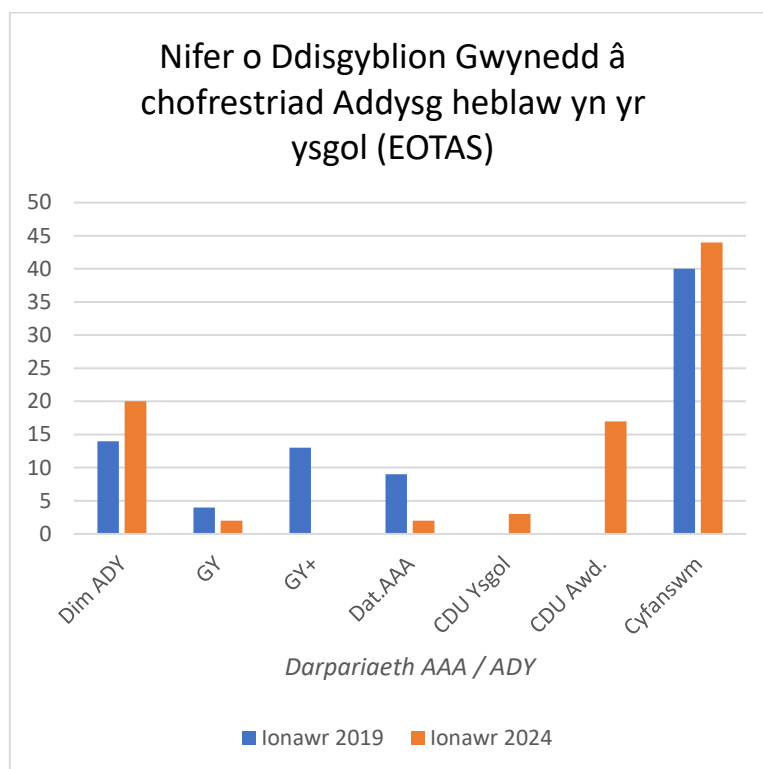


Preventative
provision and early
intervention for
schools and
learners



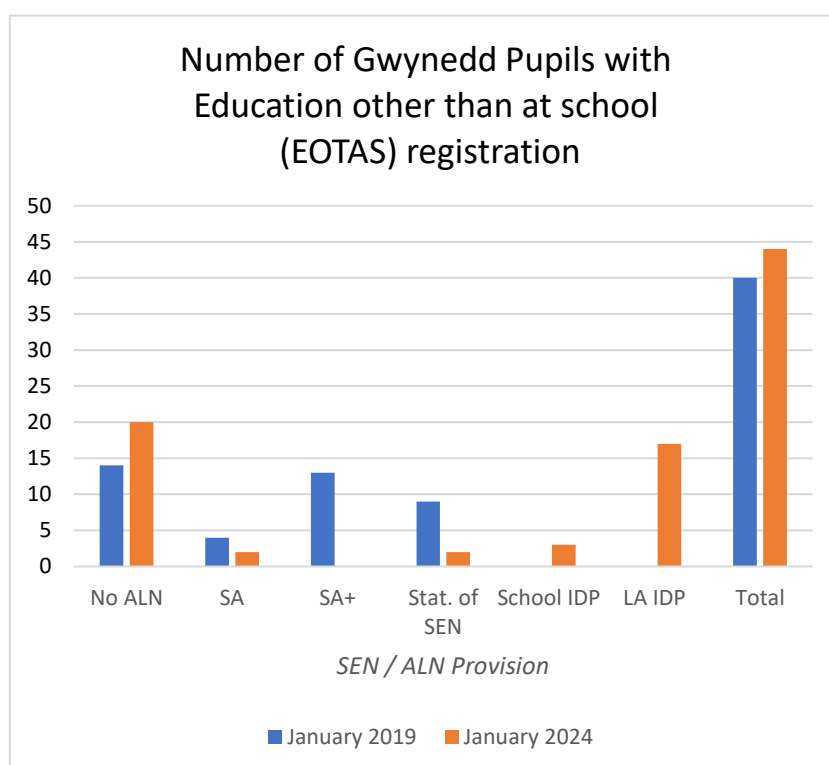


Nifer o Ddisgyblion Gwynedd â chofrestriad Addysg heblaw yn yr ysgol (EOTAS) yn Ionawr 2024 o gymharu â Ionawr 2019.



Ffynhonnell Data: Cyfrifiad ysgolion blynyddol ar lefel disgyblion (CYBLD)

Number of Gwynedd Pupils with Education other than at school (EOTAS) registration in January 2024 compared with January 2019.



Data Source: Pupil level annual school census (PLASC)

Assessing the Impact on Protected Characteristics, the Welsh Language and Socio-Economic Disadvantage

For help to complete this form see the How to Undertake an Equality Impact Assessment leaflet. You are also welcome to contact Delyth Gadlys Williams, Policy and Equality Officer on ext. 32708 or DelythGadlysWilliams@gwynedd.llyw.cymru for further assistance.

The Council's is required (under the Equality Act 2010) to consider the effect any change in policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure), has on people with protected equality characteristics. The Council also has a general duty to ensure fairness and foster good relations. A timely Equality Impact Assessment must be undertaken before making any decision on any relevant change (i.e. which has an effect on people with protected characteristics).

The Council is also required, under the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011) to consider the effect of a change in any policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure), in its opportunities for people to use Welsh and to ensure that Welsh is not treated less favourably than English. This document therefore ensures that these decisions protect and promote the use of the Welsh language.

From April 1st 2021 the Council has a duty to have due regard to tackling socio-economic disadvantage in strategic decisions.

I) Details

I.1 What is the name of the policy / service in question?

Remodelling Gwynedd Education Inclusion Service

I.2 What is the purpose of the policy / service that is being created or amended? What changes are being considered?

Over the years we have reduced the inclusion service. Back in 2012 we adopted an ambitious inclusion strategy which led to the closure of two referral units, one in Bangor and the other in Dolgellau and the closure of Coed Menai special school.

We have tried different models to provide for the children who cannot be included in schools, with mixed long-term effect results, and the range of provision not sufficient to meet the need. More recently we tried a hubs model where two schools provide rather than a central unit, again this was not an effective model. In addition, following the pandemic the behaviour and needs of our pupils have increased and we need to be strengthening the provision and support

available. Gwynedd Education Service was inspected by Estyn which is the education and training inspectorate in Wales, As a result of the inspection the need to strengthen the provision was highlighted to respond to the needs of pupils with behavioural social, emotional and social difficulties (BESD) together with ensuring monitoring arrangements and improving the quality of that provision.

As a result, we have planned options for change in the provision, and these were presented at the Council's Senior Leadership Team meeting in January 2025 and March 2025. We will also be consulting regarding a Strategy for Inclusion which will give a new focus on reducing Exclusions with Headteachers and other stakeholders will be a key part of the work. This has led us to consider opening a Registered Education Centre for the small number of pupils who experience behavioural difficulties that are beyond what a school can support, create a satellite service and extend the support of outreach schools team.

The changes being considered follow the recommendations of Estyn (June 2023) and Caroline Rees Report (November 2023), that is, an independent Review commissioned in response to Estyn's recommendations.

1.3 Who is responsible for this assessment?

Ffion Edwards Ellis – Assistant Head /Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Senior Manger
Ellen Rowlands, Inclusion Manager

1.4 When did you commence the assessment? Which version is this?

The work began in November 2023 when an independent review of the inclusion provision in Gwynedd was commissioned. Young people were consulted as part of the independent review A Project Board was established in March 2024 and there was consultation with stakeholders.

2) Action

2.1 Who are the stakeholders or partners you need to work with to undertake this assessment?

Schools; children and young people; the parents/carers of the children and young people

2.2 What measures have you taken to engage with people with equality characteristics, regarding the Welsh language or with communities (either of place or of need) that live with socio-economic disadvantage?

As part of an independent review of the inclusion provision (December 2023) there was a survey of the opinions of pupils who received the service. Pupils' feedback was positive about their experiences. All were keen for us to know that they feel they are now different people to those who were admitted to the centre at the start and have matured significantly in a short period of time. There was also a survey of the opinion of parents/carers who received the service. In conversations with parents during the review, one noted that the hub had transformed the young person's attitudes, creating hope for a better future. A foster parent noted that the child's needs were so high, neither a mainstream school nor such a hub could meet the child's needs, and the provision will need to be completely reviewed very soon. Every parent who was asked mentioned that the staff in the hubs had made a very significant contribution to help restore the young people's situation, and had created deep trust.

2.3 What was the result of the engagement?

The need to look again at the current model and adapt to ensure that we meet the difficulties that some experienced as a result of behavioural, emotional and social issues.

2.4 On the basis of what other evidence are you operating?

The need to strengthen the inclusion provision to respond to the needs of pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (BESD) and to ensure monitoring arrangements and improve the quality of that provision. The intention when reviewing the provision is to ensure that our provision is:

- Meeting the needs of children and young people
- Building on good practice
- Responding to a growing need

Estyn Report – June 2023

External review report November 2023

Exclusion data - current

Attendance Data - current

Number of pupils deregistering - current

A clear increase in the level of the needs of a number of pupils

2.5 Are there any gaps in the evidence that needs to be collected?

Consultation with stakeholders on a new Strategy to align with the new Inclusion model.

3) Identifying the Impact

3.1 The Council must give due regard to the effect any changes will have on people with the equality characteristics noted below. What impact will the new policy/service or the proposed changes in the policy or service have on people with these characteristics.

Characteristics	What type of impact?*	In what way? What is the evidence?
Race (including nationality)	Positive	<p>Develop a culture of inclusion and diversity that enables everyone who receives support either at the school or at the Education Centre to feel proud of their identity, and participate fully in the life of the Centre and Service by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminating or reducing disadvantages suffered by people who share a relevant protected characteristic associated with that characteristic • Encouraging positive behaviour among our young people • Preventing to undo any negative attitudes • Encouraging our pupils to be inclusive
Disability	Positive Negative	<p>The Inclusion Service supports a number of pupils with behavioural social, emotional and social difficulties (BESD) and strengthening the provision will improve their outcomes.</p> <p>For some pupils with BESD, a disability or vulnerable pupils, it may take time to familiarise themselves with any change to new arrangements or location. Transition support will be available for pupils to feel comfortable in their environment</p>
Sex	Positive	We recognise our duty and responsibility to establish equality for all our learners, staff, other members of the school community and service users, regardless of their race, gender, disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, religion or belief, as defined in the Equality Act 2010.
Age	Positive	The Inclusion Service supports pupils in Gwynedd. The review focuses on the well-being of children and young people in Gwynedd and specifically school years 10-11.

		<p>By promoting the well-being of children and young people and modernizing buildings and the learning environment, the proposals are in line with the well-being objectives of Gwynedd Council, <i>Tomorrow's Gwynedd</i>, "Giving our children and young people the best possible start in life" and <i>A Caring Gwynedd</i>, "Ensuring that children, young people and their families live happy lives and reach their potential in terms of their education, health and well-being" and the well-being goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) (2015).</p> <p>For the children and young pupils with ALN, the proposals contribute to the local authority's duties under the Additional Learning Needs and the Education Tribunal (Wales) Act (2018).</p>
Sexual orientation	Positive	We recognise our duty and responsibility to establish equality for all our learners, staff, other members of the school community and service users, regardless of their race, gender, disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, religion or belief, as defined in the Equality Act 2010.
Religion or belief (or non belief)	Positive	We recognise our duty and responsibility to establish equality for all our learners, staff, other members of the school community and service users, regardless of their race, gender, disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, religion or belief, as defined in the Equality Act 2010.
Gender reassignment	Positive	We recognise our duty and responsibility to establish equality for all our learners, staff, other members of the school community and service users, regardless of their race, gender, disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, religion or belief, as defined in the Equality Act 2010.
Pregnancy and maternity	Positive	The inclusion service is available to support young parents (School age). Improved outcomes and opportunities in life come from engagement with education.
Marriage and civil partnership	None	No impact identified
The Welsh language	Positive	Support and a Service within the Gwynedd Education system to ensure a Plan that assists our pupils to flourish and achieve their long-term potential in order to maintain the local language, culture and economy.

Socio Economic Disadvantage	Positive	<p>The inclusion service supports a high number of children and their families who do not engage well with school / lower than average school attendance. A high percentage of service users are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM). Improved outcomes and opportunities in life come from engagement with education. There will be a reduction in the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), offering pathways for further education or training, or the world of work.</p> <p>The support will extend to one satellite Centre as needed. This will reduce the need to travel to one Centre and be available as needed.</p>
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3.2 The Council has a duty under the 2010 Equality Act to contribute positively to a fairer society by promoting equality and good relations in its activities regarding the following characteristics – age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, race, gender reassignment, disability and pregnancy and maternity. The Council must give due attention to the way any change affects these duties.

General Duties of the Equality Act	Does it have an impact?*	In what way? What is the evidence?
Abolishing illegal discrimination, harassment and victimisation	Yes	<p>The Service recognises ensuring fairness for all as a priority along with tackling poverty. These two priorities are closely related to each other because people who have certain equality characteristics tend to be statistically poorer than those who do not.</p> <p>Broadly we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce, barriers for different people and protected characteristics. • Treat all young people with respect and dignity, whatever their background, need or characteristics of equality. • Provide services in a manner that is consistent and fair, by staff who are trained and operate according to good practice guidelines in the field of equality. • Aim to provide information to ensure access to Support, in a simple, understandable way and in methods relevant to people's requirements according to their needs. • Aim to ensure that access to the support is available in the language of the individual's

		choice, whether that be Welsh, English or British Sign Language.
Promoting equal opportunities	Yes	The aim is to give our children and young people the best possible start in life. Our ambition is to ensure that all pupils educated in Gwynedd are treated according to their needs, to encourage them to treat others equally and to ensure that their well-being and happiness is our priority
Encouraging good relationships	Yes	Promoting the well-being of children and young people is one of the priorities of the Council's Plan 2023-28.

* to be deleted as appropriate

3.3 How does your proposal ensure that you work in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011), to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than English and that you seize every opportunity to promote the Welsh language (beyond providing services bilingually) and increase opportunities to use and learn the language in the community?

The effect on Protected Characteristics and the Welsh language is that the proposal would improve the results for all pupils, including those who learn through the medium of Welsh.

3.4 What other measures or changes could you include to strengthen or change the policy / practice in order to have a positive impact on people's opportunities to use the Welsh language, and to reduce or prevent any adverse effects that the policy / practice may have on the Welsh language?

In accordance with the Welsh Language in Education Strategic Plan and the Council's Language policy we will ensure a Plan to assist our Young People to flourish and achieve their long-term potential in order to maintain the language, culture and the local economy.
Encourages individuals and other organizations to use the Welsh language when communicating with us.

3.5 How does the proposal show that you have had due regard to the need to address inequality caused by socio-economic disadvantage? (Note that this

is about closing inequality gaps rather than just improving outcomes for everyone)?

Young people suffer as a result of economic inequality clearly among the target group
Consequently increasing and improving the provision for them alleviates economic - social disadvantage

3.6 What other measures or changes might you include to strengthen or change the policy / practice to show that you have had due regard to the need to reduce disproportionate outcomes as a result of socio-economic disadvantage, in accordance with the Socio Economic Act?

Nothing has been identified

4) Analysing the results

4.1 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, positive impact on any of the above and what is the reason for this?

Positive, through
Giving the best possible support to our young people who experience social, emotional and social difficulties to receive

- Bespoke support
- Opportunity to succeed educationally (having the same opportunity as his peers) · Improving outcomes and opportunities in life that come from engagement with education.
- A reduction in the numbers not in education, employment or training, offering pathways for further education or training, or the world of work.

4.2 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, negative impact on any of the above and what is the reason for this?

Nothing has been identified

4.3 What should be done?

Choose one of the following:

Continue with the policy / service as it is robust	X
Adapt the policy to delete any barriers	
Suspend and delete the policy as the detrimental impacts are too big	
Continue with the policy as any detrimental impact can be justified	
No further action at this time because it is too soon to decide, or there is insufficient evidence	

4.4 If continuing with the project, what steps will you take to reduce or mitigate any negative impacts?

Monitoring the provision by measuring results
Monitoring school exclusion data
Estyn's Inspection Framework

4.5 If you are not taking any further action to delete or reduce the negative impacts, explain why here.

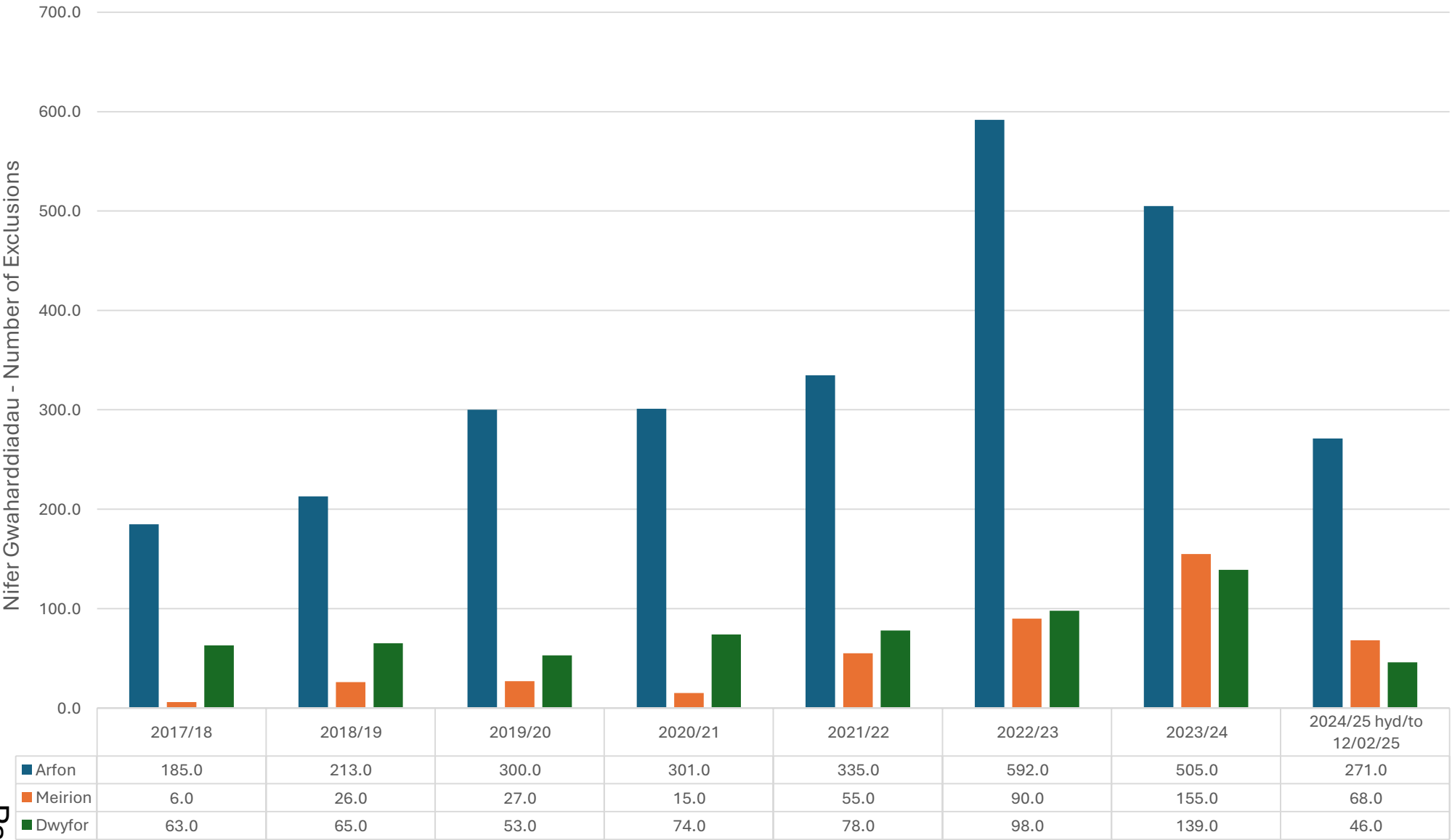
Not applicable - nothing has been identified

5) Monitoring

5.1 What steps will you take to monitor the impact and effectiveness of the policy or service (action plan)?

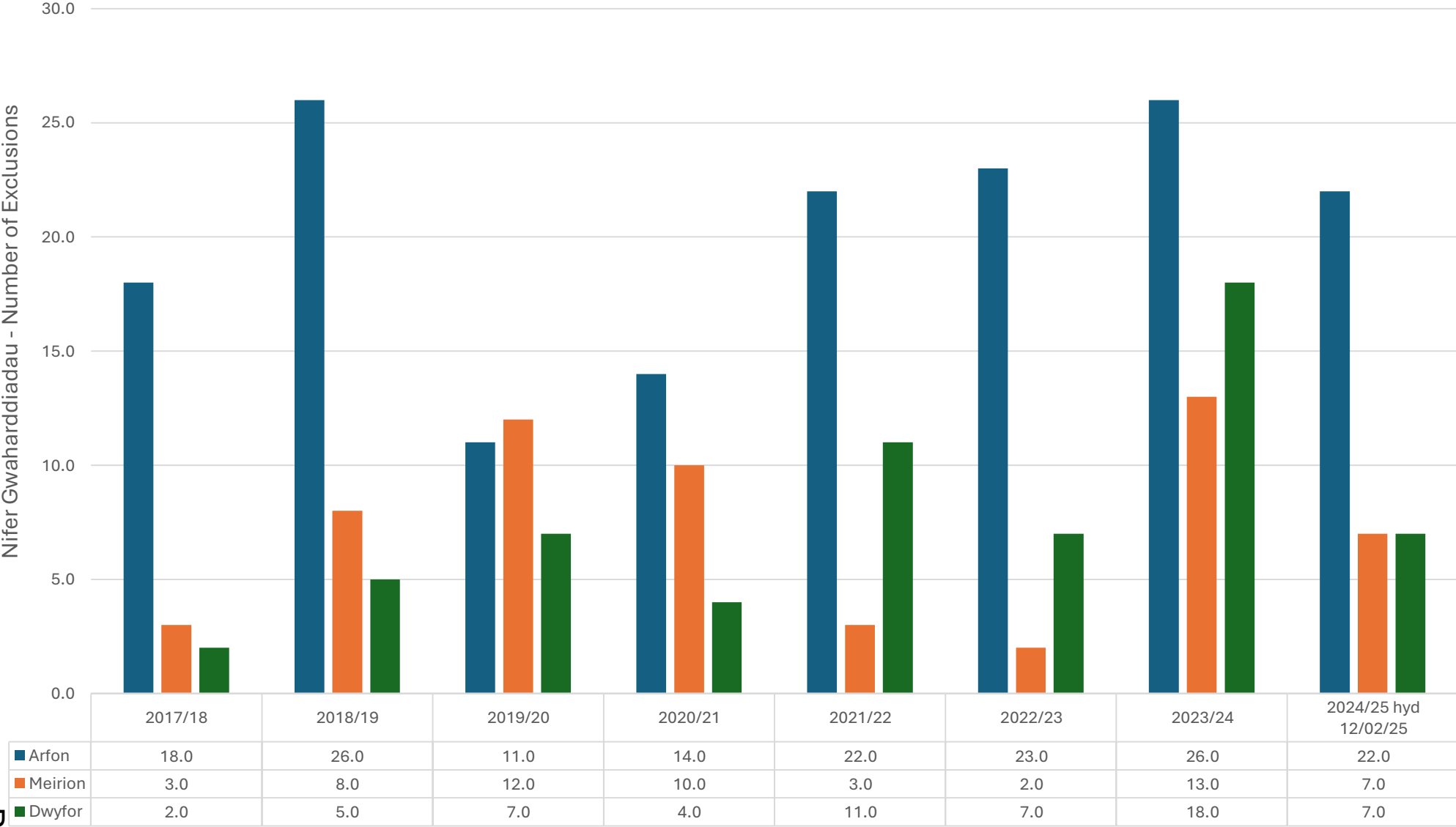
The Education Department will carefully monitor the impact of the provision and report as part of the challenging performance and Scrutiny Committee meeting arrangements.

Gwaharddiadau Cyfnod Penodol 5 Diwrnod neu Lai
Fixed Period Exclusions 5 Days or Less



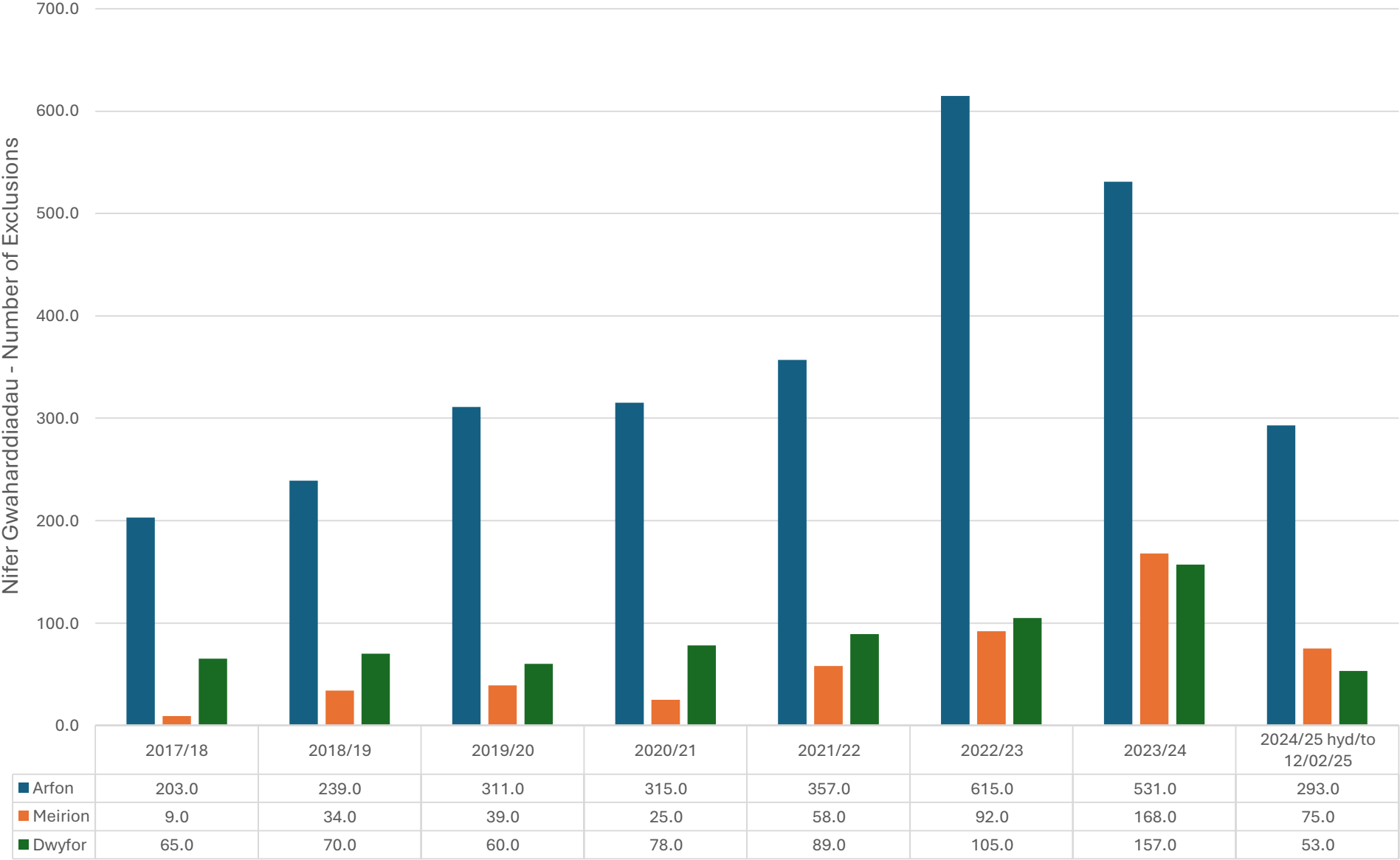
Arfon Meirion Dwyfor

Gwaharddiadau Cyfnod Penodol mwy na 5 diwrnod
Fixed Period Exclusions more than 5 days



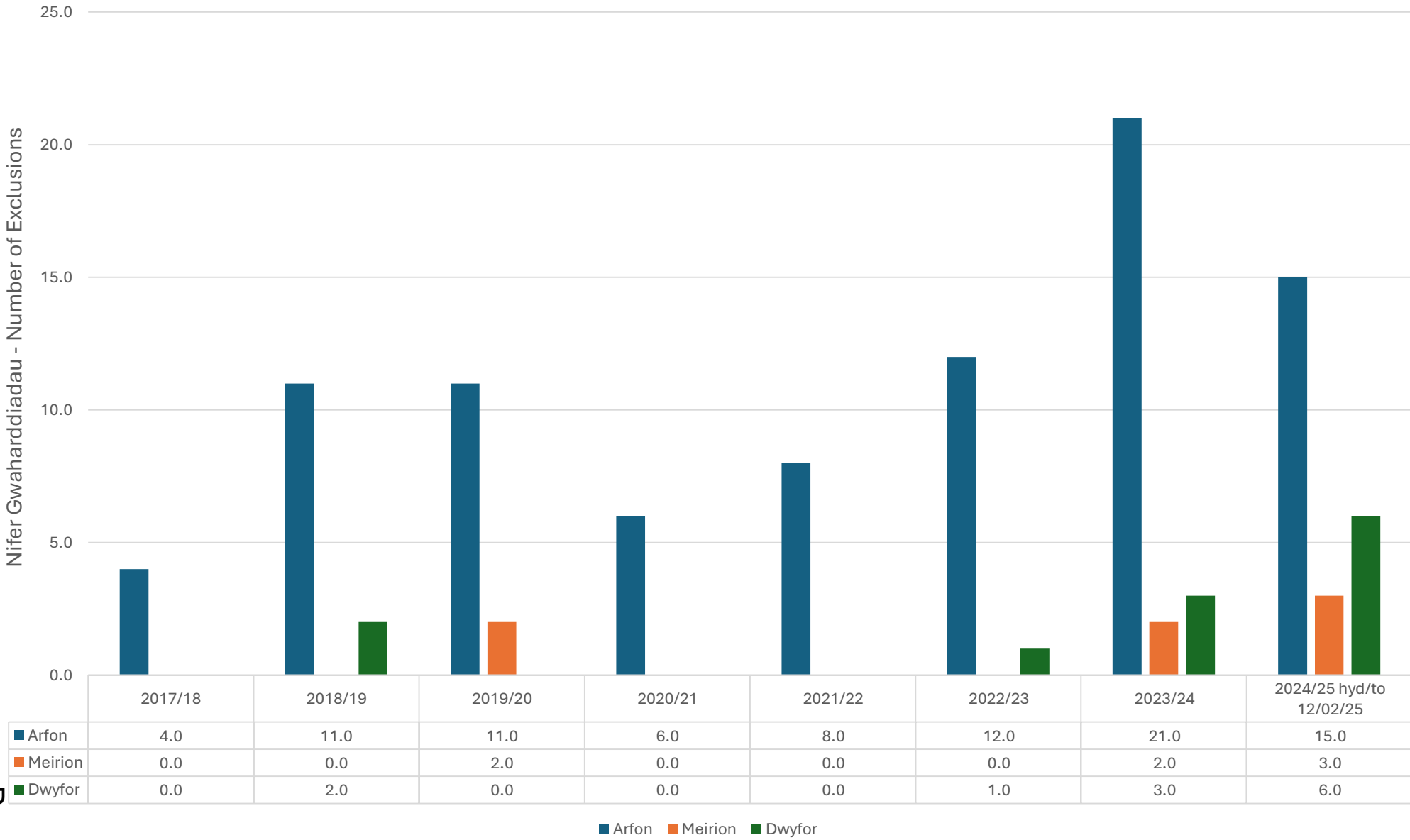
Arfon Meirion Dwyfor

Gwaharddiadau Cyfnod Penodol (Cyfan)
Fixed Period Exclusions (Total)

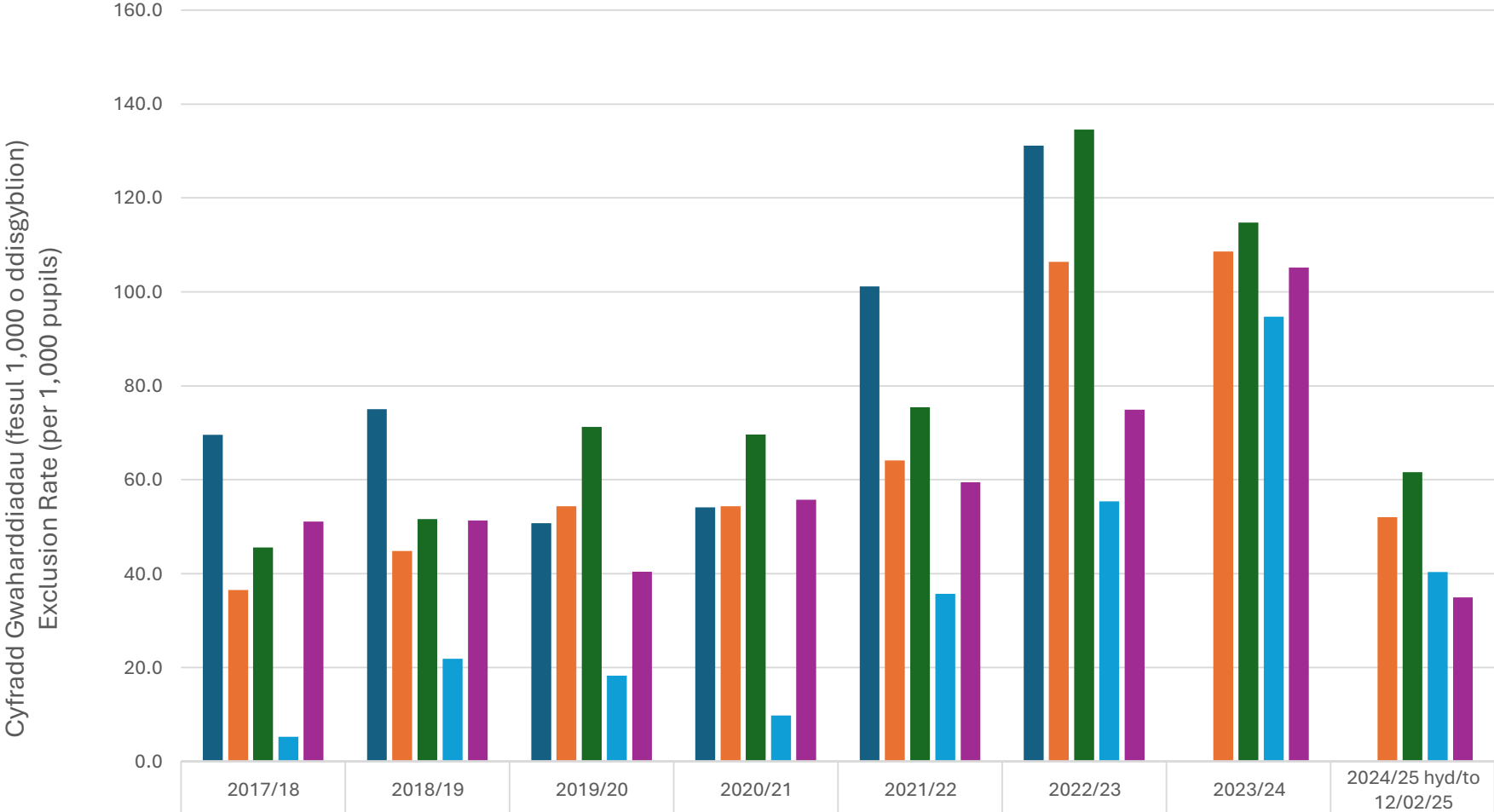


Arfon Meirion Dwyfor

Gwaharddiadau Parhaol
Permanent Exclusions



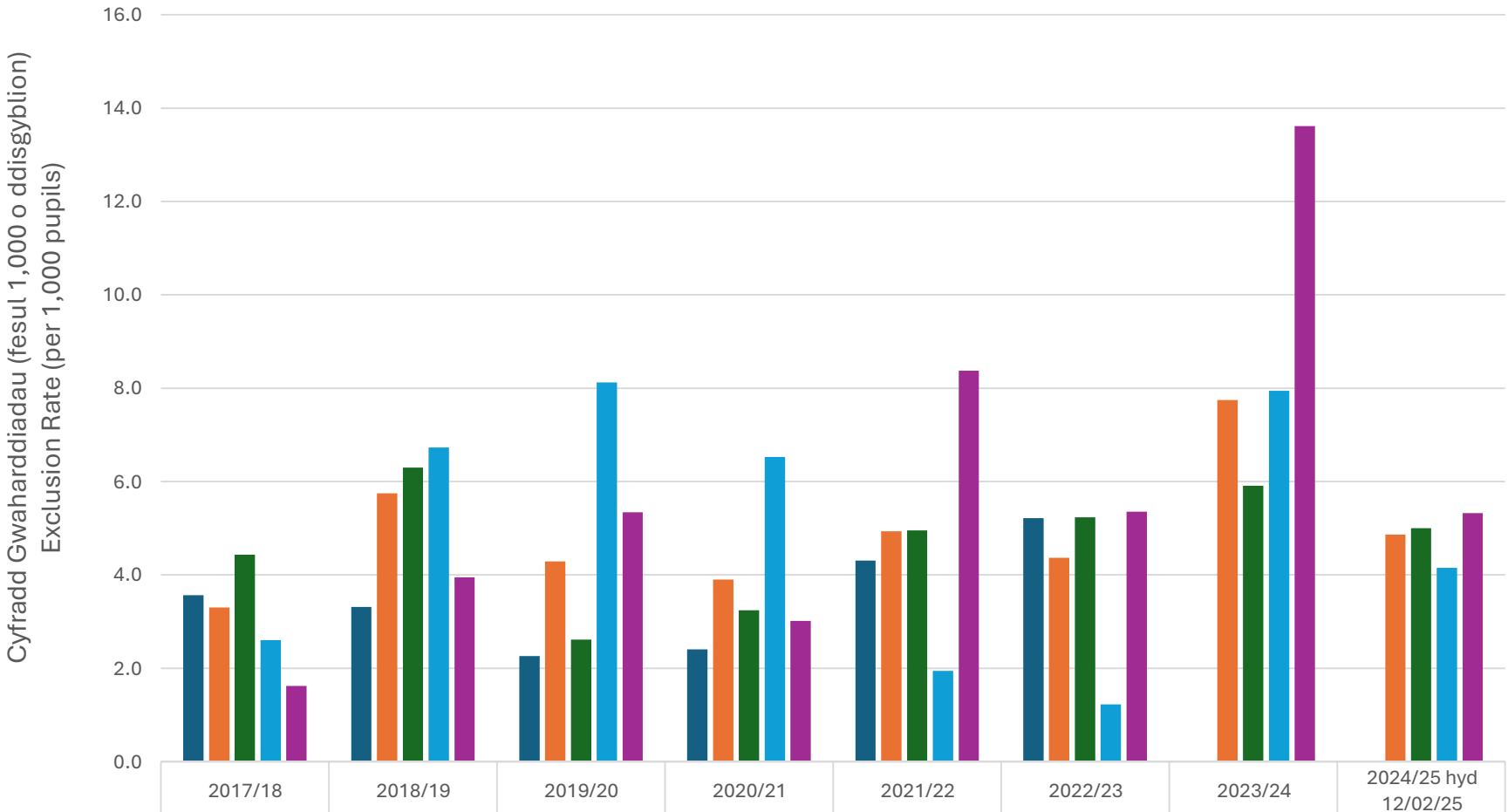
Cyfradd Gwaharddiadau Cyfnod Penodol 5 Diwrnod neu Lai
Fixed Period Exclusion Rate 5 Days or Less



Cymru - Uwchradd/Secondary (PLASC)	69.6	75.0	50.7	54.1	101.1	131.2		
Gwynedd - Uwchradd/Secondary	36.5	44.8	54.3	54.3	64.2	106.4	108.6	52.0
Arfon	45.6	51.6	71.3	69.6	75.4	134.6	114.8	61.6
Meirion	5.2	21.9	18.3	9.8	35.7	55.4	94.7	40.3
Dwyfor	51.1	51.3	40.4	55.7	59.4	74.9	105.1	35.0

Cymru - Uwchradd/Secondary (PLASC) Gwynedd - Uwchradd/Secondary Arfon Meirion Dwyfor

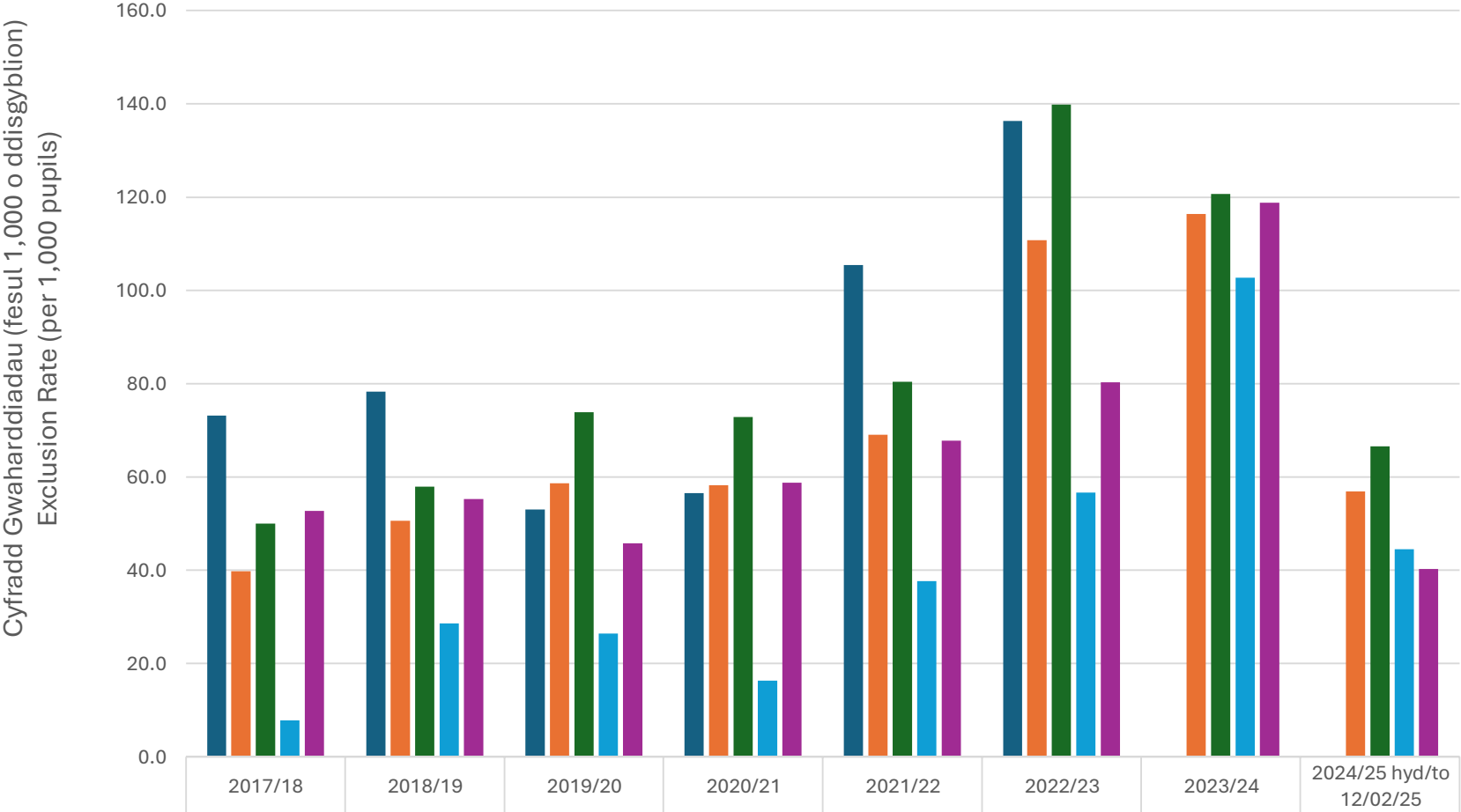
Cyfradd Gwaharddiadau Cyfnod Penodol mwy na 5 diwrnod
Fixed Period Exclusion Rate more than 5 days



Cymru - Uwchradd/Secondary (PLASC)	3.6	3.3	2.3	2.4	4.3	5.2		
Gwynedd - Uwchradd/Secondary	3.3	5.7	4.3	3.9	4.9	4.4	7.7	4.9
Arfon	4.4	6.3	2.6	3.2	5.0	5.2	5.9	5.0
Meirion	2.6	6.7	8.1	6.5	1.9	1.2	7.9	4.2
Dwyfor	1.6	3.9	5.3	3.0	8.4	5.4	13.6	5.3

Cymru - Uwchradd/Secondary (PLASC) Gwynedd - Uwchradd/Secondary Arfon Meirion Dwyfor

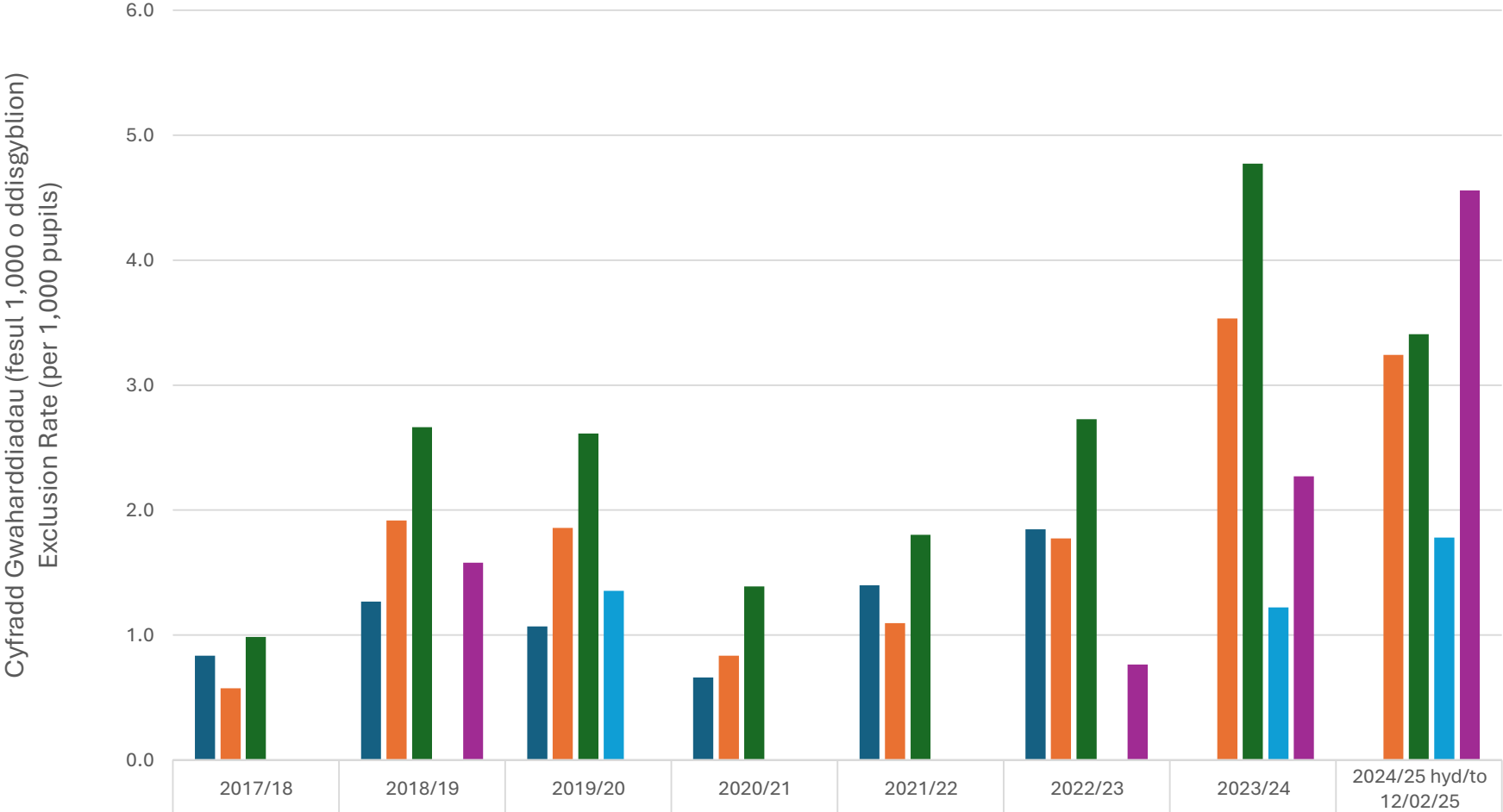
Cyfradd Gwaharddiadau Cyfnod Penodol (Cyfan)
Fixed Period Exclusion Rate (Total)



Cymru - Uwchradd/Secondary (PLASC)	73.1	78.3	53.0	56.5	105.4	136.4		
Gwynedd - Uwchradd/Secondary	39.8	50.6	58.6	58.2	69.1	110.8	116.3	56.9
Arfon	50.0	57.9	73.9	72.9	80.4	139.8	120.7	66.6
Meirion	7.8	28.6	26.4	16.3	37.6	56.6	102.7	44.5
Dwyfor	52.7	55.2	45.8	58.7	67.8	80.3	118.8	40.3

Cymru - Uwchradd/Secondary (PLASC) Gwynedd - Uwchradd/Secondary Arfon Meirion Dwyfor

Cyfradd Gwaharddiadau Parhaol
Rate of Permanent Exclusions



Cymru - Uwchradd/Secondary (PLASC)	0.8	1.3	1.1	0.7	1.4	1.8		
Gwynedd - Uwchradd/Secondary	0.6	1.9	1.9	0.8	1.1	1.8	3.5	3.2
Arfon	1.0	2.7	2.6	1.4	1.8	2.7	4.8	3.4
Meirion	0.0	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.2	1.8
Dwyfor	0.0	1.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	2.3	4.6

Cymru - Uwchradd/Secondary (PLASC) Gwynedd - Uwchradd/Secondary Arfon Meirion Dwyfor

CYNGOR GWYNEDD – Report to the Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet



Title of item:	<u>2025/26 Shared Prosperity Fund in Gwynedd</u>
Cabinet Member:	Councillor R. Medwyn Hughes Cabinet Member – Economy and Community
Relevant officer:	Dylan Griffiths, Manager, Economic Development Service Economy and Community Department
Date of meeting:	08 April 2025

1. Decision Sought

- 1.1 To agree to the continuation of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund's regional governance procedure for the 2025/26 transitional year, and authorise the Head of Economy and Community Department - in consultation with the Head of Finance, Head of Legal Service and the Chief Executive - to confirm the arrangements.
- 1.2 To continue with the UK Shared Prosperity Fund's local governance arrangements in Gwynedd for the 2025/26 transitional year.
- 1.3 To agree that it is required for every scheme in Gwynedd, which receive funding from the Shared Prosperity Fund, to realise two principles:
 - a) That targeted efforts are made to ensure that SPF money and the resulting benefits are beneficial to communities and residents in all parts of Gwynedd.
 - b) That targeted efforts are made to encourage activities (and organisations), that have not previously received funding, to obtain access to support.
- 1.4 In accordance with the principle of the UK Government that the 2025/26 funding of the Shared Prosperity Fund is an extension of the 2022/23 to 2024/25 period, which transitions to a new funding procedure; to agree to evolve and adapt activities from amongst existing projects and extend them for the transitional year.
- 1.5 To agree to commit up to £7,900,000 from the Gwynedd 2025/26 allocation from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to the 14 schemes listed in the report.
- 1.6 To agree to the continuation of four funds (with a total budget of approximately £2.29 million) to distribute smaller sums of Shared Prosperity Fund money to the county's enterprises and communities, authorising the continuation of three funds under Cyngor Gwynedd's control.
- 1.7 To authorise the Head of Economy and Community Department, in consultation with the Head of Legal Service, the Head of Finance Department and the Chief Executive,

to confirm the details of the plans and financial contribution, in consultation with the Shared Prosperity Fund Panel: Gwynedd.

2. What is the reason why the Cabinet must make the decision

- 2.1 The UK Government established the Shared Prosperity Fund for a period of three financial years up to the end of 2024/25. Governance arrangements were established and money was committed to projects in line with the timetable.
- 2.2 The UK Government has decided to continue with the Fund for another year (2025/26), and so the Cabinet needs to confirm the arrangements for this additional year and decide how to use the money.

3. Introduction and Rationale

3.1 Background / Introduction

- 3.1.1 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) was announced in April 2022 for the period up to March 2025. The Fund is £2.6 billion, with money to be allocated to all parts of the UK, based on a formula.
- 3.1.2 In England, the money has gone directly to individual Local Authorities. In Wales, local areas had to collaborate and one 'lead authority' had to be accountable for the money on behalf of the region (Cyngor Gwynedd in the case of North Wales). More background information can be found in the report submitted to the Cabinet on 19 July 2022 (see [here](#)).
- 3.1.3 It was confirmed in December 2023 that £126.46 million had been allocated to North Wales for the period. An allocation of £24.42 million was given to Gwynedd (including £2.94 million to be used exclusively to improve the numeracy skills of adults).
- 3.1.4 Although there is emphasis on regional collaboration in the context of the SPF, every county in North Wales were in agreement that areas need to benefit in accordance with the value of their individual allocation, and that deciding how to use their allocation was a matter for local areas.
- 3.1.5 A legal agreement was established to manage the relationship between the counties; in every county, staff are employed to implement the Fund, and the team collectively in Gwynedd look after the administration of the money. The arrangements for the governance and delivery of the Fund were adopted by the Cabinet on 24 January 2023 (see [here](#)).
- 3.1.6 During the first half of 2023, an open / competitive application procedure was carried out for larger schemes who wish to receive money directly from the SPF. (The details of the procedure continues to be on the Council's website, [here](#)).

- 3.1.7 On 20 July 2023 (see [here](#)), the Cabinet - on the grounds of recommendations from a Panel including Cabinet Members and Council's chief officers, in consultation with local stakeholders - committed £21.35 million of Gwynedd SPF funding to 39 schemes, including establishing funds to distribute smaller sums from the Shared Prosperity Fund money to the county's enterprises and communities. The details of all the schemes can be seen on the Council's website, [here](#).
- 3.1.8 The current funding period ends on 31 March 2025. Any money that has not been spent by then will be returned to the UK Government.
- 3.1.9 In the Autumn Budget (30 October 2024), the UK Government announced an intention to continue with the Fund with less money (£900 million) for 2025/26 to allow time to amend the funding procedure from April 2026.
- 3.1.10 On 13 December 2024, the allocations for 2025/26 were announced (see [here](#)). £42.42 million has been allocated to North Wales for 2025/26, which is around half the expenditure for 2024/25. £8.19 million has been allocated to Gwynedd, with £7.90 million available for project delivery.
- 3.1.11 The UK Government considers the new money as:
- an extension of the 2022-25 fund to ensure stability (although separately for budgetary and reporting purposes);
 - a transitional year which provides assurances when preparing to change the funding procedure within the work field;
 - a continuation of the existing method and administration;
 - a continuation of the existing activity where appropriate;
 - a means to enable the UK Government officers (with Welsh Government) to focus on the future funding after 2025/26.
- 3.1.12 Reflecting the above, the UK Government presumes that the current 'lead authorities' will continue. They have also confirmed that only expenditure between 01 April 2025 and 31 March 2026 will be eligible to receive money and that they intend for the SPF to end at that time.

3.2 The rationale and justification for recommending the decision

- 3.2.1 There are practical restrictions associated with realising a transition year to the SPF in 2025/26. Mainly, the lack of time to select plans and for those plans to deliver, creates a risk in terms of ensuring the best use of the money, whilst making sure that money is being spent and is not returned to London.

Governance

- 3.2.2 As time is scarce and as the Shared Prosperity Fund is ending, it would not be logical to change or adapt the governance arrangements for the North Wales region, beyond what is necessary.

- 3.2.3 Recommendation 1.1 asks to continue with the regional governance arrangements for the 2025/26 transitional year, including that Cyngor Gwynedd continues to be the 'lead authority' for the SPF in North Wales. Some changes to the existing agreement between the six North Wales authorities are inevitable, to reflect the change in the SPF programme period and the budget, and so the Cabinet is required to authorise officers to undertake the work.
- 3.2.4 Locally (recommendation 1.2), it is logical to continue with the governance arrangements adopted previously. It is a UK Government requirement that the Local Authority decides on the use of the money and that there is a procedure of obtaining stakeholder input (a Consultative Group was established for the Gwynedd SPF in this respect).
- 3.2.5 Continuing with the Panel within the Council, including the Cabinet Members (specifically the Leader, Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member for Economy and Community and the Cabinet Member for Finance) and the chief officers (the Chief Executive, Head of Finance, Head of Legal Services and the Head of Economy and Community), to monitor the delivery of the SPF during 2025/26 and to offer guidance, will be important to ensure that the Fund can be managed in a flexible and responsive way.
- 3.2.6 To be consistent with the decision-making procedure to commit SPF funding for 2022/23 - 2024/25, a decision is sought from the Cabinet to commit the Gwynedd 2025/26 SPF allocation.

Implementation method for 2025/26

- 3.2.7 Taking observations from the Consultative Group of county stakeholders into account, the Council has considered how to make the best use of the additional money for 2025/26 within the restrictions, which derive from the lack of time to develop proposals and implement them.
- 3.2.8 To ensure that every scheme receiving 2025/26 SPF funding delivers for the people and communities of Gwynedd, there are two principles that we wish to adopt to ensure that the SPF benefits continue to spread in the county:
- a) That targeted efforts are made to ensure that SPF money and the resulting benefits are beneficial to communities and residents in all parts of Gwynedd.
 - b) That targeted efforts encourage activities (and organisations), that have not previously received funding, to obtain access to support.
- 3.2.9 The Council wishes to ensure through recommendation 1.3 that every project incorporates these principles in their design and implementation.
- 3.2.10 Ideally, the Council and Consultative Group would wish to hold a full application procedure to ask for proposals for 2025/26 SPF funding, but it is not considered that there is sufficient time to hold an exercise or approve new schemes to be developed and implemented.

- 3.2.11 In the same manner, the Council and Consultative Group was not of the opinion that only giving opportunities to submit proposals to the schemes that are operational already would be desirable or acceptable, considering the core principles.
- 3.2.12 Consequently, the Council has commissioned plans with partners on the grounds of the UK Government themes for the 2025/26 SPF, using a selection of plans funded in 2022/23 to 2024/25 as a basis (recommendation 1.4).
- 3.2.13 It is acknowledged that there will be a need for plans operating across more than one county to continue to be individual applications for administrative purposes. Nevertheless, the same requirement to collaborate with other schemes in the county in the same field will continue, as well as the requirement for them to incorporate the principles in recommendation 1.3.

Gwynedd 2025/26 SPF Schemes

- 3.2.14 Despite the practical constraints, there was a wish to ensure that 2025/26 schemes incorporate lessons from the previous period, evolve their activities to reflect opportunities or new needs and coordinate activity within the work fields to increase the benefit.
- 3.2.15 The Council has facilitated bringing partners and stakeholders together, based on the themes adopted by the UK Government for the SPF in 2025/26, namely:
- Skills
 - Employability
 - Support for Business
 - Thriving Places
 - Healthy, Safe and Inclusive Communities
- 3.2.16 Reflecting on the established principles, there was a focus on organisations and stakeholders within the fields serving Gwynedd as a whole or a vast area of the county.
- 3.2.17 Similarly, attention was given to attempting to ensure that grant funds distributed smaller amounts of SPF money to help communities, enterprises and voluntary organisations in the county continued to be available.
- 3.2.18 The pack of schemes being recommended (recommendations 1.5 and 1.6), include 13 projects:
- Seven schemes are applications to continue schemes which operate across more than one county. These applications request £1.49 million (18.9%) from the SPF that is available to Gwynedd in 2025/26. (The continuation of these applications is subject to the support from other relevant counties).
 - Six schemes will be operational in Gwynedd only. The recommendation asks to make £6.41 million (81.1%) of the SPF funding available to these schemes. Every scheme includes provision across Gwynedd.

- The distribution across the SPF themes are as follows:

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Number of schemes</u>	<u>SPF Estimate</u>
Skills	2 (14.3%)	£697,000 (8.8%)
Employability	1 (7.1%)	£1,069,000 (13.5%)
Support for Business	5 (35.7%)	£1,428,000 (18.1%)
Thriving Places	2 (14.3%)	£ 2,179,000 (27.6%)
Healthy Communities, etc.	4 (28.6%)	£ 2,528,000 (32.0%)
<u>Total</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>£7,900,000</u>

- The schemes include 4 Funds that will distribute £2.29 million in the form of smaller grants to communities, enterprises and voluntary organisations. 28.9% of the SPF funding will be available for distribution.

3.2.19 The schemes recommended build on what has been learnt from realising the SPF in Gwynedd to date, address the established principles, and offer an appropriate balance of activity across the themes and work in the county and across counties when advantageous to do so.

3.2.20 There is an outline of individual plans in Appendix 1, but in brief:

THEME: Skills £697,000

- Support plan for young people in education or training* (Grŵp Llandrillo-Menai)
- Skills Scheme for the workforce and businesses * (Grŵp Llandrillo-Menai)

THEME: Employability £1,069,000

- Pack to support people to achieve their potential in the working world (Cyngor Gwynedd and partners)

THEME: Support for Business £1,428,000

- Ensure benefits from the North Wales Growth Deal * (North Wales Ambition)
- Specialist support to establish social enterprises and enterprises in the ownership of their employees * (Cwmpas)
- Enterprise Hub Gwynedd and Môn* (Menter Môn)
- Support pack to gain from the University's expertise* (Bangor University)

8. **Support pack and a fund for Gwynedd enterprises**
(Cyngor Gwynedd and partners)

THEME: Thriving Places

£2,179,000

9. Ardal Ni Prosperous Places Pack (Cyngor Gwynedd and partners)

10. **Ardal Ni Regeneration Fund**
(Cyngor Gwynedd and partners)

THEME: Healthy, Safe and Inclusive Communities

£2,528,000

11. Community resilience development pack (Cyngor Gwynedd and partners)

12. **Diwylliesiant** - culture, heritage and health pack (Cyngor Gwynedd and partners)

13. **Voluntary Sector Fund**
(Mantell Gwynedd)

14. Active Communities* (Active North Wales)

* Projects operating across more than one county

Project including grants to be distributed to others

3.2.21 The final details of the individual schemes are still being developed; therefore, there is a desire to authorise officers (recommendations 1.7), to confirm the details in consultation established within the Council to monitor the SPF in Gwynedd.

3.3 Next Steps

3.3.1 The final details of the schemes will be verified as the details are received, then a direction to provide offer letters will be released.

3.3.2 The schemes can start in the meantime from 1 April, at the risk of the applicant and their partners.

4. **Views of the Statutory Officers.**

4.1 Chief Finance Officer

"I confirm that there is a robust governance and operating arrangement in place to protect the Council's interests, including the Council's role as the lead authority for the North Wales region. In light of the extension for the transition year 2025/26, it is appropriate to continue with the existing arrangements. I confirm the accuracy of the allocations set out in part 3.1.10 of the report, and will work closely with officials from the Department for Economy and Community to ensure the implementation of the schemes within the allocation. I therefore support the decisions sought."

4.2 Monitoring Officer

"The recommendations consequence of the nature and duration of the extension to the Shared Prosperity Fund. Given the short window available for the Council and the region, it is logical to extend the current arrangements if they are succeed. The recommendations in relation to the funds and allocation give the Cabinet an opportunity to consider and approve what is proposed. It also acknowledges that refinement work will be required on the exact details of the plans as we move to create offers that will meet the requirements of the plan and timetable."

List of Appendices:

1. Outline of the 2025/26 SPF funds

List of Background Documents:

1. Cabinet Item 19 July 2022: 'UK Shared Prosperity Fund'
<https://democracy.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/ielistdocuments.aspx?cid=133&mid=4696&ver=4>
2. Cabinet Item 24 January 2023: 'UK Shared Prosperity Fund - governance and operational arrangements'
<https://democracy.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/ielistdocuments.aspx?cid=133&mid=4839&ver=4>
3. Cabinet Item 20 July 2023: 'UK Shared Prosperity Fund - liabilities of Gwynedd allocations'
<https://democracy.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/ielistdocuments.aspx?cid=133&mid=5013&ver=4>

CYNGOR GWYNEDD – Report for Cyngor Gwynedd’s Cabinet



Item Title:	<i>Fostering Offer for Maethu Cymru Gwynedd Foster Carers</i>
Cabinet Member:	<i>Councillor Menna Trenholme</i>
Relevant Officer:	<i>Aled Gibbard</i>
Date of Meeting:	08.04.25

1. Decision Sought:

This report describes a package of benefits for Maethu Cymru Gwynedd Foster Carers. The Cabinet is asked to approve the incentives outlined below for foster carers who are registered with the Council:

1. Allow a reduction of 50% (25% for a short break Foster Carer) in Council Tax bills of the main residence of foster carers who are registered with the Council, before considering any discounts, exemptions and/or Council Tax Reduction they are already eligible for.
2. Offer a free annual parking ticket.
3. Discounted use of leisure centres.
4. Adopt a Fostering Friendly policy for Maethu Cymru Gwynedd foster carers who are employed by the Council.

2. What is the reason why the Cabinet needs to make the decision:

- 2.1** Section 13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 gives general discretionary power to billing authorities such as Cyngor Gwynedd to reduce liability for Council Tax in relation to any person, or group of people, in addition to any relevant national discounts and exemptions.
- 2.2** Section 67 of the 1992 Act lists those sections of the Act where only the Full Council can decide on them. As Section 13A(1)(c) does not appear on this list, the Cabinet can decide to grant relief under this Section.
- 2.3** Over the past few years, a number of billing authorities in Wales have decided to grant a reduction for Council Tax bills of certain foster parents, as part of a package in order to attract more people to undertake this role.
- 2.4** This issue has received attention from officers and members across several departments and portfolios. It has also been supported by the Council's Corporate Parenting Panel.

1. Introduction and Reasoning

3.1 Background / Introduction

1. Foster Carers play an important and key role for the Council, providing care within a family for children and young people who are unable to live at home with their birth family. Very often children who receive care will have experienced significant trauma and have additional needs that require very skilled and experienced parenting and support.
2. The Local Authority has a duty to ensure that a placement is made within the Local Authority's own area (Section 81(9) Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014) unless it is not reasonably practical to do so, or there are important reasons for placing the child outside the area - the main important reason would be protection.
3. The ambitious aim of the Gwynedd Placement Commissioning Strategy 2022-2027 is to provide sufficient placements to meet the individual and diverse needs of looked after children. Over the next five years we intend to reduce our reliance on commissioning residential placements and independent fostering, in accordance with the Welsh Government's Bill to eliminate profit and increase capacity internally. We have a Small Group Homes Scheme which will reduce our reliance on residential placements in the independent sector.
4. In order to keep our current carers and increase the number of foster carers needed to support the children and young people of Gwynedd, the Local Authority must compete with independent fostering agencies which, very often, offer better terms. Consequently, this report requests approval to introduce new incentives to improve the Council's offer to local authority foster carers.
5. All registered foster carers will be eligible to receive the benefits. Where a foster carer only offers short break care, they would receive a 25% Council Tax reduction.

4. Rationale and presentation for recommending the decision

1. National Fostering Framework (2018) research provided to the Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS) in January 2022 shows that children who live with Foster Carers in their own area are more likely to thrive and that children in local authority provision are more likely to remain in their home authority, which enables them to maintain important connections. It is therefore essential that local authorities increase local placements and reduce placements outside the area.
2. The Fostering Network's Condition Report by the Nation's Foster Care (2021) provides an insight into the quality of fostering services across the whole of Wales. One of the main findings was that Foster Carers need allowances to cover the full cost of caring for a child and a payment that reflects their value as a member of the team around the child. There must be sufficient payments to attract skilled and committed new Foster Carers.
3. The growth in this sector continues to be lower than the need that has been identified, so it is necessary to consider developing incentives to attract more inquiries and approve more people to foster in Gwynedd. The service has to compete against independent fostering organisations, as well as being consistent with other Local Authority Fostering Services.
4. Wales, and other parts of the UK, are experiencing challenges to ensure there are enough Foster Carers to meet needs. The Gwynedd Placement Commissioning Strategy, which was updated in 2024, states that there are not enough internal Foster Carers in Gwynedd to meet the demand. The number of children in foster care in North Wales has increased from one year to the next and the Fostering Network has calculated that an estimated 550 new foster parents are needed across Wales each year to keep up with demand.

5. There are currently 125 internal Foster Care households in Gwynedd, namely 70 general Foster Carers and 55 Associated Foster Carers (i.e. where the child belongs).
6. Local Authorities are in competition with Independent Fostering Agencies who recruit in the same areas and offer higher fees and allowances. There is a significant reliance on the Independent Fostering Agencies to provide foster care throughout North Wales. The use in Gwynedd has been quite constant but has not increased in terms of total. It is very difficult to recruit foster care households in general across the UK.
7. The lack of suitable foster care placements can lead to children with less complex needs being placed in residential placements, which means placing a child if there's space available rather than the ability to meet the child's needs.

8. The Fostering Offer in Gwynedd:

8.1 Council Tax Reduction

- The relief will only be available to residents who have been approved by Cyngor Gwynedd to be qualified foster carers;
- The foster carers live and are liable for Council Tax in Gwynedd;
- The level of relief allowed will be 50% of the Council Tax liability of the main or only home of the Fostering Carers before considering any discount/exemption and Council Tax Reduction that the resident, or the home, may be eligible for;
- For short break foster carers the relief allowed will be 25% of Council Tax liability.
- The relief will be granted against liability arising from 1 April 2025 onwards;
- There will be no means test for the relief, and it will not be subject to the individual circumstances of the relevant foster parent.

Based on the calculations made by the Finance Department, it is estimated that granting this relief will not cost more than £111,500 per year and is likely to cost less than this. The cost of the scheme will be borne entirely by Cyngor Gwynedd's Tax Collection Fund.

8.2 Annual Parking Ticket

Free parking pass for all Council car parks.

Very few of the Foster Carers buy an annual Parking Ticket, so there would not be a significant loss of income resulting from the proposal. The Council will need to 'pay' for a ticket but the service has agreed that this will be at 30% of the actual cost.

The maximum cost would be £4800 per year if every foster carer receives a parking ticket.

8.3 Byw'n lach

The "max" card offer is currently available which is free swimming during public sessions. This is funded through the Government's Swimming Grant.

The service has offered to provide leisure membership at a reduced price, which means unlimited use of gyms, swimming pools and classes for foster parents.

This means a monthly price of £20 (50% cheaper). The maximum likely cost of this proposal to the Council would be £13,500 per year if all foster carers chose it.

8.4 Support To Foster Policy (see Appendix 1)

This policy applies to Foster Carers who are also employees of the Council in order to reduce barriers and offer flexibility in their working arrangements in order to meet the needs of the children in their care. It applies to all Council employees with the exception of educational institutions that have delegated powers. The policy offers up to 5 extra days of special leave in a 12-month period for:

- Initial assessment and training before approval as a foster carer.
- Attendance at a panel to be approved.
- Child review meetings, annual Foster Carer review meetings and training.

A policy has been drafted by The Corporate Support Department, and if the Cabinet support the proposals in this report, the policy will then be formally adopted.

1. This package of incentives makes fostering more financially feasible for some residents and may even attract those who are currently fostering with an Independent Fostering Agency to transfer to Gwynedd. The incentives are in line with other local authorities that adopt similar strategies.
2. The intention of the package is to encourage and attract more to become Fostering Carers in Gwynedd as well as to show appreciation for the experienced and dedicated carers who are already registered with the Council. The proposal will strengthen Maethu Cymru Gwynedd' position to keep and add to the number of Maethu Cymru Gwynedd foster carers and to move in the direction of reducing independent placements in order to eliminate profit from the system.

5. Next steps

If the Cabinet decides to approve the incentives package, the policies established will be used for the entire financial year starting 1 April 2025. Modified Council Tax bills will be sent to the relevant people.

1. Allow a reduction of 50% (25% for a short break Foster Carer) in Council Tax bills of the main residence of foster carers who are registered with the Council, before considering any discounts, exemptions and/or Council Tax Reduction they are already eligible for.	£111,500
2. Offer a free annual parking ticket.	£4800
3. Discounted use of leisure centres.	£13,500
4. Adopt a Fostering Friendly policy for Maethu Cymru Gwynedd foster carers who are employed by the Council.	£0
Total	£129,800

The maximum annual cost of the package to the Council would be just over £18,000 per year. The expenditure can be justified when considering that the cost of one placement in the independent fostering sector is approximately £989 per week (£51,000 per year)

6. Statutory Officers' Comments.

6.1 Chief Finance Officer

Officers from the Finance Department have collaborated closely with the author of the report. I am supportive and satisfied that the decisions sought are reasonable under the circumstances and I have no objections to them

6.2 Monitoring Officer

Section 13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 gives billing authorities such as Gwynedd Council a general discretionary power to reduce liability for Council Tax in relation to any person, or group of persons, in addition to any relevant national discounts and exemptions. This is not a Full Council decision . The Cabinet can approve the reduction. I am satisfied with the propriety of the decisions sought and that the Cabinet can adopt the recommendations.

List of Attachments:

List of Background Documents:

Support To Foster Policy



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Fostering Support Policy

1. Purpose

Cyngor Gwynedd recognises and appreciates the contribution that foster carers make to the lives of children and young people in care. We are keen to support staff who are already in, or are considering fostering. Given that, we understand that foster carers will need some flexibility in their working arrangements so that they can meet the needs of their foster child or young person.

Cyngor Gwynedd is committed to supporting any member of staff who applies to become a foster carer for Maethu Cymru Gwynedd or any other Maethu Cymru local authority. It is not relevant to those being assessed by commercial, third sector or private agencies. It is relevant to those carers approved relationship (Approved kinship carer).

We will do this, wherever possible, by creating a foster-friendly organisation, which offers flexible working arrangements and which responds to the needs of all staff who are approved foster carers or relative carers.

Cyngor Gwynedd offers staff the opportunity to work flexibly where this is compatible with the requirements of their job. Our flexible working policies, emergency time off for dependents, and a number of parental policies all apply to approved foster carers and relative carers.

2. Scope

This policy applies to staff employed by Cyngor Gwynedd, whether they are permanent, temporary, occasional, full or part-time staff. The procedure does not apply to school staff where their employment is regulated by school governing bodies. It also does not apply when employed through agencies or self-employed consultants.

3. General Principles

All policies and procedures of Cyngor Gwynedd's working conditions comply with laws and regulations relating to Data Protection, Equality, Disability Confidence and Language [\(link\)](#).

4. Time Off

Up to 5 paid days can be taken (on a pro-rata basis for part-time workers) to attend meetings and training relating to the assessment process, annual assessment meetings and to respond to the child's needs. The right applies per rolling period of 12 months, and the time can be taken on a half-day or full-day basis.

The line manager will approve the absence at their discretion taking into account the individual circumstances of each case and the operational requirements of the business. The absence will be considered and approved on a pro rata basis.

The request for time off should outline the reason and amount of absence required.

When more than the maximum entitlement to paid leave is requested (as outlined above), the line manager and the member of staff should discuss other methods available e.g. annual leave and other relevant policies.

Adolygu'r Polisi

The procedure will be reviewed in 3 years; however, the policy can be reviewed within this period in order to make any amendment/changes that are necessary in the light of operational experience or changes in employment law or statutory guidance

Review History

Version	Publication Date	Summary of Amendments
1.	Ionawr 2025	New policy

CYNGOR GWYNEDD – Report for Cyngor Gwynedd's Cabinet

Item title:	<i>Corporate Parenting Charter</i>
Cabinet member:	<i>Councillor Menna Trenholme</i>
Relevant Officer:	<i>Aled Gibbard, Assistant Head</i>
Meeting date:	08.04.25

1. Decision Sought:

Submitting a recommendation from the Council's Corporate Parenting Panel that the Cabinet approves the adoption of the Corporate Parenting Charter published by the Welsh Government.

2. What is the reason the Cabinet needs to make the decision:

The Welsh Government published principles for the Corporate Parenting Charter in September 2023. The Government is asking public sector bodies to sign the Charter to demonstrate their commitment to promoting the rights and life opportunities of children and young people who have experience of being in care.

3. Introduction and Rationale

3.1 Background/ Introduction

The charter is a set of principles and promises that align with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The principles should be followed when providing services for children and young people who have had experience of care.

As set out in the charter, the principles are:

Equality - We will support children and young people who have had experience of care to get the same life chances as every other young person in Wales.

Eliminate Stigma – We will recognize children and young people who have been in care for who they are, not just because of their experience of being in care.

Together - We will work alongside children and young people who have experience of care ensuring that their opinions, feelings and ideas are an integral part of the services, influencing and guiding the way they receive those services.

Support – We will ensure professionals who work with young people who have experience of care, understand their experiences and have access to information and training.

Ambition – We will ensure that all children and young people with experience of care arrive their potential and they can enjoy a wide experience of leisure, cultural, sporting and social activities

Encouragement – We will make every child and young person who has experience of care feel valued, respected, cared for and loved.

Good Health – We will provide support to access the right healthcare and advice

needed to support the best physical and mental health and overall well-being for all care experienced children and young people.

Stable Home - We will look for stable places to live and provide them for every child and young person who has had experience of care.

Good Education - We will provide opportunities and support for everyone who has had experience of care to learn/develop and help them become what they want to be.

Thriving - We will ensure that all children and young people who have had experience of care are ready for the future and can make positive choices for independent living and adulthood.

Lifelong – We will work to provide access to and raise awareness of help and support for all young people leaving care.

The Corporate Parenting Charter sets out 9 promises which are described as something that all Corporate Parents should fulfil when working with children and young people who have had experience of care.

The promises in the charter are:

- We will take time to listen to all children and young people who have experienced care and ensure that their views, wishes and feelings are heard and actively considered in all decisions made about them.
- We will treat all children and young people who have experienced care with respect.
- We will include all experienced children and young people in decisions that are made about them.
- We will inform all children and young people who have experience of care about what is happening and why.
- We will use simple language when we communicate with all children and young people who have experience of care.
- We will show sympathy when considering the needs of all children and young people who have had experience of care.
- We will work with all children and young people who have experienced care to help them achieve their goals.
- We will inform all children and young people who have experience of care about the process of making a complaint if they feel that we are not adhering to this charter.
- We would advise all children and young people who have experience of care that they have the right to an independent advocacy service to ensure that their views, wishes and feelings are heard when decisions are made or when they are unhappy and want something to end, start or change.

3.2 Rationale and presentation for recommending the decision

On the publication of the Charter, the priorities in the Council's Corporate Parenting strategy closely aligned with the principles and promises set out in the charter. The charter does not replace the Council's strategy, but it has been adapted to reflect the content of the Charter and reinforces and complements it. Signing up to the charter is a public

commitment by the Council to support children in care and young people leaving care.

3.3 Next Steps

The implementation of the strategy will be overseen by the Council's Corporate Parenting Panel.

4 Statutory Officers' Comments.

4.2 Chief Finance Officer

I am satisfied that approving the Corporate Parenting Charter will not create additional spending commitments. I support the report, and I do not have further comments from the perspective of financial propriety.

4.3 Monitoring Officer

I support the recommendation to adopt the Charter

List of Attachments:

Appendix 1 – Welsh Government Corporate Parenting Charter

Appendix 2 – Cyngor Gwynedd's Corporate Parenting Strategy

List of Background Documents:



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Corporate Parenting Charter – A Promise from Wales

“A SHARED PARENTING PLEDGE”

What is Corporate Parenting?

- Corporate parenting promotes the collective responsibility of local authorities to safeguard and promote the rights and life chances of care-experienced children and young people. Children can find more information about their rights here: [Children's Commissioner for Wales – UNCRC Children's Rights](#).
- Supporting care-experienced children and young people through their childhoods and as they leave care should be the responsibility of all public sector bodies.
- We want these bodies to understand and develop their responsibilities towards care-experienced children and young people, and to ensure they have the same life chances as all children living in Wales.



Why a Charter? What's it for?

- A Charter is a set of principles and promises. This Charter has been developed in collaboration with care-experienced young people.
- This Charter is a set of promises that can be adopted by any public sector body when engaging with care-experienced children and young people.
- It also sets out shared principles that all bodies and their leaders should follow when providing services to care-experienced children and young people.
- We want all public sector bodies and senior leaders to sign up to this Charter as a good Corporate Parent. This Charter is not exclusive to local authorities and public bodies, and we would welcome any members of the third sector and private sector to sign up and become a Corporate Parent.
- The development of this Charter takes into account the overarching duties laid out in Part 2, General Functions of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. Specifically, that a person exercising functions in relation to an individual for example a looked after child must have regard to the characteristics, culture and beliefs of the individual (including, for example, language). www.law.gov.wales/social-services-and-well-being-wales-act-2014-further-legislation-codes-and-guidance-made-under-act
- The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, Part 6 Code of Practice (Looked After and Accommodated Children) will be revised to include additional guidance on the Charter. The updated Code of Practice will be published in 2024 and Charter will be reviewed as part of this process.

Which kind of public sector body, public service or professionals do we mean?

This charter is for any public sector body or individual who engages with or is responsible for care-experienced children and young people to adopt. For example:

- Politicians – Welsh Ministers, Members of the Senedd, (**United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 4**).
- Independent Bodies – The Children’s Commissioner, The Future Generations Commissioner and The Welsh Language Commissioner.
- Local Authorities – councillors, chief executives, directors of social services, local authority commissioners and procurement teams, housing and education, Foster Wales and National Adoption Service.
- Local Health Boards.
- NHS Trusts.
- Regional Partnership Boards.
- Social Care Providers – Local authorities, residential children’s homes and independent foster agencies.
- Social Care Professionals and practitioners – social workers, Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs), personal advisers, youth and support workers, residential children’s home staff, foster carers, kinship carers and adoptive parents.
- Housing Providers – housing associations.
- Education – schools, governors, universities, colleges and Qualifications Wales.
- Transport for Wales.
- Third Sector Organisations and voluntary adoption agencies or services.
- Inspectorates – Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), Estyn and Health Inspectorate Wales (HIW).
- Cafcass Cymru.
- Department for Work and Pensions.
- Police – youth justice teams and those supporting individuals in custody.
- Employers/Apprenticeship/Traineeship providers.
- Other public bodies: National Resources Wales, National Park Authorities, The Arts Council of Wales, Sport Wales, National Library of Wales and National Museum of Wales. (**As listed in Section 6 of the Wales Future Generations Act 2015**).

Shared Principles for Corporate Parents

- **Equality** – We will support care-experienced children and young people to have the same life chances as every other young person in Wales. This is because all children have rights, no matter who they are (Article 1. UNCRC)
- **Eradicate Stigma** – We will recognise care-experienced children and young people for who they are, not just by their experience of being in care. This is because all children have a right not to be discriminated against (Article 2)
- **Togetherness** – We will work alongside care-experienced children and young people to ensure their views, feelings and ideas are integral to, influence and inform the services they receive and the way they receive those services. This is because all children have a right to be listened to and taken seriously (Article 12).
- **Support** – We will ensure professionals working with care-experienced young people understand their care experiences children and young people's needs and/or have access to information an training.
- **Ambition** – We will ensure every care-experienced child and young person reaches their potential and can enjoy a wide experience of leisure, cultural, sport and social activities. This is because all children have a right to be the best they can be (Article 3 and 29) and have the right to relax and play (Article 31).
- **Nurture** – We will make all care-experienced children and young people feel valued, respected, cared for and loved. This is because all children have a right to be safe and protected from harm (Article 19) and because all children who are not living with their families should be checked on regularly to make sure they are okay (Article 25).
- **Good Health** – We will provide support to access the right health care and advice needed to support the best physical, mental health and general well-being for all care-experienced children and young people. This is because all children have the right to the best possible health and support (Article 24 and 39).
- **A Stable Home** – We will seek out and provide stable places to live that are right for all care-experienced children and young people. This is because all children have a right to special protection if they don't live with their family (Article 20). This is because any adoption must be overseen by Government to make it supports the young person in their growth and development, is lawful and that it prioritises children's best interests (Article 21).



- **A Good Education** – We will provide opportunities and support for all care-experienced children and young people to learn/develop and help them become who they want to be. This is because all children have a right to an education (Article 28 and 29).
- **Thrive** – We will ensure all care-experienced children and young people are prepared for the future and are able make positive choices for independent living and adulthood. This is because all children have a right to reach their potential (Article 3 and 29).
- **Lifelong** – We will work to provide access to and raise awareness of the support and information available after leaving care. This is because adults have a duty to act in children’s best interests (Article 3).

Our Promises as Corporate Parents

Set out below are the promises all Corporate Parents should fulfil when working with care-experienced children and young people:

- We will take time to listen to all care-experienced children and young people and ensure their views, wishes and feelings are heard and actively considered in all decisions made about them.
- We will treat all care-experienced children and young people with respect.
- We will involve all experienced children and young people in decisions that are made about them.
- We will keep all care experienced children and young people informed about our involvement with them and explain our actions to them.
- We will use straightforward language when we communicate with all care-experienced children and young people.
- We will show compassion when considering the needs of all care-experienced children and young people.
- We will work with all care-experienced children and young people to help them achieve their goals.
- We will advise all care-experienced children and young people of the process to make a complaint should they feel we are not adhering to this charter.
- We will advise all care-experienced children and young people that they have a right to access independent advocacy to make sure their views, wishes and feelings are heard during decisions being made or when they are unhappy and want something stopped, started or changed.



References

Reference	Description
UNCRC Article 2	The Convention applies to everyone whatever their race, religion, abilities, whatever they think or say and whatever type of family they come from.
UNCRC Article 4	Governments should make these rights available to children.
UNCRC Article 12	Respect for children's views. Children have the right to give their opinions freely on issues that affect them. Adults should listen and take children seriously.
UNCRC Article 19	Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for, and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.
UNCRC Article 20	Children who cannot be looked after by their own family must be looked after properly, by people who respect their religion, culture and language.
UNCRC Article 21	Adoption. Government must oversee the process of adoption to make sure it is safe, lawful and that it prioritises children's best interests.
UNCRC Article 24	Children have the right to good quality health care and to clean water, nutritious food and a clean environment so that they will stay healthy. Rich countries should help poorer countries achieve this.
UNCRC Article 25	(Review of treatment in care). If a child has been placed away from home for the purpose of care or protection (for example with a foster family or in a hospital they have a right to a regular review of their treatment, the way they are cared for and their wider circumstances.
UNCRC Article 28	Children have a right to an education. Discipline in schools should respect children's human dignity. Primary education should be free. Wealthy countries should help poorer countries achieve this.
UNCRC Article 29	Education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full. It should encourage children to respect their parents, their own and other cultures and the environment.
UNCRC Article 31	All children have a right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of activities.
UNCRC Article 39	Children who have been neglected or abused should receive special help to restore their self-respect.

UNCRC

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is an international agreement that protects the human rights of children up to the age of 18. It recognises not only their basic human rights but gives them additional rights to protect them from harm as one of the most vulnerable groups in society. In 2011 the Welsh Government made the UNCRC law in Wales, with the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011. The Measure places a duty on Welsh Ministers to have a due regard to the UNCRC and its Optional Protocols when making their decisions. Altogether there are 54 articles in the convention. Articles 1-42 set out how children should be treated.

For further information on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child please visit: The Welsh Government's UNCRC website [Children's rights | Sub-topic | GOV.WALES](#).

Gwynedd Council Corporate Parenting Strategy

January 2025

1. Foreword

Dear Corporate Parents,

As a young person who has been through the care system, I would like to offer you the following observations as this new strategy begins about your responsibilities toward us as corporate parents.

Remember, first of all, that it is not our choice to go into care; but as we have been forced into the situation, an understanding of the reality of the situation is required. Through this letter you will, hopefully, gain a better understanding.

One thing that persists throughout this message, is for you to realise how important it is that you listen to us. It takes a great deal of courage for us to express and share our feelings. It is a huge step in our lives to share our most personal feelings, and when we do so, you must realise how difficult this is and how important it is that you believe what we say. Our lives can change as a result of sharing our experiences and knowing that someone believes us makes a difference.

We are children, like all other children, and when we are placed in a foster home, we want to be treated like the other children in the home. We want the opportunity to go on holiday with our carers - we don't want to be placed in respite care when everyone else goes away. We want good quality clothes - just like those the children at the foster home get, and want to have the necessary equipment to do our school work. This probably sounds quite obvious to you, but it is important that we are able to say it.

Our families continue to be important to us, even though we are in care, but everyone should not be painted with the same brush. See each of us as an individual. Sometimes, we do not wish to see our blood relatives, and there are a number of reasons for this; but it isn't the situation forever. Situations change, and feelings and wishes change, and it is necessary to be flexible and respond to our wishes. Remember also, when we are not placed with our brothers and sisters that they are still very important to us, and we want to see them regularly in a comfortable place and not in public places. Make sure we have pictures of our childhood - they help us remember our own stories in years to come.

Growing up is difficult, but growing up in care is more difficult. We would like for you to understand that, for a great many of us, 16 years old is far too young to think about living independently. It is necessary to work with carers to ensure they are able to support us and offer us a home until we are ready to leave. Being 16 or 18 years old does not mean we do not need support. Make sure we have a home to return to when we are on leave from university. Having security and stability helps us succeed.

Perhaps, at times, we will need help to concentrate at school and sometimes this will mean we don't want to go; this is because we have so much going on in our lives compared to other children. So, we need you to understand this and help us deal with it. We need you to see things through our eyes and put yourselves in our shoes. In doing so you may understand why we behave the way we do.

To summarise, therefore... the main messages we'd like you to hear as corporate parents are:

- Listen
- Respect
- Treat us as you would your own children
- Be there through everything
- Remember we have a story that's important to us, and help us remember it.

Yours faithfully,
Young person who used to be in care.

2. Message from the Cabinet Member for Children and Supporting Families

It is my pleasure to present this important strategy that sets out our responsibilities as corporate parents to ensure that we fulfil the priorities and aspirations noted for you as children and young people in our care.

Gwynedd Council takes its responsibilities as corporate parent seriously, and is committed to ensuring that every child and young person in its care, and who has left its care, are given the best opportunities in life.

We acknowledge that you face a number of challenges in your lives. Gwynedd Council works closely across the Council's Departments and with our external partners to ensure that doors open to you in order to offer opportunities which will maximise your ability to reach your potential in the future - exactly as we would do with our own children.

We want to assure you that you will have access to good educational opportunities and we will encourage you to do your best by supporting you to attend school, whilst accepting that there will be times in your lives when this seems difficult. But, our aim is to support you through difficult times by listening and discussing with you and by trying to reach a situation where you feel more confident.

We work very hard to ensure you are placed in suitable and welcoming foster homes so that you are able to feel safe and secure. We will also ensure that you are able to keep in regular touch with your family, in a safe environment. We know that this is important to you.

We are eager to ensure that your social worker spends time getting to know you and that your social worker will not change unless there is good reason for doing so. If you have any concern or complaint about the service you're receiving, we assure you that we will listen to you and will try to solve any problem immediately.

We are eager to ensure that you are clear about the things you should expect from us as corporate parents and, so, I introduce this strategy to you as an operational document that lays the foundation for implementing our priorities and our commitments to you.

Councillor Menna Trenholme
Cabinet Member for Children and Supporting Families

3. Messages from our Looked-after Children

'My foster parents are great - I can go to them to discuss anything'

'I chose to stay with my foster parents under the 'When I'm Ready' scheme, and this has meant that I am able to undertake a college course. Without the scheme, I think things would be very different for me'

'It is important that the social worker is not changed - we form a relationship and we trust them and change is difficult as you have to start from the beginning once again'

'I want to see more of my family - not just mam and dad, but my brothers and sister and my cousins'

'I don't attend my statutory review as they are too formal and there are too many people there discussing my situation'

'I get the opportunity to pursue my interests outside school - I'm very busy!'

'I enjoy school, but I've had to change schools a number of times because of my situation, and that is very difficult. I now know that I am staying in ****, and I'm happy at the school and have made friends.'

'We don't want to be punished with an absence mark if we leave school to attend our reviews'.

4. Commitments and Responsibilities

This strategy sets out Gwynedd Council's vision and commitment for looked-after children and young people and explains how we as a Council will succeed as effective corporate parents, whatever their age, language, sex, sexuality, ethnicity, belief or disability.

As every good parent knows, children need a safe environment to grow and thrive. Parents protect and support their children against life's dangers and risks. Parents have ambitions for their children and want them to reach their potential. Parents celebrate their children's achievements. The child that is looked after by the Council has the right to expect the same from his/her corporate parents as he/she would from a good parent. Every child and young person needs to live in a safe and stable environment in order for them to develop and thrive. As a Council, we are ambitious on their behalf and are eager to celebrate and share their successes.

This means that we as a Council:

- *We will support care-experienced children and young people to have the same life chances as every other young person in Wales. This is because all children have rights, no matter who they are.*
- *We will recognise care-experienced children and young people for who they are, not just by their experience of being in care. This is because all children have a right not to be discriminated against.*
- *We will work alongside care-experienced children and young people to ensure their views, feelings and ideas are integral to, influence and inform the services they receive and the way they receive those services. This is because all children have a right to be listened to and taken seriously.*
- *We will ensure professionals working with care-experienced young people understand their care experiences children and young people's needs and/or have access to information and training.*
- *We will ensure every care-experienced child and young person reaches their potential and can enjoy a wide experience of leisure, cultural, sport and social activities. This is because all children have a right to be the best they can be (Article 3 and 29) and have the right to relax and play.*
- *We will make all care-experienced children and young people feel valued, respected, cared for and loved. This is because all children have a right to be safe and protected from harm and because all children who are not living with their families should be checked on regularly to make sure they are okay.*
- *We will provide support to access the right health care and advice needed to support the best physical, mental health and general well-being for all care-experienced children and young people. This is because all children have the right to the best possible health and support.*
- *We will seek out and provide stable places to live that are right for all care-experienced children and young people. This is because all children have a right to special protection if they don't live with their family. This is because any adoption must be overseen by Government to make it supports the young person in their growth and development, is lawful and that it prioritises children's best interests.*
- *We will provide opportunities and support for all care-experienced children and young people to learn/develop and help them become who they want to be. This is because all children have a right to an education.*

- *We will ensure all care-experienced children and young people are prepared for the future and are able make positive choices for independent living and adulthood. This is because all children have a right to reach their potential.*
- *We will work to provide access to and raise awareness of the support and information available after leaving care. This is because adults have a duty to act in children's best interests.*

And most importantly...

As a Corporate Parent we will ensure that we think, plan, act and make decisions in line with the following assumption:

"If this were my child..."

We take joint responsibility with every elected member, every Council department, along with our partners, in our effort to continue to improve results for children and young people.

The Corporate Parent Panel will work to ensure that the above is addressed. In accordance with the Welsh Government's Corporate Parenting Charter we will fulfil the following promises when working with children and young people who are are experienced.

- *We will take time to listen to all care-experienced children and young people and ensure their views, wishes and feelings are heard and actively considered in all decisions made about them.*
- *We will treat all care-experienced children and young people with respect.*
- *We will involve all experienced children and young people in decisions that are made about them. We will keep all care experienced children and young people informed about our involvement with them and explain our actions to them.*
- *We will use straightforward language when we communicate with all care-experienced children and young people.*
- *We will show compassion when considering the needs of all care-experienced children and young people.*
- *We will work with all care-experienced children and young people to help them achieve their goals.*
- *We will advise all care-experienced children and young people of the process to make a complaint should they feel we are not adhering to this charter.*
- *We will advise all care-experienced children and young people that they have a right to access independent advocacy to make sure their views, wishes and feelings are heard during decisions being made or when they are unhappy and want something stopped, started or changed.*

5. Key Responsibilities

The corporate parent responsibility has been set out for local authorities in the Children Act 1989 and 2005. In addition, Section 27 of the Children Act 1989 places a duty on the Health Authority as well as Housing and Education Departments within Local Authorities to assist

Social Services Departments to carry-out their duties under the Act in the context of providing assistance, support and services for looked-after children and young people. The Departments that include leisure services, libraries and youth services have a role to play in supporting looked-after children and those who have left care by providing opportunities to learn, participate and promote their health and well-being.

Gwynedd Council, through the Lead Cabinet Member, the Chief Executive, the Social Services Statutory Director and the Head of Children and Supporting Families have a key role in ensuring the Council carries out its responsibility as corporate parent in full in a way that builds trust and confidence among the children and young people in their care.

The "If this were my child..." document clearly states that the Council in its entirety is the 'corporate parent' and states that every councillor has a fundamental duty over the children in his/her care. In order to implement the responsibility, clear procedures need to be in place in order to provide them with accurate information to enable them to understand the fundamental issues facing looked-after children and young people in their areas. It is not appropriate to provide personal information about individual cases, but general information about specific fields and local trends that affect looked-after children must be provided, along with information about the quality and range of services available for them.

In Gwynedd Council, the Corporate Parent Panel, on behalf of the Council as a whole, will implement the direct responsibility to ensure that appropriate and suitable services are available for looked-after children. The Corporate Parent Panel will be responsible for taking action by setting up task and finish groups that will focus on specific fields in order to look closely at the quality of services, successes and obstacles as well as finding out about experiences directly from children, young people and carers, in order to improve the experiences of looked-after children in Gwynedd.

Each councillor will be given annual training to raise awareness of their responsibilities as corporate parents, and a report relaying the activities of the Corporate Parent Panel will be submitted to a meeting of the full Council annually.

The Panel will meet every quarter, and will arrange meetings to focus on one particular priority field in order to ensure that due attention is given to aspects of the service, with the assumption that panel members take responsibility to lead on the work with key officers and partners. It is expected that practical research be carried out between meetings and the panel member is responsible for reporting on any findings to be discussed at the panel.

Gwynedd Council is proud of its ability to provide foster care of the highest standard and it invests heavily in recruiting, assessing and registering local foster carers for children in Gwynedd. Foster care of the highest quality is a resource that is vital in enabling us to ensure that our commitments to looked-after children are carried out.

Foster carers are responsible for looking after the children in their care as though they were their own children, and for ensuring they have the best opportunities, advocate on their behalf and collaborate well with parents, social workers and partners. A high percentage of children looked-after by the Council are placed with their own family members who become registered foster carers because of the children's legal status. We fully commit to taking responsibility for providing the same practical and professional support for these families as

for any other foster placement, since the challenge of looking after a child from one's own family is one that is fully acknowledged.

We have ensured that the opinion and voice of the foster parent is included in Corporate Parent Panel activity through having an experienced foster carer as a panel member.

Leadership and Governance Structures

Membership of the Corporate Parent Panel:

Council Officers

Chief Executive

Statutory Director of Social Services

Head of Children and Supporting Families

Head of Education

Head of Economy and Community Department

Head of Adults, Health and Well-being Department

Senior Manager – Children's Services

Senior Education Manager

Senior Manager, Housing and Well-being

Independent Reviewing Officer

Council Members

Cabinet Member - Children and Supporting Families

Cabinet Member - Adults, Health and Well-being

Cabinet Member - Housing

Cabinet Member - Education

Cabinet Member – Economy and Community

Partners

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board - Children's Services Manager

Looked-after Children

Looked-after Children Champion

Looked-after Children Representative

Foster Parent Representative

The Panel will invite relevant officers from different agencies and from within the Council depending on the focus area of specific discussions.

Our Vision

Gwynedd Council's vision for looked-after children places specific responsibilities on each member of the Corporate Parent Panel, namely:

- Putting the child or young person at the centre of everything we do.
- Listen to looked-after children and young people

- Re-establish and hold a contributor group to listen to and collaborate with looked-after children in order to improve services and support
- Ensure that the promises made to looked-after children and young people are kept
- Act to remove any obstacles to service provision or individual opportunities.
- Understand the impact all the Council's decisions have on looked-after children and young people
- Ensure that governance arrangements are in place to implement decisions about children and young people across the authority and other agencies
- Gain access to quantitative and qualitative information about the services and ensure sufficient individual understanding to evaluate the information and its meaning for looked-after children
- Conduct a detailed analysis of the needs of the looked-after population and all aspects of services required to respond to the need so that clear evidence is available to feed into decisions for the future.

6. Looked-after Children in Gwynedd

Gwynedd Council aims to support most of the children and young people in the county by enabling and supporting them to live with their families in their communities without statutory intervention and without bringing them into care. Nevertheless, for a small number, this is not possible and they need short term or long term care under statutory care arrangements.

The experiences of being in care vary for every child according to what they experienced as care from the family. The feeling of loss is commonplace and needs to be acknowledged - the loss of relationship with family members, despite the bad experiences they have had whilst in their parents' care, and particularly the loss if they have to move from the area, and lose school friends. Children and young people become looked-after either through a court order or through agreement with the parents. There can be several reasons why some children become looked-after by the Council - either as a result of temporary problems their parents are facing, or as a result of more permanent issues which means that it is no longer safe to send some children home.

The children and young people we look after come from all kinds of life backgrounds and have different aspirations, aims and cultural backgrounds.

The "corporate parenting" term is used to describe the joint responsibility the Council and its partners have to ensure effective, stable, safe and appropriate care for looked-after children and young people, including those who are leaving care.

We are aware that looked-after children are at a greater risk of being socially isolated compared to their peers who are not in care, because of their experiences before becoming looked-after and because they are looked-after. It is, therefore, critical that the Council, as Corporate Parent, ensures that the experience of being looked after is a positive and supportive one that maximises their potential and ensures they play a full part in their community.

When it is not possible to place children in foster care because of complex needs, we are committed to finding alternative placements that respond to the needs of the individual and work tirelessly to ensure that there is no delay in planning the care for the specific child or young person.

We have ensured that the opinion and voice of the child who has been looked-after in Gwynedd is included in the activities of the Corporate Parent Panel through the membership of a young person on the panel.

There has been an increase in the number of children placed at home with their parents under Care Orders. By their nature, it is acknowledged that these are high risk placements in some circumstances. Gwynedd Council is committed to ensuring that safeguarding these children and young people is a corporate priority. The Council is committed to promoting and ensuring the success of these placements as they mean that the children and young people are brought up with their own parents, within their own families, and in their own communities, whilst acknowledging that this cohort of looked-after children needs a great deal of support through providing specialist services to adults, children and young people.

7. Including looked-after children and young people

A vital aspect of our vision as Corporate Parents is our commitment to listening to the children and young people we look after. Historically, we have held 'Have your Say' sessions with representation from looked-after children and young people in order to give them the opportunity to meet and discuss specific issues that are important to them with officers and representatives of elected members who are members of the Corporate Parent Panel.

It is our priority to re-establish similar arrangement in the near future and we are currently putting plans in place to make this happen.

We are making sure we get the opinion of looked-after children and young people in every review of foster parent registrations through asking their opinion about placements and any specific matter that will improve their experiences.

We are ensuring that older young people who remain in our care or who have left care gain access to regional and national groups held by 'Voices from Care', and through this be in a situation to influence service planning and future policies.

We operate within the National Advocacy Framework to ensure that looked-after children and young people have access to independent advocacy services when any issue surrounding their care concerns them to such a degree they feel they need independent help from an advocate to resolve it.

We want to ensure that the opinions of children and young people are given full consideration in their statutory reviews throughout their time in care.

Social workers and foster carers are vitally important in ensuring the voice of the child and young person is heard, that they have the opportunity to voice their wishes and aspirations and their opinion about the care they receive.

8. Corporate Parent in Gwynedd

Gwynedd Council's vision for looked-after children and young people is based on the opinion of children and young people in Gwynedd.

- Health and Well-being
- Enjoyment and Attainment (Education)
- To be safe
- Make a positive contribution
- Economic well-being and becoming an adult

An important part of the Council's role as an effective corporate parent is to ensure we develop a sense of being careful of these children and young people and that we want the best for them in life, not simply ensuring they receive adequate care by checking operational arrangements.

Despite the attention given to the field over the years, the results gap between looked-after children and other children has further widened. We as a Council intend to improve life opportunities for looked-after children and young people and reduce the current gap.

Corporate parents have a responsibility to protect and promote the well-being of the children they look after and prepare them for adult life by:

- Listening to looked-after children and responding to them by being clear and honest
- Identifying the complexity that stems from caring for looked-after children, and ensuring that appropriate interventions are found to support carers as well as children and young people
- Creating the right circumstances to identify the needs of individual children, and ensuring that services respond to these needs
- Questioning and, if necessary, challenging aspects of services and quality of services that are provided for looked-after children and young people
- Ensuring that looked-after children receive suitable education and achieve, at least, in accordance with their ability.
- Ensuring that the authority's strategic plans and the joint plans with other key partners reflect the needs of looked-after children and young people
- Ensuring that we have up-to-date information about the field and best practice that can be fed in to future decisions.

Health and Well-being



Gwynedd Council endeavours to ensure that you as looked-after children and young people have the best possible opportunities in life through enjoying good health. The Council and its partners will develop holistic arrangements to ensure you have access to physical and emotional health services and care and health education, in a timely and responsive manner.

Education



Good education is critical for a bright future and to maximise opportunities. As corporate parents, we have a responsibility to ensure we encourage and support you to reach your highest possible educational attainment, and to support you to do your best. This is vital in preparing you to succeed when faced with life's challenges as an adult.

Staying Safe



The Council will promote and safeguard your welfare by providing high quality specialist services that will concentrate on your individual needs. We will help you keep in touch with your family and other people who are important to you. We will ensure you have one social worker who will form a relationship with you and will be available to you if you have any problem or concern. We are committed to finding a home for you that suits you and that creates an environment for you where your needs are given priority.

Make a Positive Contribution



It is acknowledged that people's opinions help the Council provide services that rightly meet their needs. We will encourage you to develop your talents and interests and support you to do the things you enjoy. But, above all else, we promise you that we will include you in the decisions that affect your lives.

Economic well-being and becoming an adult



It is a challenge for us as corporate parents to meet the unique and wide-ranging needs of each of you and ensure you are prepared for life as independent adults. We will work hard with you to give you the help and support you will need to move on from being looked-after to life as an adult, ensuring that you have opportunities in education and employment and can live independently in a stable home.

9. Conclusion and statements

Looked-after children and young people in Gwynedd should expect to receive the type of support responsible parents would give their children and, therefore, the Council along with its main partners must work together and take ownership of their responsibilities in providing this support. The Corporate Parent Panel works on behalf of the Council to address this. The Panel will take a strategic and operational overview to ensure the life opportunities for looked-after children and children who are leaving care are maximised so that they reach their full potential and, even more importantly, that they develop into hard-working and well-rounded citizens, adults and parents. The Panel will endeavour to ensure that children and young people, including those who have left care, have access to the Council's services and the services of relevant partners.

CYNGOR GWYNEDD CABINET



Report to a meeting of Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet

Date of meeting: 8 April 2025

Cabinet Member: Councillor R Medwyn Hughes

Contact Officer: Sioned Williams

Contact Number: 01286 679547

Subject: CHALLENGE PERFORMANCE REPORT - CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMY AND COMMUNITY

1. THE DECISION SOUGHT

To accept and note the information in the report.

2. THE REASONS WHY A DECISION IS NEEDED

In order to ensure effective performance management

3. INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 The purpose of this report is to update fellow members on what has happened over the past few months in the areas I am responsible for as Cabinet Member for the Economy and Community. This will include outlining the latest developments against pledges within the 2023-28 Cyngor Gwynedd Plan; the progress of performance measures; and the latest on the savings and cuts plans.

4. PRIORITY PROJECTS OF THE CYNGOR GWYNEDD PLAN 2023-2028 (Improvement Priorities)

- 4.1 The table in APPENDIX 1 gives an update on the progress of the four priority projects in the Cyngor Gwynedd Plan 2023-28 that the Economy and Community Department is responsible for implementing. Three of these projects are in the Prosperous Gwynedd section of the Plan, which aims to strengthen the economy and support Gwynedd residents to earn a worthy wage. However, the responsibility to lead a workstream within the 'Supporting the residents of Gwynedd to live full and safe lives in our communities' project in the Caring Gwynedd programme has been transferred to the Department since the beginning of January 2025.

4.2 From the information in the Appendix, you will note that the Department has made good progress against the main milestones of these projects over recent months. The main risk that is common to these four schemes is that there is uncertainty regarding the future of the budgets that have funded the work since 2023. This refers mainly to the budget of the ARFOR Programme, the Levelling-Up Fund and the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF).

4.3 I would like to draw specific attention to the following matters:

Priority Project: Promoting our Culture and a Sustainable Visitor Economy

4.3.1 A Sustainable Visitor Economy Summit was held on 14 February 2025 where over 100 attendees from various businesses, organisations and communities across Gwynedd and Eryri came together to discuss the next steps to implement our Gwynedd and Eryri Visitor Economy Plan 2035. It was a successful event and there was very positive feedback from the attendees. The Visitor Economy Partnership will reflect on the contributions and enthusiasm of partners to ensure there is a clear benefit for communities in developing the action plan for 2025/26.

4.3.2 When reflecting on the fact that 109 Gwynedd cultural organisations have received support through the Diwylliesiant Project over the past year and with uncertainty about funding beyond 2025/26 to support the sector, a Gwynedd Culture event was held on 18 February 2025 to celebrate the important contribution of the sector to the well-being of Gwynedd residents. Over 70 partners attended and it was agreed that a vision and principles needed to be developed for the investment sector in future.

4.3.3 I would also like to draw your attention to the fact that the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund (LUF) investment timetable has changed, with an opportunity to make a case to extend the fund's expenditure until the end of 2027 and achieve some outcomes by the end of 2029. This will affect partners' investment timetable in the Llewyrch o'r Llechi project and we will be reviewing some agreements with partners in the communities in the coming week. I am pleased to say that some aspects of the scheme have now been completed, and it was a pleasure to visit Neuadd Ogwen recently, which has received a grant of £648,972.65 through Cyngor Gwynedd's Llewyrch o'r Llechi project to upgrade facilities, and to hear about the direct benefits to the community from the investment.

Priority Project: Regenerating Communities and Town Centres

4.3.4 The project has achieved all the agreed milestones for the last quarter, but there is considerable effort by the service at present to complete expenditure on various grants and to support partners to overcome obstacles to achieve outcomes and submit full claims.

Priority Project: Create the best possible circumstances in Gwynedd for businesses and community enterprises to thrive, and support the people of Gwynedd into work

- 4.3.5 Over the last quarter, significant work has been undertaken by the Service to complete expenditure on projects under the Welsh Government's ARFOR programme and the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF). These programmes have included funds to support businesses and community enterprises to thrive and support the people of Gwynedd into work. To date, 573 enterprises have received support through SPF and ARFOR and 184 have been supported to return to work.
- 4.3.6 While the ARFOR programme evaluation report shows clear benefits for businesses and communities; promotes the use and visibility of the Welsh language and highlights job opportunities for young people within the ARFOR region, the future of the programme remains uncertain with no commitment from the Welsh Government to fund it again in 2025/26.
- 4.3.7 I would like to draw your attention to the fact that the UK Government has now confirmed arrangements to extend SPF for another year, but that there is 49% less funding available for Gwynedd and the counties of North Wales. An event was held on 12 March in Porthmadog to celebrate what has been achieved with SPF funding to date. At the end of the programme, we will produce a booklet to share to highlight the value of the different projects across Gwynedd, but this video <https://youtu.be/IP1wKeMwnIE> may give you a taste of what has been achieved. Although we are continuing to evaluate the impact of projects in the 2022/25 programme, the work of identifying priorities for 2025/26 has already commenced.
- 4.3.8 You will note from the appendix that contractual works for the development of 10 new business units in Minffordd are nearing completion, with an intention to commence the construction work in the second quarter of 2025/26. In addition, you will note that the timetable for the preparation of the new Economic Strategy has slipped as a result of the UK Government's decision to offer SPF funding for an additional year to Local Authorities.

Priority Project: Supporting the residents of Gwynedd to live full and safe lives in our communities

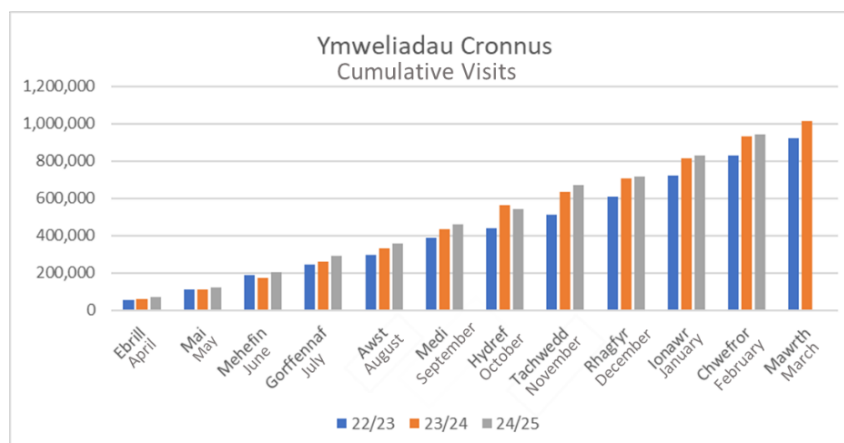
- 4.3.9 While the main milestones of this project have been achieved, I am keen to review our arrangements to support the hubs in order to create a model that would be more sustainable for the future. We will report further on this over the next year.

5. PERFORMANCE OF DEPARTMENT SERVICES

- 5.1 The Department's Performance Dashboard is reviewed regularly. There was an opportunity to scrutinise the performance of the various services at a meeting on 24 March 2024 and I would like to draw the attention of Cabinet Members to the following matters:

Leisure Resources Service - Byw'n Iach, Padarn and Glynllifon Country Parks

- 5.2 The grant investment work at Parc Padarn and Glynllifon is ongoing. Clear challenges have arisen during the development phase and arrangements to collect customer satisfaction scores are affected by the work.
- 5.3 Last time, we reported on the recovery of Cwmni Byw'n Iach in providing services. It is seen again that the number of visits to leisure centres was higher in recent months compared to the same periods for 2023/4 and 2022/23.



- 5.4 However, I am concerned that the number of pupils in Gwynedd who receive swimming lessons at our centres continues to fall. Pre-Covid, 85% of KS2 children receiving swimming lessons in Byw'n Iach pools met the national curriculum standard for basic swimming skills. By the end of Summer 2024, we can be certain that only 54% of all KS2 children can swim. 30% of those assessed had failed as they had not had enough sessions, and 16% had not received an assessment as schools had not brought pupils to lessons.
- 5.5 The concern is that some of the schools with the highest levels of deprivation in the county have the lowest levels of swimming skills. The National Curriculum does not specifically include swimming, so there is a complete reliance on individual schools to prioritise within the area of health and well-being. The financial situation has led to a large number of schools cutting back on the provision with transport costs often reported as a particular barrier.
- 5.6 In response, I would like to inform the Cabinet that I have agreed with the Cabinet Member for Education to share details of school swimming rates with the governing bodies of Gwynedd schools and ask them to give further consideration to the risks and inequality across the county.

Maritime Services, Hafan Pwllheli and Victoria Dock, Caernarfon.

- 5.7 The number of customers with a mooring contract increased by 6.5% in our harbours compared to the previous year, an increase from 250 to 266 (not including Hafan Pwllheli and Caernarfon Dock). However, a large number of boats have been removed from their moorings over the winter period to protect them from damage during inclement weather and to enable owners to undertake maintenance. The service has commenced the process of corresponding with all customers to invite them to re-apply for a mooring in 2025. Since the beginning of the year a number of enquiries have been received across the harbours from new boat owners wishing to moor in Gwynedd, which is very encouraging.
- 5.8 It is also encouraging to see that the majority of our customers at Hafan Pwllheli are keen to continue with the agreement in 2025/26. 9% have cancelled their contract, which is a normal turnover level (it can be up to 15%). The main reasons for cancellations are that sailing costs are increasing, weather and the age of the boat owner. However, reference is also made to the environment of Hafan and Pwllheli including the dredging challenge and the onshore services available (restaurants, hotels, shops etc.). A Dredging Plan is in place and the other issues are being taken into account in future investment plans.
- 5.9 Caernarfon Harbour Trust manages Victoria Dock on behalf of Cyngor Gwynedd through a historic agreement. This agreement needs to be reviewed and we will be working over the next few months to agree new terms with the Trust for the future.

Archives, Museums, Arts and Libraries Services

- 5.10 In January and February, 244 users completed the Archives customer satisfaction questionnaire with 92% of users very satisfied with the service, 2% satisfied, 1% of users indicating that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 5% dissatisfied. The majority of comments received were positive, such as "Excellent and friendly service", "Very grateful for all the support", "Effective service". Of those who were dissatisfied, comments were received such as "The opening hours (days) are the only thing that lets you down", "Opening hours/days. It is inconvenient to have to limit it to only 3 days". Opening hours were reduced to the minimum allowed by the National Archives as a result of cuts in 2016.
- 5.11 The development work at the Lloyd George Museum is nearing completion and we look forward to re-opening and welcoming the public to the Museum in its new guise over Easter.
- 5.12 The demand for the café in Storiell continues. Various provision options have been considered over the past few months including partnering with Bangor University and Cyngor Gwynedd's Adults Service. Although these options are no longer possible, opportunities to work with Grŵp Llandrillo Menai are being considered before going out to tender.

- 5.13 The last few months have been busy but successful for the team at Neuadd Dwyfor. The satisfaction rate remains quite high, with the usual rate between 90%-96% and the regular comments praising the facilities, staff and customer care. Following the introduction of a full programme of events, the number of visits has increased. There has also been considerable experimentation over the period, such as a film club on Monday nights where tables and seats are set up in front of the screen and attendees are encouraged to bring a take-away with them to enjoy the film with a drink from the bar. During these evenings, we have seen an increase in our sales of food and drink.
- 5.14 Thanks to SPF funding, a new lighting desk has arrived at Neuadd Dwyfor with a new projector to be installed in April. These will ensure the sustainability of Neuadd Dwyfor as a cultural destination for the residents of Gwynedd for years to come.
- 5.15 Data from the latest customer satisfaction survey of the Libraries Service shows that 98% of users are very happy with the service. Several correspondences have come to my attention depicting the impact that the Library service has on the residents of Gwynedd. Here is an example from a customer in Tywyn Library: '... the library ... is a valuable resource for the community. Not only in the local area but further afield as well. Value for money, it has to be one of the best services provided by Cyngor Gwynedd. The building is certainly used to its full potential. All staff on the site put in 100% effort to provide the best possible service to their clients. Apart from the usual library services, which are well used. The number of local activities taking place in that Building is impressive to say the least. They range from Writing Groups, Chess Groups, Mother and Baby Groups. There are a number of other groups which are too many to mention.'

Economy and Regeneration Services

- 5.16 The Economic Development, Tourism, Regeneration and Community Support services have focused their efforts over recent months on the implementation of the priority projects outlined in Appendix 1. The performance of these services has therefore been reported therein.

6. FINANCIAL POSITION

- 6.1 The Department has a scheme to generate savings of £100,000 between 2022/23 - 2024/25, namely the scheme to remodel Neuadd Dwyfor. The Covid-19 crisis led to a delay in the realisation of development work at the Neuadd, but the work has now been completed. Despite this, it is clear that the crisis and increase in living costs, along with other factors such as the impact of the new form of watching films, with a large number of people awaiting the release of films on the internet/television, raises concern about our ability to fully implement the savings. Although there has been an increase in the number of users of the Neuadd as reported in 5.13, it is difficult to see

a long-term impact on numbers attending the Neuadd. Discussions are underway to identify a reasonable plan of action in the short term.

- 6.2 One savings scheme continues from previous years (£45,000 in total), which is subject to on-site parking charges. The work has now been completed and local discussions will continue regarding future site management arrangements, including fees to be introduced.
- 6.3 With the exception of scheme savings set out in 4.1 and 4.2, the remaining schemes that had been programmed have been realised in 2024/25, with current schemes worth £135,020 programmed for 2025/26.
- 6.4 A comprehensive financial performance of the Department's position was reported at the 21 January 2025 Cabinet meeting, with projections that the Department will overspend by the end of the 2024/25 financial year. The overspend is mainly due to a lack of income at Neuadd Dwyfor, due to the reasons stated in 4.1, along with the increased costs of running Byw'n lach properties, a lack of income in the Maritime service and a lack of income from Storiell. A combination of underspending on other headings coupled with the use of reserves reduces the reported overspend to £239k. A comprehensive report on the final position of the Department's financial performance will be submitted to the Cabinet on 13 May 2025.
- 6.5 We will continue to review the areas closely in the new financial year, hoping to identify opportunities to implement savings where possible.

STATUTORY OFFICERS' VIEWS

Monitoring Officer:

"No observations to add in relation to propriety."

Chief Finance Officer:

"I am satisfied that the report is a fair reflection of the financial situation of the Economy and Community Department".

Cyngor Gwynedd Plan 2023-28 – Year 2 Actions

A Prosperous Gwynedd: Strengthening the economy and supporting the people of Gwynedd to earn a worthy wage

Department	Project	What do we want to achieve during the SECOND year 2024-25 (milestones):	CONCISE update on progress with milestones to date (10 March 2025)	Is the milestone completed/likely to be completed by the end of the financial year (Yes / No)
Economy and Community	Promoting our culture and a sustainable visitor economy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 We will have established a structure to implement the Gwynedd and Eryri 2035 Visitor Economy Plan and have targeted resources to promote the new objectives. 2 We will have hosted a Sustainable Visitor Economy Summit 3 We will have reviewed our arrangements to support events in Gwynedd. 4 We will have opened, promoted and monitored the use of 4 Motorhomes/Arosfan 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> .1. All elements of the structure are operational and resources have been received from the Council's transformation fund and SPF to further the new objectives. .2. A successful event with over 100 attendees held on 14 February 2025. A very positive response to the event. .3. Arrangements reviewed as part of the development of an SPF event support fund. .4. 4 locations have opened, usage is monitored. Evaluation report to be submitted to Cabinet during 2025. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. Yes 3. Yes 4. Yes

		<p>sites across Gwynedd and will have evaluated the pilot scheme</p>	<p>The number of payments are as follows since June 2024 (Y Glyn) others opened more recently: Caernarfon: 115 Cricieth: 399 Pwllheli: 159 Llanberis: 809</p>	
		<p>5 We will have supported communities and businesses in Gwynedd to promote and celebrate culture locally through the 'Diwylliesiant' project.</p>	<p>.5. 109 organisations/businesses supported through an investment of £715,553 from the Diwylliesiant fund for events, culture and healthy living. These have attracted an additional investment of £5.8m for the County. A great deal of activities have taken place through Storiell, Byw'n lach, Archives, Libraries and Parc Glynllifon.</p>	<p>5. Yes</p>
		<p>6 We will have agreed new plans to provide services at Storiell, Lloyd George Museum and Neuadd Dwyfor, and work with partners in the cultural sector to identify future priorities.</p>	<p>.6. Discussions continue for Storiell, Lloyd George Museum and Neuadd Dwyfor. Neuadd Dwyfor's agreed income target - £20,000 for the next 2 years. The Gwynedd Culture event was held on 18 February to celebrate the sector and identify future priorities. Over 70 people attended, and it was agreed that a vision and principles of culture needed to be developed for Gwynedd.</p> <p>.7. The Llewyrch o'r Llechi and LleCHI LleNi projects are in operation and</p>	<p>6. Partially</p>

		<p>7 We will have supported the communities of Gwynedd to take advantage of the world heritage designation of the slate industry by securing Heritage Lottery funding for LleCHI LleNI projects, and funding from the Shared Prosperity Fund and the Levelling-up Fund, including work at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ogwen – contractors at Yr Hen Post site, upgrade of connecting route in place, official opening of Neuadd Ogwen ○ Dinorwig – contractors at the site of The Slate Museum and Parc Padarn ○ Blaenau Ffestiniog – connecting route completed, Aelwyd yr Urdd upgrade completed, contractors at Church St site ○ Public Art – installed in 6 towns ○ Town Centre Improvements – schemes completed in 6 towns 	<p>successfully delivering despite some challenges.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contractors at the Hen Post site March '25. Unveiling the plaque at Neuadd Ogwen 7 March 25. Some of the path work has been delivered – other parts for 2025. • Contractors at the A-Incline site The work of emptying the Museum has been completed. Contractors on site for Parc Padarn Tourist Information Centre March 2025. Museum appoints contractor 12-03-25. • Path and Aelwyd complete. Starting at Church St. April / May. • Blaenau Art, Porthmadog, Penygroes completed. Tywyn to be completed before the end of March and the other locations during 2025 / 2026. • Schemes in place in Porthmadog, Tywyn and Penygroes. Completion before the end of March 2025. 	<p>7. Partial – delivery period extended to 2027 and 2029 for 2 projects.</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Signing and interpreting – installed in 6 towns ○ Conservation – several historic structures have received investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Commission awarded to YGC to manage and implement. 3 SPF towns to be completed before the end of March '25. ● Work in operation at Penrhyn Quarry Hospital. 	
Economy and Community	Regenerating communities and town centres	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 We will have published Local Regeneration Plans for each of the 13 local regeneration areas and will have confirmed arrangements to co-ordinate these and implement them in the future. 2 We will have supported and enabled partners to implement a package of regeneration projects across the communities of Gwynedd through the effective administration of the £1.8m Community Support Key Fund. 3 We will complete the Porthmadog, Pwllheli, Bala, Dolgellau Placemaking Schemes and update the Slate Area town plans 4 We will have invested £1.8m of Shared Prosperity Fund grant money to upgrade Gwynedd's town centres 5 We will attract additional investment to regenerate Gwynedd's town centres by targeting the Welsh Government's Transforming Towns Programme 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Local Regeneration Plans for each of the 13 areas have been published on the Council's website, and a review of local co-ordination arrangements has been undertaken. 2. The Key Fund has been successfully administered offering grants for a range of local regeneration projects. 3. The Placemaking Creation Schemes have been completed for Porthmadog, Pwllheli, Bala, and Dolgellau. 4. The Town Centre Plan is operational, and all the expenditure will be completed before the end of March. 5. Projects in receipt of the Transforming Towns grant 2024/5 include College Park, Bangor; the vacant property of Galeri Cyf; Menter 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. Yes 3 Yes 4. Yes 5.Yes

		<p>6 We will have brought more empty buildings into use through Cyngor Gwynedd's Empty Properties Programme</p>	<p>y Tŵr Pwllheli; Canolfan Bro Tegid, Bala; and Bangor Health and Well-being Centre.</p> <p>6. The Council's Empty Properties Group meets regularly, and gathers data on empty properties coming back into use</p>	<p>6 Yes</p>
Economy and Community	Create the best possible circumstances in Gwynedd for businesses and community enterprises to thrive, and support the people of Gwynedd into work	<p>1 We will have provided a programme of support to support businesses and social enterprises through the ARFOR programme and the Shared Prosperity Fund and have evaluated the impact of the investment on the economy of Gwynedd.</p> <p>2 We will have held a day to celebrate and promote the success of Gwynedd's businesses and enterprises and have run a campaign to encourage residents and visitors to support local businesses</p> <p>3 We will have started the construction of 10 new business units in Minffordd</p>	<p>1 573 businesses have received Council support to date during the second year of the Plan, including support funded by the SPF and ARFOR programmes. Evaluations of commissioned work.</p> <p>2 Gwynedd Business Week was held in October, with a series of events organised for businesses in Dolgellau, Pwllheli and Bangor. Highlights of the events can be seen on X streams and LinkedIn. The Council's social media campaign to encourage residents and visitors to support local businesses has reached 50,000 other accounts.</p> <p>3 Building rights secured through the planning process along with the Welsh Government's commitment to the scheme in the form of land and money. Tenders are live for the construction but the timeline has been extended.</p> <p>4 We continue to support the North Wales Growth Application schemes, paying particular attention to the schemes that offer the greatest benefit</p>	<p>1 Yes</p> <p>2 Yes</p> <p>3 Construction will now begin in early 2025/26</p>

		<p>4 We will have worked together with partners across North Wales to ensure benefits to Gwynedd from the North Wales Growth Deal.</p>	<p>to Gwynedd in the Digital Programme, the Energy Programme, the Agri-Food Tourism Programme and the Land and Property Programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parc Bryn Cegin scheme has been approved and arrangements are in place to commence on-site operations. • Details of a Responsible Adventure Tourism Plan are being developed. • Glynllifon Innovation Hub project undergoing redesign. • The Trawsfynydd scheme will not be developed in its current form, but consideration is being given to modifying the application to protect investment in the site. 	4 Partially
		<p>5 We will have agreed a new Gwynedd Economy Plan for the period 2025-2028 and will have prepared bids for resources to implement its priorities.</p>	<p>5 Significant consultation with a range of stakeholders has been undertaken to provide guidance and priorities for the Plan. An additional year requires the diversion of resources for the time being. Constructive conversation with members of the Scrutiny Committee – request to return with a draft document.</p>	5 Timetable slipping to 2025/26 in response to SPF extension
		<p>6 We will have provided support for Gwynedd residents to return to work and to increase their ability to earn a good salary</p>	<p>6 184 have been supported to return to work this year and 232 have received help to increase their ability to earn a good salary (so far)</p>	6 Yes
				7 Yes

		7 Our SPF plan to prevent unemployment and support people to achieve their potential will be completed and evaluated	7 Current SPF plan in place and expires 31 March. An evaluation has been commissioned.	
Corporate Support	Keeping the Benefit Local	<p>1. Conduct performance challenge meetings of category management identifying the Procurement forward programme and reporting on indicators (where appropriate):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Value • Value for money • Local expenditure with local businesses • Environmental measurement and carbon reduction efforts <p>2. To carry out an assessment of the potential opportunities arising from the implementation of the new Procurement Act.</p> <p>3. Develop a Communication Plan with the aim of keeping the Benefit Local.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p>

A Caring Gwynedd: Supporting the residents of Gwynedd to live full and safe lives in our communities

Department	Project	What do we want to achieve during the SECOND year 2024-25 (milestones):	CONCISE update on progress with milestones to date (specify date)	Is the milestone completed/likely to be completed by the end of the financial year (Yes / No)
Cross-departmental	Supporting People's Well-being	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establishment of 2 People Support Hubs in 2 new areas. 2. Organise training for the Hubs' employees and volunteers on supporting individuals. 3. Appointment of Well-being Champions posts and hosting cost-of-living events, various drop-in sessions. 4. Collaborate with a volunteer partner to provide numeracy and budgeting support to residents. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discussions held at Bro Peris (Menter Fachwen); and an interim co-ordinator commissioned in the Porthmadog area. 2. Well-being Wales training commissioned. 3. Well-being Champions posts have been appointed 	<p>Partially</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>

		<p>5. Complete the Digital Inclusion Project to provide practical help to teach people to go online and distribute IT equipment.</p> <p>6. Maintain a Food Plan to include the establishment of a grant fund for food and feeding schemes by community groups; community cooking courses in conjunction with the Health Board, and the creation of community gardens and allotments.</p>	<p>4. We are working closely with CAB to advise and provide an outreach service at the hubs.</p> <p>5. We work closely with Ability Net to offer mentoring and support to individuals with digital systems.</p> <p>6. A Capital and Revenue Fund has been established to support feeding projects in the communities. Collaborated with BIPBC to provide cookery courses at the hubs. An Allotment Fund earmarked entirely for the creation of new allotments or the development of existing allotments.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>
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Cabinet Member Performance Report

Councillor Paul Rowlinson

Contact Officer: Carys Fôn Williams, Head of Housing and Property



Housing and Property Department

8 April, 2025

Photo: Tai ar Daith event, Caernarfon - April 2024



Agenda Item 11

A report for the Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet

Date of meeting	8 April, 2025
Cabinet Member	Councillor Paul Rowlinson
Contact Officer	Carys Fôn Williams, Head of Housing and Property
Item	Housing and Property Cabinet Member Report on Performance

DECISION SOUGHT

To accept and note the information in the report.

THE REASON WHY A DECISION IS NEEDED

In order to ensure effective performance management



1. Executive Summary



1.1 The **purpose** of this report is to update Cabinet on what has happened in my areas as Cabinet Member for Housing and Property. In summary it will include an update on projects within the Council's Plan 2023–2028, where the performance measures are on, and an update on financial savings plans.

1.2 **In general I am satisfied that significant progress is taking place with projects led by the Department in accordance with the Council Plan and the performance measures for which I am responsible. The Department continues to face challenges, but I am confident that the Department has suitable plans to handle the situation to the best of its ability.**

1.3 While the pressure on the services and resources of our homelessness team remains high, three developments are now offering homes for our county's most needy people, as well as other exciting schemes underway to try and tackle the situation, including the Penrallt building, and the Mona Building, Caernarfon. I'm also pleased to note that the latest data suggests that there is less reliance on emergency accommodation in 2024/25 compared to 2023/24. See 2.1.4 to see more.

1.4 Demand for all types of housing remains high, therefore, and the need for ambitious and innovative schemes to meet this need is as alive as ever. I am pleased with the direction of the Department in responding proactively to address this problem, with schemes such as Supporting the Social Housing Construction Programme, Tŷ Gwynedd, Buy to Let and Empty Homes Schemes directly addressing this demand. I would like to draw particular attention to the fact that two Tŷ Gwynedd developments are now on site, and others are on the near horizon. Read more about these plans in 2.2.1.

1.5 All of the issues set out here are constantly discussed by myself, the Chief Executive, Head and Service Managers of the Department. Indeed, I had my first encounter as a new Cabinet Member to scrutinise the performance measures in January this year as well as attending a presentation of an update on the Housing Action Plan to a Briefing of Council Members on 19 March, where supportive and positive comments towards the Plan were received.

2. CYNGOR GWYNEDD PLAN 2023-2028 SCHEMES

PRIORITY AREA: A Homely Gwynedd

2.1 Ensuring that no one is homeless in Gwynedd

2.1.1 In the 2024/25 financial year to mid-March, 891 households have presented as homelessness to the Service, and 564 households were placed in emergency accommodation. These presentation figures are similar to last year's, however the numbers in emergency accommodation have fallen slightly compared to 2023/24 (when 662 households were accommodated during the year). I would like to note that this may be due to a number of reasons, however the hard and deliberate efforts of the Department and the Homelessness Service are a key factor in this reduction as we seek to reduce our reliance on unsuitable emergency accommodation.

2.1.2 There many work streams currently ongoing to ensure that no one is homeless in Gwynedd – here is a summary of the main ongoing projects:

2.1.3 **Supported housing developments:** Our aim as part of scheme 1a of the Housing Action Plan is to develop 83 supported units for homeless individuals in locations across the county.

Supported accommodation developments

2.1.4 The first development completed in Dolgellau last year – Dôl Sadler is now home to 5 people, and a two-unit accommodation in Pwllheli has also completed, and is home to two households. Many other developments are in progress, namely:



2. CYNGOR GWYNEDD PLAN 2023-2028 Schemes: A Homely Gwynedd

Project	Units	Update
35 College Road, Bangor	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This development's schedule has slipped significantly as a result of finding faults in the renovation work by an external contractor. Steps are in place to make amends however this will take time
137 High Street, Bangor	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction completed and an open day was held in November, 2024 Discussions continue to discuss welfare and support arrangements with North Wales Housing.
Penrallt building – former WG offices, Caernarfon	up to 40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feasibility assessments have been carried out, design work in progress, as well as condition and structural surveys in preparation for going out to tender Visit has been scheduled for Caernarfon local members and Cabinet Members in April
Mona Building, Caernarfon	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Closed the building as an office in December Attracted grant to complete work on the external structure as part of phase 1 – work commenced in early March Preparatory work on phase 2 (conversion of the internal building) in progress



Penrallt Building, Caernarfon



Mona Building, Caernarfon



137 High Street, Bangor on completion (photo: Adra)

2.2 Increasing the supply of housing for local people

2.2.1 The demand for housing continues to exceed the number of suitable homes we have in Gwynedd, which is why this priority has been, and continues to be, one of the Department's main aims in the Council's Plan.

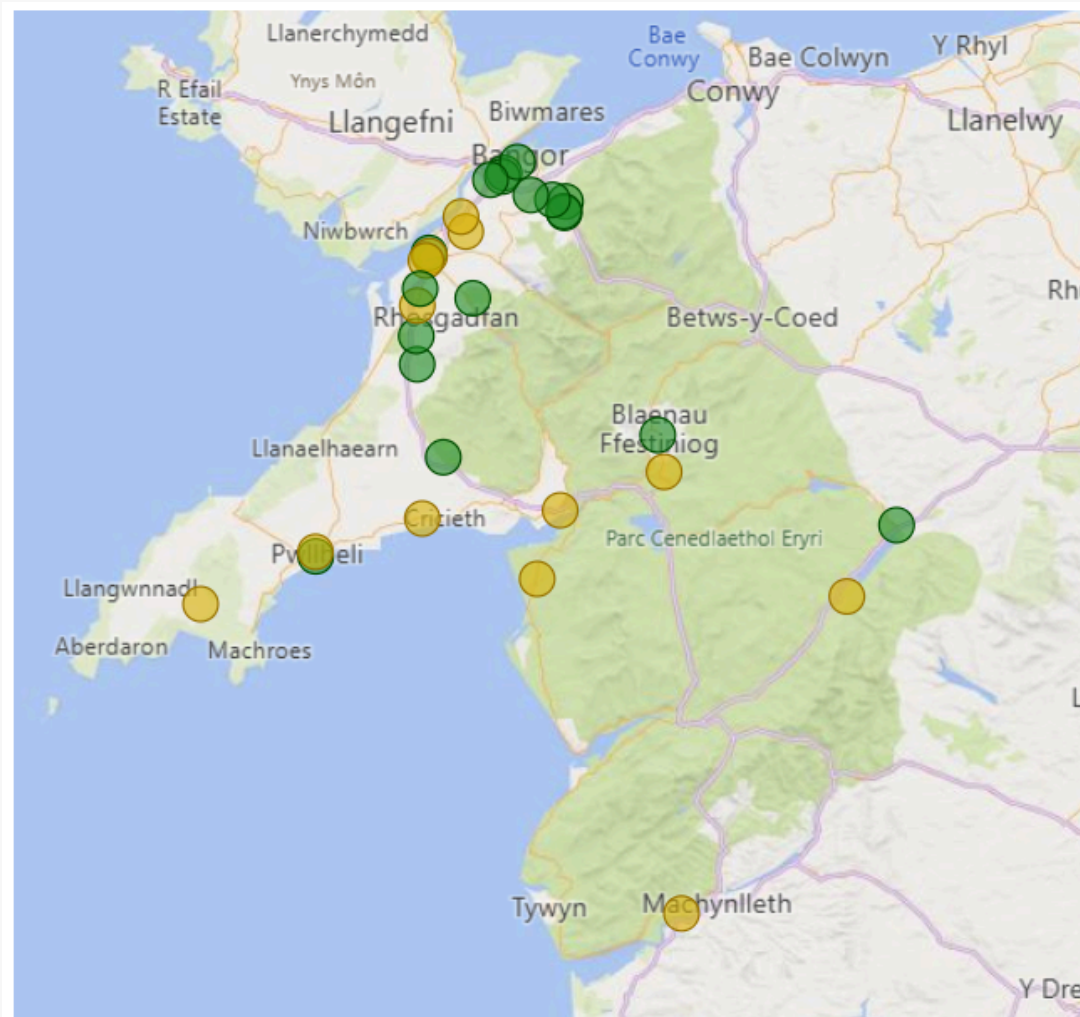
2.2.2 **Gwynedd Social Housing Development Programme (PDP):** As part of the Gwynedd Social Housing Development Programme, which is also part of project 2a of the Housing Action Plan, we continue to work closely with Housing Associations to support the construction programme and aim to build 700 new homes over the life of the Plan.

Gwynedd Social Housing Development Programme (PDP)

2.2.3 352 affordable homes have now been built since the start of the Housing Action Plan which has offered 1,178 Gwynedd residents the opportunity to access social tenancy in their county. There are also over 361 units in the pipeline that will come forward over the next year.

2.2.4 This is great news for the people of Gwynedd who really need housing – without these developments, they would not be able to live in a stable, quality home, with a secure tenancy.

2.2.5 I would like to specifically note my pride in the data which shows that 97% of social housing lettings go to someone with a local connection to Gwynedd. A further sample of recent lettings shows that an average of 60% of lettings go to someone who has a connection to the community they wish to live in.



2.2 Increasing the supply of housing for local people

Tŷ Gwynedd

- 2.2.6 The vision for Tŷ Gwynedd has resulted in an exciting scheme which will see the Council build quality, affordable, future-proof and cheap to run homes.
- 2.2.7 Work is continuing in Llanberis, which will turn the site of the old library into 3 homes for families from Gwynedd. Although a few issues have arisen recently, I am satisfied with the progress of the work and that there are robust arrangements in place to manage the work.
- 2.2.8 Since the last report, development on the site of the former Coed Mawr Infant School, Bangor, which will build 10 houses, has begun and a turf-cutting ceremony was held in December 2024.
- 2.2.9 More good news came in January as the development of Tŷ Gwynedd Maes Twnti, Morfa Nefyn received planning permission to build nine homes. Cyngor Gwynedd gets green light to build nine homes in Morfa Nefyn. Work has begun on appointing a contractor to undertake the work, and I expect the tender will be published in the coming weeks.
- 2.2.10 Two other developments in progress on the main programme, namely:
- Site in Llanystumdwy (5 units)
 - Site in Mynytho (4 units)

- 2.2.11 Of course, to reach this plan's ambition of building 90 homes by the end of the Housing Action Plan's lifespan, other sites are regularly considered, including sites that we already own across the county. This could be oral discussions, desktop assessments, or sometimes going out to conduct assessments on the ground.
- 2.2.12 All developments under the **Tŷ Gwynedd** banner will build adaptable, green, energy-efficient, sustainably built houses, and will be available to buy or rent at an intermediate rent to meet the demand for this type of tenancy.



With Liz Saville Roberts AS and Councillor Gareth Jones at the Maes Twnti site, Morfa Nefyn

Buy to Let

2.2.13 43 houses have been purchased as the map on the right shows. The latest purchases include locations such as Chwillog and Cricieth.

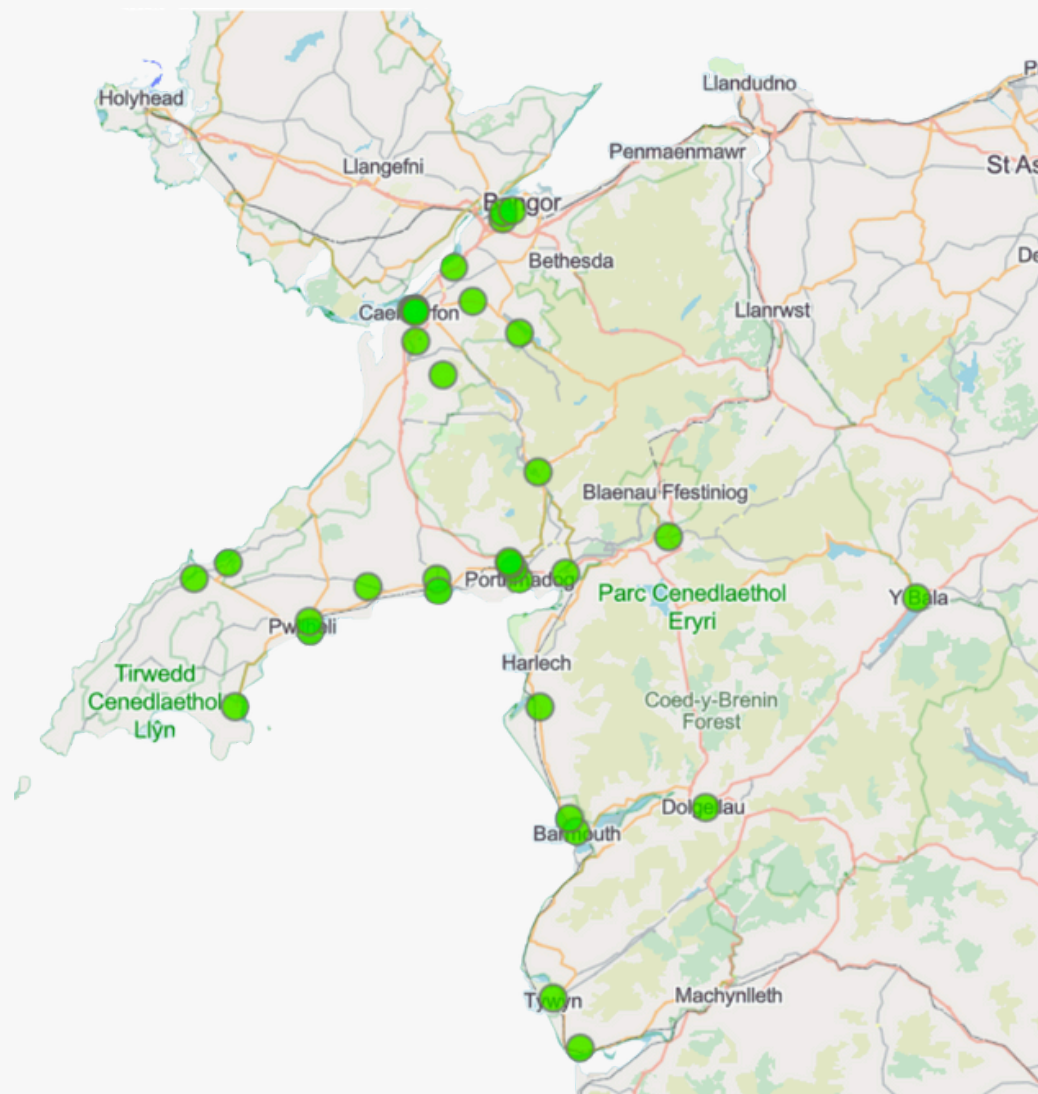
2.2.14 In addition to that there are 3 other purchases in the pipeline.

2.2.15 As always, in addition to the above further opportunities are being considered and negotiated on an ongoing basis. Work is underway to upgrade several houses we own, with contractors on site in 13 properties, and others either in the process of tendering for contractors or preparing to do so.

2.1.16 There are now 11 properties let to local residents in locations such as Pwllheli, Llanberis and Penrhyndeudraeth.

2.2.17 I recognise that there have been some delays before some houses can be let – this is often due to a lack of contractors applying for work, or complications arising during the renovation work. Steps are now underway to try to resolve this, such as looking at internal capacity, or grouping properties for tender so that a package of work is available to potential contractors.

2.2.18 Despite this, I am pleased to report that we have passed the ambition (of 43) for the number of purchases set as an ambition for 2023/24 and I am very pleased with the progress and direction of the Plan as a whole.



Empty homes

Arfon - 49

Dwyfor- 23

Meirionnydd - 29

2.2.19 Through the Council's support, 259 empty homes have come back into use since the start of the Housing Action Plan. Recently, the opportunity was taken to expand the Scheme in order to respond to changes to the needs of our residents and the increases in costs that are seen nationally. As a result, the grant now available has increased from £15,000 to £20,000, and the grant is now available to all types of buyers, not just first-time buyers. My co-Members are reminded that the grant has already been extended so that it's available to homeowners who have purchased properties used to be second homes as well, in order to encourage as many empty homes as possible back into use in the county.

2.2.20 This includes 97 houses where their owners have received grants to refurbish the house to an acceptable standard of living.

2.2.21 Over £1.1m worth of grants have been allocated to date, across the county, with locations and breakdown for Arfon, Dwyfor and Meirionnydd detailed on the map on the left.

2.2.22 In addition, scheme 3e which offers a Council tax exemption for up to a year for empty homeowners to undertake essential restoration work has been very successful with 123 exemptions approved up to the last quarter of 2024.

2.3 Dealing with the energy cost crisis and fuel poverty

2.3.1 Tackling the energy cost crisis and fuel poverty is one of the Department's top priorities in the Council's Plan in the wake of the increase in energy costs, which means that many people in the county are being pushed into fuel poverty, which can pose a real risk to the health of some of our residents. In order to provide support and assistance to the people of Gwynedd, the Department has established an Energy Service for residents as part of the Housing Action Plan which works with our partners to promote and facilitate energy saving schemes, grants, and benefits to ensure that as many people as possible take advantage of the support available at a very challenging time.

2.3.2 There are two main streams of work, Decarbonisation of Housing, and Public Consultation on Fuel Poverty – both aiming to tackle the problem in practice and in the approach that maximises our capacity and resources.

2.3.3 The Service is extremely busy, and manages to provide vital support and advice to some of our residents. For example, in November and December 2024, the team helped 661 people through a combination of telephone advice, face-to-face attendance at events as well as home visits.

2.3.4 In addition, since the start of the scheme, 4,487 energy vouchers have been distributed, equivalent to a total of £188,609 – money that has gone directly to help the residents of Gwynedd who are most in need.

2.3.5 The Department is also involved in the ECO 4 Scheme and the Nyth Scheme – schemes that provide support to improve the energy efficiency of housing. A total of 597 homes across Gwynedd have now seen an improvement in their Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) – 71 since the last report.

2.3.6 To date an investment of over £10m has succeeded in improving the energy performance of 597 homes in Gwynedd, with 248 having raised 4 energy levels, or enabled 449 homes to achieve energy certificate grade B.

2.3.7 This has made a real difference to people in terms of their energy costs, by ensuring that the people of Gwynedd can afford to heat their homes, and helping many to get out of fuel poverty. It also enables housing to be more comfortable, and improves the health and well-being of our residents.



An example of a property that has benefited from solar panels through the eco grant

2. CYNGOR GWYNEDD PLAN 2023-2028 Schemes

PRIORITY AREA: AN EFFICIENT GWYNEDD

2.4 Adopting a Property Assets Management Plan to ensure that our estate is fit for purpose for future working

- 2.4.1 It remains our intention to adopt a new Property Asset Management Plan which will outline the Council's plan in terms of using its buildings to provide services. The last Property Asset Management Plan was adopted in 2016, and there has been a significant change in working arrangements and service provision since then.
- 2.4.2 The Department continues with regular discussions to look at the management and rationalisation of the estate in accordance with the Council's priorities and the needs of the services provided for the residents of Gwynedd.
- 2.4.3 The work to review policies has been completed and discussions have taken place with a large number of Departments. Discussions are currently underway in relation to the reform of the Delegated Rights Clauses for procurement and disposal, and the changes in the revised Policies will need to be addressed along with consideration of the impact of the cuts programme results on the content of the Scheme.
- 2.4.4 As part of this priority work, the adaptation of our offices is ongoing, with staff from the Mona building already relocated. As per the current schedule, it is anticipated that all departmental adjustments will be welcomed by the end of April 2025.



3. OTHER RISKS

There are a few risks to the Department that I need to highlight at the moment.

3.1 **Responding to the pressures on our resources in the area of homelessness** remains a significant challenge for the Department, and the risk to our budgets of not being able to respond to demand, or the risk to our budgets due to the high costs associated with our use of emergency accommodation remains at the top of the Department's list of risks.

3.2 However, a group of officials and Members have met regularly over the past year and a half, and good progress has been made since on trying to reduce our use of unsuitable emergency accommodation, and associated costs. Plans mentioned at the beginning of this report will mean that our options for providing suitable accommodation for the homeless will increase again over the next year and thus enable us to reduce our costs. Extensive work on the efficiency of our internal processes and arrangements has also taken place and continues to be underway, and we are certainly going in the right direction with all of this.

3.3 That said, it must be noted that I do not foresee that this risk will disappear completely for some time, despite the Department's efforts to reduce its probability or impact.

3.4 It is anticipated that the Council's energy costs will remain unstable, and although we have established our own gas purchase framework which has significantly reduced costs, the gas and

electricity contracts are rolling from one year to the next and we are dependent on our broker to provide expert advice to enable us to be in the best position possible. So far the advice that has been received has put us in an advantageous position. We will be meeting our broker again soon to see if it is timely to lock-in for a while.

3.5 The Department continues to emphasise the need for users of Council buildings (offices, schools and others) to take every opportunity to make the most sensible use of their energy, especially over the winter period ahead. The Energy Service will continue to monitor energy consumption across our sites in order to make the best use of the energy.

3.6 There is no doubt that Gwynedd is in a housing crisis, and that has been known for some time as a result of the lack of housing we have in the county. The Housing and Property Department is leading the way in trying to increase the county's housing stock by either doing the work with the resources we have in-house, or by collaborating with our partners. To that end, this aim has been included as a priority in Gwynedd Council's Plan 2023-28.

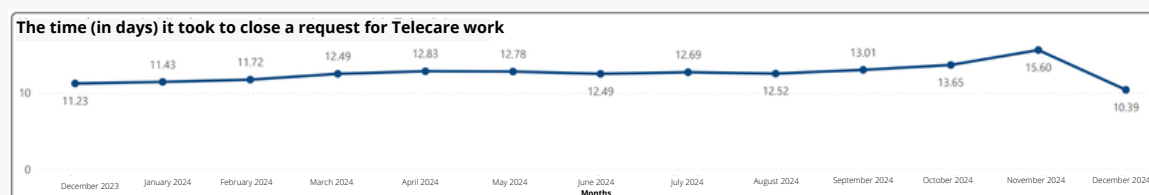
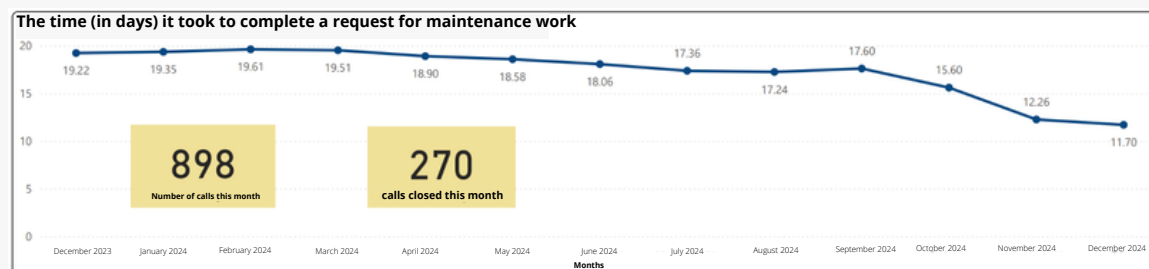
3.7 A key part of this work is the construction of social and intermediate housing, however opposition to such planning applications is now seen. As a result, there is a risk that we will not succeed in our aim of increasing the supply of housing in Gwynedd.

4. PERFORMANCE

- 4.1 Here are some of the key matters arising from the last performance report submitted by the Department on December 2024 performance. The information does not refer to all services in the Department, only those that we feel need to be brought to your attention. I would like to say that I am very satisfied with the performance of the Department.

Maintenance

- 4.2 Over the last period there has been a high number of emergency calls to the Maintenance Unit – due to periods of inclement weather. Despite this, there has been an encouraging reduction in the days taken to respond to calls. The improvement in response time stems from a change in the unit's arrangements over the past few months. On the other hand, although there has been a drop in the number of Telecare calls during November, the number of calls has increased steadily over a period of one year reflecting an increase in demand for the service, with the number of



calls for December 2024 having doubled compared to the data for December 2023. The work of updating the Telecare devices from analogue to digital technology is ongoing, and I note that it will likely have an impact on our figures going forward. Over 700 devices have now been digitally replaced, and work is expected to continue towards the spring.

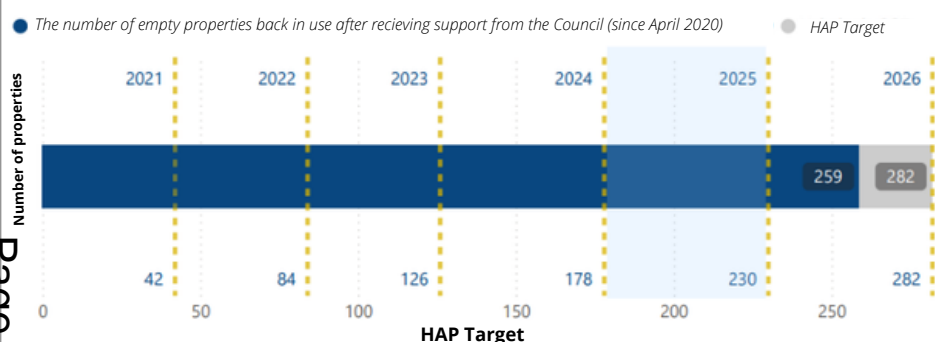
Empty homes

- 4.3 The number of empty homes that have come back into use as a result of Council support has increased again over recent months to 259 (compared to 236 when last reported). This includes 97 homes that have received a First Time Buyers grant as part of the scheme 3dd of the Housing Action Plan. Indeed, since the Scheme was expanded, we have seen an increase in the number applying for the grant, and the availability of up to £20k is also helping more people with rising construction costs. We anticipate that this pattern of progress will continue. One of the successes of this scheme is that giving grants to owners also supports local contractors to carry out repairs. On average, over 3 local contractors are deployed to complete the work on each application, and I'm very glad to report that.

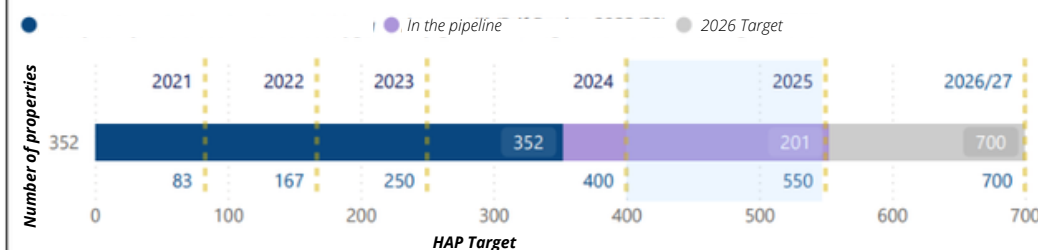
Housing Development Programme (PDP)

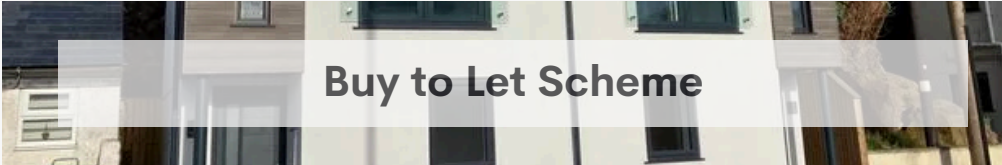
- 4.4 The Department measures the number of units that have been developed through a partnership with the Housing Associations. The housing development programme (PDP) Main Programme, funded through the Welsh Government's Social Housing Grant and managed by the Council, has now built 352 units, with a further 201 in the pipeline. Good progress continues to be made on the schemes in progress and the budget for the next 3 years has already been earmarked for various schemes across the County. We continue to work closely with our Housing Partners to develop contingency plans for the years beyond that and to be able to have mature plans in place so that we can take advantage of any opportunities to attract funding will become available as it already is happening.

The number of empty properties back in use after receiving support from the Council (since April 2020)



Number of Social Housing units developed in order to achieve HAP target

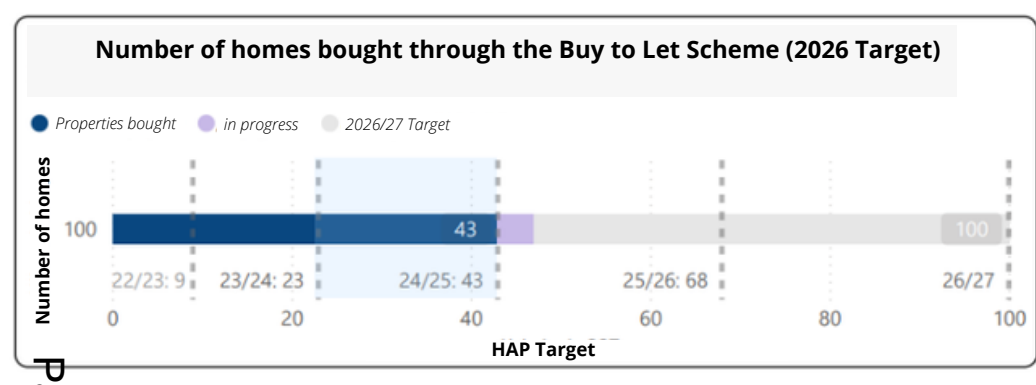




4.5 **43 properties have been purchased** through the Buy to Let Scheme to date and we are pleased that our ambition for a number of purchases in the 2024/25 financial year (43) has already been met.

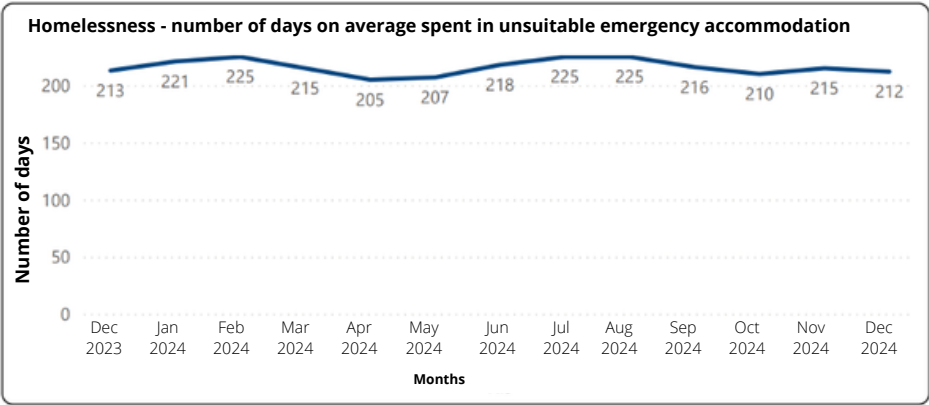
Work is underway to upgrade a number of the homes we own, with contractors on site at 14 properties, and others either in the process of tendering for contractors or preparing to do so.

The second 'part' of this Scheme is letting, and now 11 properties have been let to local residents in locations such as Pwllheli, Llanberis and Penrhyndeudraeth.



4.6 As already stated, homelessness remains one of the Department's busiest services, and deliveries remain high – indeed, there has been a significant increase over the Christmas period due to a number of factors, including inclement weather. For example, between 24/12/2024 and 02/01/2025 5 people were accommodated, with 2 of those due to the severe weather protocol. Without offering accommodation to these, they would have been out on the street in dire conditions.

4.7 The Department measures the **average days spent in emergency accommodation**, which has stabilised over the past year at an average figure of between 205-225 days. This figure is not low enough of course, but I am satisfied that the Department is doing everything within its ability to move individuals and families forward as soon as possible from emergency accommodation. Indeed, without the continued support of Homeless Service officers, this figure would be much higher.



5. FINANCIAL/SAVINGS SITUATION

- 5.1 According to the latest review of the Department's position, an underspend of £303k is forecast this year. In addition, the Department aims to realise savings of £261,230 in 2024/25. Two plans face a slight delay, but all others are on track to come to fruition this year.

VIEWS OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

MONITORING OFFICER

No observations to add in relation to propriety

HEAD OF FINANCE

I am satisfied that the report is a fair reflection of the financial situation of the Housing and Property Department.

