



Complete Agenda

Democracy Service
Swyddfa'r Cyngor
CAERNARFON
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH



Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

This document is also available in Welsh.

Meeting

EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date and Time

10.30 am, THURSDAY, 11TH DECEMBER, 2025

**(NOTE: A BRIEFING SESSION WILL BE HELD FOR MEMBERS AT 10.00AM AND
A LUNCH BREAK IS PLANNED FOR 12.30PM – 1.30PM)**

Location

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

*** NOTE***

This meeting will be webcast

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

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(DISTRIBUTED 03/12/25)

EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP (18)

Plaid Cymru (12)

Councillors

Beca Brown
Dawn Lynne Jones
Olaf Cai Larsen
John Pughe
Dyfrig Siencyn
Sian Williams

Jina Gwyrfai
Gareth Tudor Jones
Gwynfor Owen
Huw Rowlands
Rhys Tudur
Geraint Wyn Parry

Independent (6)

Councillors

Elwyn Jones
Beth Lawton
John Pughe Roberts

Gwilym Jones
Dewi Owen
Richard Glyn Roberts

Ex-officio Members

Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council

Other Invited Members

CO-OPTED MEMBERS:

With a vote on education matters only

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

Without a Vote

| | |
|---------------|--------|
| Elise Poulter | NEU |
| Gwilym Jones | NASUWT |

A G E N D A

1. APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

To receive any declarations of personal interest.

3. URGENT BUSINESS

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

4. MINUTES

5 - 22

The Chair shall propose that the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 16th of October, 2025 be signed as a true record.

5. SCHOOLS STRATEGY

23 - 103

To scrutinise the draft Schools Strategy 2026-2036.

6. CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION PERFORMANCE REPORT

104 - 187

To report to the Scrutiny Committee on the performance of the Education Department.

A lunch break is planned for 12.30pm – 1.30pm

7. CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMY PERFORMANCE REPORT

188 - 240

To report to the Scrutiny Committee on the performance of the Economy Department.

8. CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE PERFORMANCE REPORT

241 - 275

To report to the Scrutiny Committee on the performance of the Finance Department.

EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 16/10/25

Attendance:

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

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

Co-opted Members: Colette Owen (Catholic Church), Sharon Roberts (Arfon Parent / Governor Representative) and Gweno Glyn Williams (Dwyfor Parent / Governor Representative).

Officers present: Bethan Adams (Scrutiny Adviser) and Jasmine Jones (Democracy Services Officer).

Present for item 5 - Councillor Medwyn Hughes (Cabinet Member for Economy and Community), Sioned Williams (Head of Economy and Community Department), Dylan Griffiths (Economic Development Service Manager), Nia Bowden (Business Support Programme Manager).

Present for item 6 - Councillor Dewi Jones (Cabinet Member for Education), Gwern ap Rhisiart (Head of Education Department), Debbie Anne Jones (Assistant Head of Education Services), Siwan Llwyd Roberts (Head of the Gwynedd Immersion Education System).

Present for item 7 - Councillor Llio Elenid Owen (Cabinet Member for Corporate and Legal Services and the Welsh Language), Ian Jones (Head of Corporate Services), Arwel Evans (Procurement Manager), Miriam Fflur Hughes (Procurement Consultant).

Present for item 8 - Councillor Llio Elenid Owen (Cabinet Member for Corporate and Legal Services and the Welsh Language), Ian Jones (Head of Corporate Services), Catrin Love (Assistant Head of Corporate Services), Iwan Evans (Head of Legal Services).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Elwyn Jones and Gwilym Jones (NASUWT).

Councillor Iwan Huws was thanked for his work on the committee.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Sharon Roberts declared a personal interest in items 5, 7 and 8. The member considered that it was a prejudicial interest, and she withdrew from the meeting during the discussion on the items.

3. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

4. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 19 June 2025, as a true record.

5. GWYNEDD ECONOMY STRATEGY

The Cabinet Member for Economy and Community presented the report, noting that the report had been drawn up following extensive consultation with several businesses and organisations. It was noted that the current economic situation was challenging with businesses continuing to face many changes and challenges, including rising costs, the speed of digital transformation and the need to develop appropriate skills sustainably across the county.

It was noted that a recent statement from the Welsh Government referred to the possibility of £550 million of funding to boost the economy in Wales, but there was no clarity as to where that money would be allocated. It was noted that the situation was unclear, stressing that the level of funding received had decreased significantly. It was elaborated that around £20 million was received two years ago with £8.5 million received this year, and that this figure could decrease further next year.

It was stressed, therefore, that a clear strategy was needed to outline the priorities moving forward. It was noted that, following the receipt of input from Committee Members in February on the priorities for increasing the future prosperity of Gwynedd's residents and communities, an initial draft of the long-term strategy would be submitted to the Committee for Members to offer input and feedback before the document was confirmed.

It was emphasised that the long-term strategy in question sets the overall direction, with an action plan behind it to outline the projects that would contribute to the realisation of the strategy, and that said plan would be updated annually. It was noted that this was not just a Council strategy, but a strategy for the whole county, with the intention of continuing to work closely with partners to finalise the final document.

The intention to establish a Gwynedd Economy Forum was explained to co-ordinate the work with partners from all sectors and to build on the positive experiences of implementing the Shared Prosperity Fund. It was noted that the next steps would be to receive additional input, establish the Gwynedd

Economy Forum, confirm the content of the strategy, and submit the final document to Cabinet and then to the Full Council.

The Committee was thanked for its 17 comments at the meeting on 13 February 2025, and it was noted that these had been considered in the formulation of the strategy.

During the discussion, the following observations were made:

It was noted that it was a pleasure to see the work coming to fruition, and more information about the Gwynedd Economy Forum was requested, specifically in terms of membership and how often it would meet. In response, it was noted that the intention was to include representatives from the main sectors that are important to Gwynedd, such as agriculture, tourism, education, universities and colleges, as well as local business owners, entrepreneurs and economic experts. It was emphasised that the representation of the private sector was an essential element of the Forum to secure practical advice and expertise.

Questions were asked about the references to deprived areas of Gwynedd in the strategy, noting that there was no specific reference to fostering economic growth in areas such as Meirionnydd and Dwyfor. It was stressed that more emphasis was needed on these areas within the strategy. In response, it was noted that this was a fair point, and that the geographical element should be underlined more clearly within the document. It was explained that the action plans under the strategy would include consideration of the geographical matters, and it was emphasised that the department strived to ensure fairness across the whole county. Although less funding was available, it was noted that the intention was to maintain a fair distribution of the resources available.

An update on the situation at Llanbedr and Trawsfynydd was requested. In response, it was explained that the development project at Llanbedr continued to be linked to the development of the new road, and that it was hoped that the work would progress by next May. In the case of Trawsfynydd, it was noted that an investment of £70 million had been recently announced for the decommissioning project over the next three years, with the expectation that this would create between 150 and 200 local jobs. It was emphasised that work was underway to strengthen the opportunities in the area, including the development of a science park and elements such as data centres and artificial intelligence.

In relation to Llanbedr, it was emphasised that pressure needed to be put on the Welsh Government to earmark funding before May, noting that it was not fair to expect the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee to provide the funding. The need to continue to press for the continuation of the decommissioning process at the Trawsfynydd site was noted, noting the risk of the process slipping as the financial plans had not increased in line with inflation. In response, it was noted that this point had been raised with the relevant bodies at the Trawsfynydd Oversight Board.

Concern was noted about the lack of Welsh speakers in senior positions and the influence this could have on the proportion of the non-Welsh speaking workforce. The need to monitor the situation and ensure fairness for Welsh speakers within public and private workplaces was emphasised.

The future growth of the economy and the impact of additional costs such as the national insurance tax on small businesses, particularly in the tourism sector, was questioned. It was noted that several businesses were concerned about this matter and, as a result, had reduced their workforce. There was further questioning as to what grants were available to assist these businesses, especially the rural businesses. In response, it was noted:-

- There was a lack of clarity regarding grants as they were constantly changing, with the Welsh Government setting the allocations from year to year.
- The economic vision was based on "growth for purpose" rather than "growth for growth's sake", with a focus on maintaining and maximising what was available and supporting local businesses to save costs, increase income and adapt to a net zero economy.
- The strategy included new opportunities that were suitable and appropriate for Gwynedd as an area, seeking to capitalise on local strengths and geographical elements such as sites like Trawsfynydd.
- The Annual Action Plans would set out the practical actions and local projects that would contribute to these aims, relying substantially on external funding and private sector contribution.
- The current situation needed to be protected while looking to the future.

It was questioned where economic growth was projected in the coming years, stressing the need to create good quality jobs to keep young people in the county. In response, it was noted that access to the electricity grid was crucial, with developments such as data centres, new agricultural developments in Glynllifon and clean energy projects underway. It was noted that while the financial situation was challenging, it was hoped that prosperity and growth would be seen with the new technology. It was stressed that the programme of schemes would be included in the annual action plans. It was noted that it was intended to review them annually to identify the relevant projects as circumstances and private sector interest developed.

In relation to planning applications, awareness was expressed of businesses intending to move to Gwynedd to develop their activity but had not received planning permission. It was questioned how much frustration this created for the development of Gwynedd's economy, and whether representation from the planning area would be part of the Gwynedd Economy Forum. In response, it was noted that planning was a critical area for economic success and was mentioned in the strategy. It was further noted that representation from the planning area would be part of the Gwynedd Economy Forum.

Concern was noted about the soft nature of the strategy in terms of language use, with reference to words such as 'support' and 'promote', as well as the delay in receiving the draft document for 2025-26. In response, it was noted

that strategic documents were directional documents and therefore tended to be soft in tone, and that the action plans included the concrete actions. It was noted that a delay in receiving a funding settlement this year had led to a delay in the preparation of the work, and that action had to be taken within a short financial period.

Concern was expressed about the lack of certainty about the future of grants, referring to the programmes that expired in March 2026. In response, it was noted that several successful programmes had been in place over the past three years, fully funded by grants. It was noted that uncertainty about ongoing funding created uncertainty for Council staff about their working contracts. It was stressed that over half of the department's workforce was on short-term contracts due to reliance on grants, creating a challenge in retaining experienced staff. It was noted that the department was concerned about this and efforts to receive this grant funding for next year would be prioritised.

A request was made for more information about economy schemes relating to the Welsh language and efforts to attract people back to Gwynedd. In response, it was noted that the department had been working on the Arfor programme over the past three years with a budget of £11 million, but this year only received bridging funds. It was emphasised, however, that the lessons learnt, and research carried out over the last three years, such as what mattered to young people and what conditions and circumstances would attract them back, would continue to be used. It was noted that the matter was a priority within the strategy and was therefore being prioritised in grant applications to continue to build on the work that had already been done.

More information was requested regarding collaboration between the Economy and Community Department and the Environment Department to ensure that the strategy was fully considered as the new Local Development Plan was developed. In response, it was noted that there was a clear link between the strategy and the development plan, and that the two strategies would move in the same direction. It was noted that a close working relationship existed for major projects, and that the Department highlighted the importance of the plans to the local economy and offered their views as the planning processes progress.

Further details regarding the evaluation of the Arfor programme were requested. In response, it was noted that the evaluation had been commissioned and shared with the four counties, and that it showed which schemes had succeeded best, helping to identify, moving forward, which type of interventions made the biggest difference. It was noted that the intention was to publish the report by December 2025, having been agreed with the Welsh Government, to ensure that the findings would inform the work into the future.

The lack of discussion between the Environment Department and the Economy and Community Department in relation to various planning applications, was highlighted. The need for better communication between the Departments was noted, particularly in relation to smaller developments and developments in rural areas. In response, it was noted that the working relationship on large

projects was strong, but that the department would discuss with the Environment Department how to extend this to smaller projects.

The importance of supporting the work taking place in Llanbedr in relation to drone developments was emphasised, noting that these developments benefitted agriculture. In response, it was stressed that there was no military work on the site and that the Council would continue to support the development.

It was noted that clean energy generation and hydro schemes were not an industry with potential for growth at present, as the prices offered for this electricity by the Government had dropped significantly.

Opinions were expressed that the delivery plan over-emphasised the Arfon area. It was noted that greater emphasis needed to be placed on the development of basic skills such as carpentry, plumbers and electricians, within the construction industry when formulating training plans.

It was noted that there was a need for more regular reporting on the jobs created or safeguarded through the department's plans, including information at ward level, to demonstrate the impact of the investment on the people of Gwynedd.

RESOLVED

- 1. To accept the strategy and note the observations.**
- 2. Express concern regarding the availability of grants for deprived areas such as Gwynedd, and express hope that there will be equality and fairness within the County in relation to the distribution of resources and support.**
- 3. To note the importance of collaboration between the Economy and Community Department and the Environment Department to ensure that the New Local Development Plan addresses the need to attract jobs and businesses to the County. Similarly, to collaborate with Eryri National Park.**
- 4. Suggest that a clear structure is established to review the progress at the end of the year against the delivery plan.**

6. IMMERSION EDUCATION SYSTEM

The report was presented by the Cabinet Member for Education. It was noted that the Immersion Education System had been the subject of discussion on numerous previous occasions by the Committee, and that continued interest in the field was welcomed as it was a vital one for the county. It was emphasised that Gwynedd had a unique opportunity as a county to ensure that children arriving late to the area had the opportunity to develop a vital skill, namely the Welsh language. It was noted that the Welsh language was important to everyone in Gwynedd and opened doors in terms of employment and cultural opportunities. It was emphasised that this was essential that, in a county where

the majority spoke Welsh, all children were able to take full advantage of everything available to them.

It was noted that two reports had been published since the field was last discussed, namely a report from Bangor University and a report from Estyn. It was emphasised that the previous immersion system had not been inspected by Estyn, but that the system was now registered as an educational entity and therefore received a full Estyn inspection like the schools. The report by Estyn was noted to be very positive, recognising that Gwynedd had an innovative immersion system.

Appreciation was expressed to the staff of the department for their hard work, and in particular to Rhys Meredydd Glyn, the former Head of the Immersion Education System.

During the discussion, the following observations were made:

The level of detail of Estyn's inspection of the Immersion Centres was questioned. It was noted that Bangor University's report contradicted the Estyn report and made specific recommendations, such as reconsidering the current four-day model and returning to a five-day model, noting that the four-day model contained shortcomings such as the contact on the fifth day between the immersion centre and the teachers in the schools. It was questioned whether the Department would be prepared to consider Bangor University's recommendations.

In response, it was noted that the Estyn inspection had included extensive fieldwork compared to Bangor University's inspection, with three inspectors over three days in each of the six immersion centres and in schools, including interviews with pupils and staff. It was noted that Bangor University's report had used different criteria to Estyn, including methods used in assessing adult immersion.

It was stressed that the comments in both reports were valid and that the recommendations had been accepted by both organisations. It was elaborated that work was already underway to respond to several of the recommendations, with centre staff now starting to work alongside pupils in the classroom, rather than taking them out of class as under the old system. It was further noted that additional resources were being offered to respond to the recommendations, and that a website was being developed to provide a snapshot of what was being achieved within the immersion centres.

It was noted that the recommendations regarding the number of days in the immersion centres had been fully weighed up and measured by the Department, with a table appearing in the report comparing the advantages and disadvantages of the four models available. Each model had been considered in detail before deciding to keep the current arrangement for the time being, as headteachers had asked for consistency.

Concern was expressed by a member that not all school headteachers were aware of the situation at grassroots' level.

The difficulties highlighted within the reports were highlighted in terms of the structure of lessons for the children returning from the immersion centres to the schools, and the need to return to the five-day model to address this. It was noted that the Estyn report was superficial, with little detail or evidence to support it. It was further noted that Estyn had inspected several immersion centres in Wales who had just started their journey, and therefore the praise of Gwynedd's centres was understandable.

It was noted that Bangor University's report was a good report, with more detail, evidence and comments from mainstream teachers, immersion teachers and pupils. It was noted that several recommendations and conclusions had emerged from the report, and that one of the main messages was that children needed more hours of immersion. It was noted within the report that comments from immersion teachers indicated that there was no constant contact between the schools and the centres, and that mainstream teachers tended to become more comfortable with using English.

It was noted that a five-day model within the immersion centres offered a clearer structure in terms of education for the children, but that there was insufficient monitoring or follow-up to this within the mainstream, as there were not enough immersion teachers available to ensure this. The need for the Welsh Government to provide more funding to maintain the immersion system was emphasised, as it was not fair for schools to have to contribute to fund the provision.

In response, it was noted that the fifth day within the school was advantageous as it enabled better communication between the centres and the mainstream schools. It was noted that pupils' well-being remained a central consideration for the Department, as well as teaching, and that the fifth day back at school had been identified as something beneficial for the children. It was stressed that the current decision reflected what was best for the children and for the schools, as well as the headteachers' request for consistency, money was not the main factor in reaching the decision. It was recognised that there was room for improvement in communication between the centres and schools, and that plans had been drawn up to rectify this.

It was stressed that both reports were important and stood on their own merits, and that there were lessons to be learned from both. An opinion was expressed that the findings of Bangor University's report stemmed from what happens on the fifth day, which is Friday, when pupils were back at school. It was elaborated that the context of the inspection, particularly the time of year when the work had been carried out, was likely to have influenced to some extent what was seen on Friday. It was noted that Friday was not necessarily a suitable day for children from the immersion centres to return to school.

It was explained that the financial situation was challenging, but that the Council had received a significant grant from the Welsh Government for the

immersion provision and had used all possible means to protect schools from having to fund the provision themselves.

A member made the following comments:-

- That Estyn had already misled this Committee on the matter of children's well-being and safety, and therefore a view was expressed that the Estyn report was unreliable.
- The conclusion of Bangor University's report that mainstream schools were finding it difficult to support pupils to successfully reintegrate on Fridays, and that this had reduced the robust efficiency of the immersion process.
- Bangor University's conclusion had indicated that a return to mainstream school on Fridays had a negative impact on pupils' well-being in terms of consistency.
- Only £1 million was being spent on the immersion system, and that the Welsh Government needed to lobby for more funding.

An opinion was expressed that the report contained bias, disregarding the findings of Bangor University's report.

Concern was expressed about the lack of criticism in the Estyn report, stressing that Bangor University's report offered a more balanced picture and highlighted a lack of strategies, contact and understanding from teachers. It was stressed that changing the model from Friday to Monday at school was not going to be a solution to this problem. It was suggested that pupils' well-being needed to be specifically examined when deciding on the best arrangement, as evidence had shown that pupils felt more confident in the immersive environment than when returning to mainstream school.

The need to consider increasing immersion hours and placing greater emphasis on the process of integrating pupils back into their schools was emphasised, ensuring appropriate strategies and training for staff. It was noted that there was a lack of time for teachers to implement the strategies, and that consideration needed to be given to a return to a five-day-a-week system that had already proven successful.

A view was expressed that the Language Charter had not proven successful, with English being used as an informal language within schools, and that it should be reviewed and scrutinised as a matter of urgency by the Committee.

In response, the following was stated:-

- Work was underway to re-launch the Gwynedd Language Charter with new branding.
- Any additional funding from the Government was welcomed.
- The Department had already used all available resources to maintain the provision and to protect schools from additional costs, but that there were wider financial pressures across education services.

- It was important to continue to celebrate the successes of the immersion centres and to recognise the hard work undertaken daily by teachers and staff across the county.
- Secondary headteachers had raised concerns that communication remained challenging.
- Schools were encouraged to appoint a language mentor to act as a liaison between the immersion centre and the school, to ensure linguistic progression. It was noted that this role was essential to maintain the link between pupils and the immersion staff after their time at the centre.
- An immersion period did not end after 10 weeks, and that relationships were intended to be fostered with mainstream schools to share immersion expertise. It was further noted that the training on the principles of immersion needed to be guided by the universities, so that it could be part of the training of all teachers.

The nature of the consultation held with the headteachers was questioned. Headteachers had been asked whether they had been given an opportunity to consider the evaluation before expressing an opinion on the new models. In response, it was noted that all primary and secondary headteachers had received a copy of the four models and the relevant information before expressing an opinion.

It was noted that cases had been reported where teachers did not arrive at mainstream schools on time on Friday, meaning children had to wait for long periods. Concern was expressed that long periods of online work could lead to loneliness among the pupils. It was therefore stressed that having children back on the fifth day did not fulfil its purpose of keeping them in touch with the school and their fellow pupils.

Concerns were raised about the impact of the fifth day on the social language of the schools, especially in rural areas. It was noted that this could affect the linguistic nature of the whole school and the Welsh culture on the playground and in the classroom. It was suggested that it would be worthwhile to receive the views of schools that had already experienced the arrangement to get a more comprehensive picture of the situation.

A question was asked about cases where parents had not chosen to send their children to the immersion centres. In response, it was noted that reasons such as the need to settle in a new home were common, but that the Department was extending the invitation to future periods and continued to invite and persuade parents to attend through in-person visits to the centres. It was emphasised that cases of refusal of the invitation to attend the immersion centres were very rare.

It was questioned how children with additional learning needs were supported by the immersion centres. In response, it was noted that robust arrangements were in place to support pupils with additional learning needs and emotional needs. It was explained that individual development plans were transferred to the centres and that staff received training on the principles of parenting schools, trauma awareness and ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants).

The importance of promoting Welsh as a social language in mainstream schools was emphasised, emphasising the need to create a culture where pupils can use the language naturally in the playground and in the community. In response, it was noted that two officers within the Council were working on the reform of the Language Charter and that a funding bid had been submitted to expand these roles. It was further noted that there were jobs available within schools in each catchment area for teachers to take on additional responsibilities to implement the Language Charter and to organise one annual event in their catchment area.

It was noted that another model had been suggested regarding keeping the fifth day within the school but extending the period within the immersion centres from 10 weeks to 12. It was elaborated that it was impossible to determine how practical this model was at present, but that it was something to be considered further in the future.

A member thanked the immersion service staff, congratulating them on their excellent work and praising them for the efficiency of the service. They also thanked all the teachers in the county for their heroic efforts to immerse pupils on a day-to-day basis in the classroom.

It was proposed that the report be rejected because there was a trend in the glorification of the reports received from Bangor University and Estyn; recommend that the Cabinet Member for Education lobbied the Welsh Government for additional funding to fund the provision and thank the staff at the immersion centres for their work.

Councillor Rhys Tudur noted his opposition to accepting the report. He elaborated that insufficient consideration had been given to models of greater duration in the immersion centres; that models needed to be looked at in need of extensive funding e.g. pupils go back to an immersion centre once a week after the 10-week period; and the impact of pupils returning to schools from the centres for one day a week on pupils' language practices in mainstream schools had not been considered.

The proposal was seconded. A vote was taken on the proposal, and it fell on the Chair's casting vote.

A discussion was held in relation to accepting the report.

RESOLVED

- 1. To accept the report and note the observations.**
- 2. To ask the Cabinet Member for Education to:**
 - further lobby the Welsh Government for additional financial resources.**
 - give further consideration to the option of returning to five days and/or consideration of the length of the period in the language centres, taking into account the welfare of the pupils.**

- **consult further with stakeholders and ensure flexibility in terms of the provision in moving forward.**

3. That the Scrutiny Committee extends its gratitude to all those involved in immersion, both in the language centres and within mainstream schools.

7. PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

The report was presented by the Cabinet Member for Corporate and Legal Services and the Welsh Language. It was explained that new legislation in the field of procurement came into force in February this year. It was noted that the report outlined the Council's response to the Act, together with the strategy itself and the consequences of using the social value methodology in the evaluation of contracts.

It was stressed that public sector procurement was subject to a legal framework to ensure fair and open competition, value for money, and to comply with national and international obligations. It was noted that the Social Partnership and Public Procurement Act 2023 was likely to come into force next year, and that preparatory work was underway to respond to these changes.

It was explained that the Council spent around £200 million a year on procurement and therefore needed to deliver the best value in terms of price, quality and social benefits, including a contribution to decarbonisation. It was noted that the strategy sets out the direction for achieving these objectives and includes seven priority areas: local benefits, zero carbon, value for money, social value, technology, governance arrangements and the Welsh language.

It was reminded that the social value evaluation methodology reflected the seven aims of the Well-being of Future Generations and the Welsh Language Act, and that the Council would pilot a new system to ensure positive outcomes for Gwynedd, such as creating employment opportunities for local residents, spending in the local supply chain, and financial contributions to charities and community clubs. It was noted that companies had already offered social benefits of over £4 million since the introduction of the new approach.

It was explained that the next steps were outlined in the report, with a view to submitting the strategy to Cabinet in November. It was emphasised that the Council was a pioneer in the field of social value and that this strategy would underpin procurement over the coming years.

During the discussion, the following observations were made:

A question was asked about the main challenges facing the Council in implementing the Strategy, particularly in terms of achieving the net zero target and keeping the benefits local. In response, it was noted that there were challenges across several sectors, including the environment, Welsh language and the social elements, and that the change in legislation and the need to understand the new arrangements were currently posing the main challenges.

The additional cost of implementing decarbonisation policies, such as the purchase of electric vehicles instead of diesel vehicles, was questioned and what financial impact this had on the Council. In response, it was noted that the main challenge was to calculate the environmental impact when comparing an old contract with a new one, and that this work was continuing at a national level. It was noted that there was currently no sophisticated method to measure carbon in detail, but that the hope remained that energy consumption would decrease over time and that this would lead to a reduction in costs. It was agreed to undertake further research to analyse the additional financial cost of implementing the net zero target.

A member expressed an opinion that the costs of future decarbonisation were likely to be higher than the cost of reaching the net zero goal. The amount of collaboration work that had been undertaken with the Economy and Community Department, and how much support was being given to small companies within the Strategy, was questioned. In response, it was noted that the Economy and Community Department provided support through grants and helped businesses in general. It was also noted that the Procurement Service offered support and provided advance information to businesses about tendering opportunities, with the ability to refer companies to Business Wales who offer independent support. It was emphasised that the Council sought to avoid using national frameworks where possible, to ensure more opportunities for local companies to compete.

The current monitoring arrangements and the steps to develop them further were questioned. In response, it was noted that contract management currently took place primarily within the individual services, and that the intention was to strengthen those arrangements by introducing best practice and ensuring full value for contracts. It was noted that there was a need to improve the monitoring of social value, the collection of carbon information and public reporting on the outcomes of tenders and the performance of large contracts.

It was enquired what was new in this Strategy compared to the previous one. It was asked if the fact that we measured social value was different from other authorities and went beyond the requirements of legislation. In response, it was noted that the element of measuring social value, the emphasis on keeping the benefit local, the impact of net zero procurement, value for money, making the best use of technology, looking at the governance arrangements, and promoting the Welsh language were additional aspects that had not been included in previous strategies. It was elaborated that several of these elements had been a priority in the past but had not been documented within a strategy. It was noted that the emphasis on social value in Gwynedd was higher than in many other authorities. It was emphasised that this strategy reflected the requirements of the Social Partnership and Public Procurement Act and laid the foundations for annual reporting on progress.

It was questioned whether technology and artificial intelligence had led to savings for the Council so far. In response, it was noted that the use of artificial intelligence technology was already taking place, but details of the financial savings were not currently available. It was noted that this area was developing

as part of the Digital Plan, with robust governance arrangements being put in place.

The desire to see the Welsh language treated as a practical and meaningful factor in contracting, rather than just a symbolic promotional element, was emphasised. In response, it was noted that legal advice had been obtained on this matter and shared with the Member, noting the need to act within current law. It was noted that further work was underway to explore new opportunities to strengthen the use of the Welsh language through the detailed action plan.

The timetable for formulating and implementing the action plan was questioned. In response, it was noted that work was already underway in the background, but that the timetable would depend on the capacity and resources of the service. It was noted that this was a long-term strategy, with the actions to be prioritised over several years.

It was questioned what would be updated within the Procurement Policy and when this would happen. In response, it was noted that the Policy would be updated to reflect the requirements of the legislation. It was confirmed that a draft version of the Policy had already been prepared, and that it needed an internal consultation before it could be adopted.

RESOLVED

- 1. To accept the report and note the observations.**
- 2. To ask the Cabinet Member for Corporate and Legal Services and the Welsh Language to ensure that everything possible, within the limitations, is done to keep the benefit local, to promote small companies, create social value and support the Welsh language.**

8. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CORPORATE AND LEGAL SERVICES AND THE WELSH LANGUAGE

The report was presented by the Cabinet Member for Corporate and Legal Services and the Welsh Language, explaining that the report referred to the progress made against the promises of the Council's Plan and the department's performance measures. It was noted that performance had been discussed at a performance challenge meeting in September.

Members were reminded that the department was leading on six projects within various priority areas: keeping the benefit local, promoting the use of the Welsh language, workforce planning, ensuring fairness for all, women in leadership and a strategic review of health and safety management. The strategic review of health and safety management was highlighted, noting that there had been a slippage in two milestones within the project. The first was to introduce a new information technology system for health and safety across the Council, and the second was to develop a five-year audit plan. It was emphasised that the work was progressing and that the work was expected to be fully carried out.

In terms of day-to-day performance, it was noted that the situation was generally positive, but that several matters needed further attention. Reference was made to language assessments completed by staff, where the percentage had been high but had not yet reached the full target, with eight new members of staff not completing the assessment. Similarly, it was noted that 14 DBS applications were awaiting processing in Liverpool, and a further 44 awaiting implementation by staff or management, with the figures changing daily as new staff reached their renewal period. It was explained that the Safeguarding Operational Group discussed DBS performance on a quarterly basis, with a sub-group scrutinising the data.

It was noted that 52 referrals had been made to Occupational Health in August, with 48 members of staff attending appointments. Of those, 40 were absent from work, but following actions such as a phased return or reasonable adjustments, it was noted that 19 individuals had now returned to work.

In terms of data protection requests, 18 requests had been received during the quarter of which 13 were answered within the timeframe. It was noted that the complexity of many of the applications, particularly in the children's field, had influenced performance, and that if the numbers and complexity increased, the resources would need to be reviewed to cope.

It was noted that the average sick days per head across all Council services, including schools, stood at 4.43 days, compared to 4.23 last year. It was explained that an in-depth analysis for 2024-25 had been submitted to the Corporate Management Team and the Local Joint Consultative Committee, with action to be taken from that. It was noted that the average time to complete job appraisals had decreased from an average of 49.04 days to 35.09 days by the end of August. It was stressed that this performance reflected the work of the team but also depended on the number of applications received and other priorities within the department.

All the officers of the department were thanked for their commitment and continued support to the work of the Council.

During the discussion, the following observations were made:

A question was asked about the lack of reference in the report to progress, or lack of progress, in relation to the Ffordd Gwynedd scheme. In response, it was noted that the department was not leading on the plan but was contributing significantly to the plan leading on several individual streams of work. It was explained that a report on the Ffordd Gwynedd scheme had already been submitted to Cabinet in July.

It was noted that the staff sickness absence figure had not changed much since last year. It was questioned whether there were any patterns or differences between departments regarding staff sickness absences. In response, it was explained:-

- That an in-depth analysis of the situation had been submitted to the Corporate Management Team, showing progress between 2023-24 and 2024-25.
- A new policy on sickness absence had been introduced, and nearly 400 managers had been trained on it.
- A new system to record absences had led to more effective monitoring and possibly increased the figures due to better recording.
- Stress and musculoskeletal conditions remained major factors, with intervention packages available and a focus on the manager's role in supporting staff well-being.

A question was asked about stress, asking whether work pressures and financial cuts contributed to the situation. In response, it was noted that stress was recorded as either personal or work-related, and that it could be a combination of both. It was explained that work was underway to encourage managers to have regular conversations about well-being with staff, through new training and courses such as the i-act training and the ongoing evaluation system.

The department was asked if there were concerns about DBS completion figures, and the reasons why some members of staff had not completed or renewed their DBS. In response, it was noted that the figures were not of concern to the department, as it was aware of the employment status of these individuals, and that the figures were regularly reported to the Safeguarding Strategic Panel and the Safeguarding Operational Group. Individuals without DBS were identified as either new workers, on long-term sickness absence or on maternity leave.

The Women in Leadership project was questioned, asking about the impact of the work and information about the projects specifically to raise awareness among men. In response, it was noted that the response from men had been mixed due to the branding of the project, but that sessions had been held within the Managers' Network to ensure that all managers, whether male or female, received the same message.

The extent to which job-sharing schemes had been considered to encourage and facilitate women to progress to higher positions within the Council, was questioned. In response, it was emphasised that there were several successful examples of women progressing to senior positions, and that more work was being done to expand opportunities through flexibility and suitable contracts. It was recognised that there was room for further improvement.

More information was sought on the health and safety audits that would be carried out through the Corporate Forum and Departmental Forums. In response, it was noted that the work was part of a wider strategic plan. It was noted that carrying out the health and safety audits within the Departmental Forums provided an opportunity for the voice of staff to be heard regarding health, safety and well-being concerns, and that there was cross-departmental representation on the policy approval panel.

The low percentage of 54% of managers who had completed site management training was questioned, and clarification was sought for this. In response, it was noted that not all managers were site managers. It was explained that the course in question was a refresher course, and that most site managers had already completed the original course. It was emphasised that basic health and safety arrangements were in place at all sites, with health and safety officers offering direct support to new teachers or managers.

The performance of 72% of data protection requests completed within the timeframe, was questioned. In response, it was noted that:

- The complexity of the requests affected performance.
- The percentage for Freedom of Information requests had increased to 95%.
- Work continued to improve arrangements and training on responding to requests.
- The use of technology could help, but that the number of systems within the Council meant that such work took a significant amount of time to complete.

Information was requested about the project to develop a new employment system for the Council. In response, it was noted that the project was currently in the procurement phase, with the tendering process underway and an assessment planned within the next month, with the aim of having the system up and running by early December 2026.

Legal Services

A Legal Services report was presented by the Cabinet Member for Corporate and Legal Services and the Welsh Language, stating that the service was made up of four teams, namely legal, propriety, elections and coroner support. It was noted that 91% of responses to the customer satisfaction survey had indicated "very satisfied", with 9% "satisfied", and that the number of responses had increased significantly. It was noted that the service had now progressed from the previous recruitment challenges and had benefited from the Gwynedd Yfory schemes and apprenticeships.

It was noted that the department had now incorporated a new case management system and had looked at the possibility of adopting features of the Lexcel qualification that would benefit the department. It was noted that the department continued to support and advise on the Council's functions in terms of ensuring constitutional, legal and administrative propriety. It was elaborated that this work was ongoing, but in particular a series of "Good Decisions" seminars were planned to be held from October onwards. It was emphasised that the department would work with the Standards Committee, Political Group Leaders and Members, along with relevant officers, to maintain and support high standards of conduct among councillors. Councillors were reminded to ensure they had completed the training on the Code of Conduct.

It was stressed that the main challenge at the moment was the regional work and the provision of legal assistance to the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC). It was noted that the current period was challenging as several elements of the CJC's work became operational during the current quarter. Reference was also made to the arrangements of the new Senedd elections for 2026, noting the changes to the voting system and the new "Gwynedd Maldwyn" constituency.

During the discussion, the following observations were made:

It was questioned where the department was at in terms of training on the Code of Conduct for town and community councils. In response, it was noted that two or three sessions had been held for clerks and chairs at the beginning of the year, but that staffing priorities had led to a temporary delay in provision. It was emphasised that on-line training was available.

It was questioned whether the department was confident that all the changes related to the upcoming elections could be handled. It was further questioned whether the department had the capacity to fulfil the requirements. In response, it was noted that there was a clear geographical challenge, but that planning work had already commenced in conjunction with Powys, Wrexham, Denbighshire and Conwy councils, with clear working arrangements in place between the authorities to ensure effective organisation.

A question was asked about the department's experience with the automatic registration pilot by the Welsh Government. In response, it was explained that the Council had contributed to the pilot, and that a report from Welsh Government on the system was expected to inform the next steps.

RESOLVED

- 1. To accept the report and note the observations.**
- 2. To welcome the steps taken to address stress, to promote the role of women in leadership, and to ensure that employees have a voice in relation to health and safety arrangements within the Departmental Forums.**

9. EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD PROGRAMME 2025/26

It was noted that all Council members, co-opted members, Cabinet Members, Heads of Department and the public had been given the opportunity to suggest potential items for scrutiny during 2025/26. At the Committee's informal meeting on 17 July 2025, the potential items for scrutiny during 2025/26 were considered.

It was clarified that information about the possible items was provided in advance to committee members. An attempt had been made to prioritise a maximum of three items per meeting to ensure that matters received due

attention and that scrutiny could add value. It was noted that this had not been possible this year with four items programmed for each meeting. It was noted that the members considered that the prioritised items needed to be scrutinised during the year. The expectation for all members to ensure their attendance for the morning and afternoon session was underlined.

'Attendance and pupil behaviour in Gwynedd schools' and 'School Improvement Service' had been identified as items to be programmed in 2026/27. It was noted that the work of the Scrutiny Investigation into Safeguarding Arrangements in Schools was ongoing. It was explained that the final draft report of the investigation was intended to be submitted to the Committee meeting on 11 December 2025.

To ensure that the voice of pupils received due attention as part of the investigation, as emphasised by members of the investigation together with the Crime Response Plan Programme Board, it was noted that it was inevitable that the timetable for submitting a draft final report to the Committee would have to slip. As a result, the relevant departments had been contacted regarding the possibility of reprogramming an item from the February meeting to the December meeting. Confirmation had been received from the Education Department that the 'Education Strategy' item could be moved to the meeting on 11 December 2025.

Members were reminded that the implementation of the Language Charter had been a matter raised during the discussion under the 'Immersion Education System' item as a potential area for scrutiny.

RESOLVED

- 1. To adopt the work programme for 2025/26.**
- 2. To consider prioritising scrutiny of the implementation of the Language Charter when timely.**

The meeting commenced at 10:30am and concluded at 3:10pm

Chair

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| MEETING | Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee |
| DATE | 11 December 2025 |
| TITLE | Schools Strategy 2026-2036, presentation of draft document |
| REASON TO SCRUTINISE | To scrutinise the draft Schools Strategy 2026-2036 |
| AUTHOR | Gwern ap Rhisiart – Head of Education |
| CABINET MEMBER | Cllr Dewi Jones |

1. Why it needs scrutiny

1.1 In accordance with the request of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee, we are submitting a draft Schools Strategy 2026-2036. The guidance of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee will enable us to refine the Strategy, ensure that the voice of stakeholders is fully reflected, and lay the necessary foundation for successful implementation.

2. What exactly needs scrutiny?

2.1 The forward scrutiny of the Strategy will allow the Committee to consider the content of the Schools Strategy and offer observations. An initial version of the Equality Impact Assessment has also be presented.

2.2 Observations and feedback are sought from the Scrutiny Committee on the following:

- The Strategy's Vision (p. 6).
- The eight values we have used to shape the future education system in Gwynedd (pp. 7-15).
- Principles and considerations for all sectors to realise our vision (pp. 33-38).
- The procedure for the annual review of the Gwynedd schools estate (pp. 39-41).

3. Summary of the Key Matters

3.1 The strategy plays a prominent part in the Council Plan which sets a clear direction for us as an authority until 2028 and ensures that we achieve the Council's ambition. Tomorrow's Gwynedd highlights how we will ensure the best possible start for our children and young people.

3.2 The vision of the Gwynedd Schools Strategy 2026-2036 is ambitious but also solid in its foundations. Its main intention is to ensure a fair, inclusive and sustainable education regime that enables all learners to reach their full potential.

3.3 While this vision is ambitious, it can be considered realistic, as it is based on existing national and local policies such as Curriculum for Wales, Cymraeg 2050, and the Additional Learning Needs Act (2018). The Strategy reflects the direction of Welsh education policy, and therefore builds on solid foundations rather than starting over.

3.4 In addition, the Strategy sets practical and measurable priorities, including:

- investing in school infrastructure and buildings through the Sustainable Learning Communities Programme
- strengthening leadership and responding to the challenge of recruiting and retaining headteachers and teachers
- developing a skilled bilingual workforce, responding to the challenges of recruiting Welsh-speaking teachers in specialist subjects
- ensuring financial equity and support for small rural schools through schemes such as the Protection Scheme
- prioritising well-being and safeguarding, ensuring safe, inclusive and eco-friendly learning environments.

This shows that the Strategy contains realistic mechanisms to achieve its goals over time.

4. Background/Context

4.1 The original Strategic Programme Strategy *"Towards 2025": Future of Education and Training for Children and Young People in Gwynedd* was published in 2010 to set a direction for the field of education and training in Gwynedd up to 2025. The new draft Schools Strategy before us builds on the foundations of this Strategic Programme for the next decade up to 2036.

4.2 The Education Department has produced the Gwynedd Schools Strategy 2026-2036 to set a clear direction for the schools' provision over the next decade. There have been far-reaching changes in education in Wales over recent years, and the new Strategy responds to national changes such as the Curriculum for Wales and the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act (2018) along with increasing expectations on schools, and the need to modernise buildings and resources.

4.3 Local considerations and drivers also influence the education system, the vision and objectives of the Strategy. We need to ensure that we maintain and support what is good and unique about the education system in Gwynedd, as well as identify opportunities to respond to some of the challenges that the system is likely to face now, and in the future, such as:

- Ensuring the viability and resilience of our schools when there is a reduction in the number of learners as a result of low birth rates.
- Strengthening leadership on all levels and responding to the challenge of recruiting teachers and assistants in our schools.
- Responding to the challenge of maintaining the education system in an unprecedented period of cuts to Local Authority budgets.

- Maintaining and strengthening our education and training provision to enable children and young people in Gwynedd to reach their full potential and to develop the qualifications and skills that enable them to live and thrive.
- Maintaining and strengthening the Welsh language in all aspects of school life in the wake of the 2021 Census results.
- Ensuring excellent well-being support services for children and young people in Gwynedd to help them to overcome barriers and reach their full potential.
- Improving our school estate to ensure the best possible learning environment for our children and young people when we have so many buildings to maintain, and an expectation for the school estate to be zero carbon over the next period.

4.4 The title of the document has been changed from Education Strategy to Schools Strategy to recognise that this document does not cover post-16 or early years provision. However, it does include the Primary, Secondary and Special sectors, which are the core of the school network in Gwynedd.

In producing it, the Education Department has considered a wide range of relevant policies and factors, such as:

- Nationally: Cymraeg 2050, Curriculum for Wales, the ALN and Tribunal Act 2018 and the Code 2021, The Equality Act 2010, and the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015.
- Locally: The Council's Plan 2023-2028, the Welsh Language in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032, the Council's commitment to Net Zero Carbon, and the Medium-term Financial Plan.

4.5 The Vision for Education in Gwynedd.

Our vision is to ensure a fair and inclusive education system that meets the needs of all learners in the County, and gives them the opportunity to reach their full potential. Family background, location, or personal circumstances should not be an obstacle on life's path or to choosing opportunities.

We aim for a system that:

- nurtures and promotes well-being,
- provides world-class education and training,
- broadens horizons and develops skills relevant to the local, regional, national and global economy,
- creates firm paths to ensure prosperity for every child and young person in Gwynedd.

4.6 The Strategy clearly recognises that the current system contains several weaknesses that can have an adverse impact on the quality of education. These include significant variances between schools in terms of resources and curricular opportunities, recruitment challenges leading to a lack of consistency in teaching, and the vulnerability of smaller schools in relation to leadership and sustainability. These factors can create an inconsistent experience for learners and reduce their chances of reaching their potential.

To respond to these challenges in a positive way, the Strategy sets out a series of clear actions to improve the quality of education and ensure consistency across the county:

1. Strengthening school leadership

By promoting flexible leadership models, sharing expertise and building capacity among current and incoming leaders, the Strategy seeks to create a more resilient system that is less susceptible to disruption.

2. Ensuring a sustainable and effective schools network.

The Strategy considers how the schools network can be organised so that each can offer a broad curriculum, appropriate support and quality provision, minimising the inconsistencies seen in the current system.

3. Developing a skilled and bilingual workforce.

By investing in training, promoting staff retention and attracting new teachers, the Strategy addresses the recruitment challenges that weaken the quality of teaching in some settings.

4. Investing in modern learning environments

The Strategy prioritises buildings and infrastructure that support contemporary education, reducing variances in standards between settings and improving learner experiences.

5. Emphasis on well-being, behaviour and inclusion

By developing a whole-school approach that supports emotional health, positive behaviour management and inclusion, the Strategy builds the foundations that enable learners to thrive.

6. More cohesive support for schools

New support arrangements offer a more rapid and uniform response to challenges, ensuring that effective interventions take place before problems worsen.

As a whole, the Strategy responds to the weaknesses of the current system by creating a fairer, more sustainable and more robust system that enables all learners to benefit from the highest quality of education.

5. Consultation

5.1 In drawing up the Strategy, the opportunity was taken to engage with stakeholders in order to receive input and reflect the perspective and views of those who will be using and implementing the Strategy.

5.2 Further engagement sessions have been arranged with Headteachers of Secondary, Primary and Special Schools, as well as meetings with the County Young People's

Forum and the Gwynedd Governors' Forum during December 2025. The Equality Impact Assessment will be updated following these sessions.

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

- 6.1** The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 seeks to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act places a well-being duty on public bodies which is aimed at delivering the seven well-being goals by following the five ways of working.
- 6.2** The Act places a welfare duty on the Council to carry out sustainable development work by working in conjunction with the 'sustainable development principle'. This means that the impact on people in the future needs to be considered when making decisions.
- 6.3** In Appendix 2, the Equality Impact Assessment can be seen, which sets out exactly how the Strategy meets the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act by implementing the five ways of working, and responds to the 7 national well-being goals.

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

- 7.1** An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed in draft form to accompany the Schools Strategy, and a final copy will be submitted when the Strategy is presented to the Cabinet.

8. Next Steps

- 8.1** The Schools Strategy 2026-36 is scheduled to be presented to the Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet on 10 February 2026.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Schools Strategy 2026-2036

Appendix 2 – Draft Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 3 – Scrutiny Committee Questions – Question and Answer

CYNGOR GWYNEDD

SCHOOLS STRATEGY

2026 – 2036



INTRODUCTION

Giving our children and young people the best possible start is at the root of the Council Plan. Our vision is to create an education system in Gwynedd that addresses the needs of every learner and offers the best opportunities for everyone to reach their full potential.

The purpose of this strategy is to set our ambition for education in Gwynedd over the next decade. Every child has a unique opportunity to have an education, and it is our duty to create a system that enables our children and young people to follow their dreams, develop into individuals who are full of confidence, and achieve anything that they wish.

Over the last few years, we have seen important changes in our education arrangements – such as establishing lifelong schools and developing primary provision. As the numbers of pupils change, there are new opportunities to re-design the education system in a way that is robust, sustainable and prepares them well for the future.

Small schools and schools of all sizes offer valuable experiences, but with the changes in the curriculum, increasing expectations on headteachers and teachers, and the need to manage resources wisely, it is essential to set a clear direction that ensures stability and long-term success. By looking forward with a concrete plan, we can ensure that every school is part of a strong and inclusive education network.

We acknowledge the importance of schools for our rural communities and their key role when nurturing and maintaining the Welsh language. This is why it is important that we work together – parents, staff, learners and communities – to create a future that safeguards these elements and makes them stronger than ever.

This strategy forms the foundation for every other aspect of our education work – from Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion to Digital Learning and promoting the Welsh language. Through this foundation, we will build a sustainable education system that offers learning experiences of the highest quality to all our children and young people.

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What impacts the design of our strategy?

No strategy can stand on its own – it has to comply with a range of national, corporate and educational objectives. Behind these objectives, there are many key local and national policies and documents such as the following;

National

- Cymraeg 2050
- Curriculum for Wales
- Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) 2018
- Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021
- Equality Act 2010
- The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Local

- Council Plan 2023-2028
- Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032
- Net Zero Carbon/Climate Emergency
- Medium Term Financial Plan

How does this strategy play a part in the Council Plan?

The strategy plays a prominent part in the Council Plan which sets a clear direction for us as an authority until 2028 and ensures that we achieve the Council's ambition. Tomorrow's Gwynedd highlights how we will ensure the best possible start for our children and young people.

It is noted in the Council Plan that our ambition is to ensure that every pupil taught in Gwynedd:

Is treated equally and fairly, encouraged to treat others equally and fairly, and assurance that their well-being and happiness is a priority for us.

Has an education of the best possible standard including access to a broad range of academic and vocational subjects in order to fulfil the requirements of the new 'Curriculum for Wales'.

Has access to Welsh-medium education throughout their time in education.

Is educated in buildings that are in a good state of repair, and to the best of our ability are safe and fit for purpose.

Has the opportunity to develop into rounded, happy and confident people in the world.

Has tailored support from professional services to meet their additional learning needs.

Has the opportunity for as many pupils as possible to have a nutritious meal at school, free of charge.

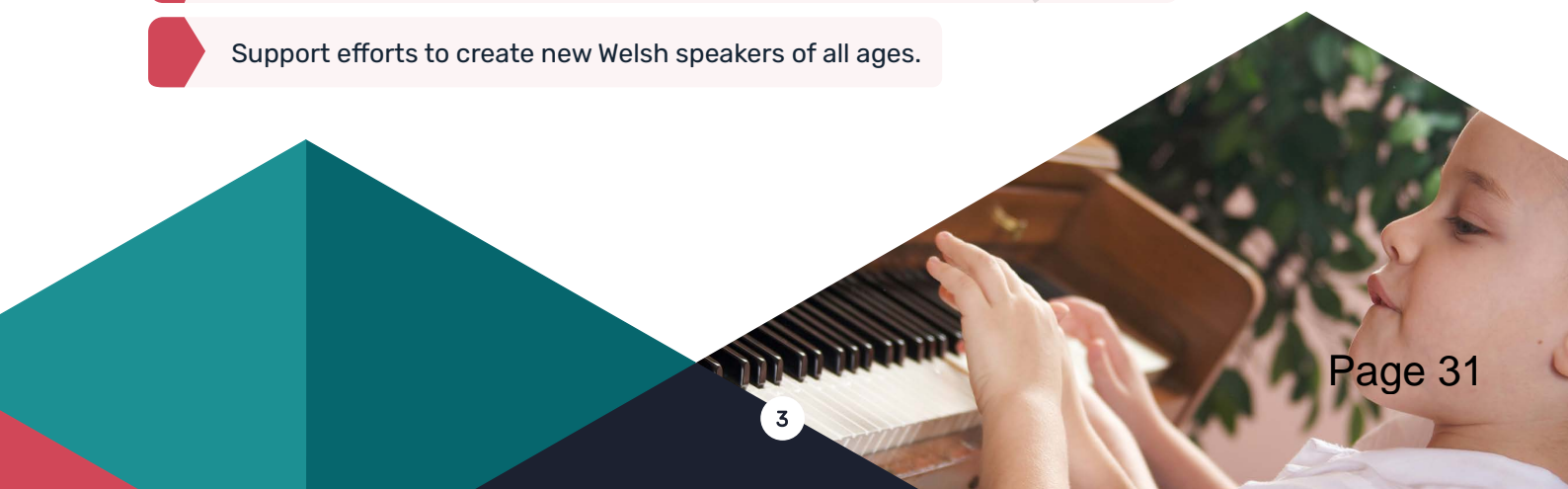
Has access to equipment and technology that promote modern and effective learning.

Has the assurance that suitable facilities and playing fields are available for children and young people in their leisure time.

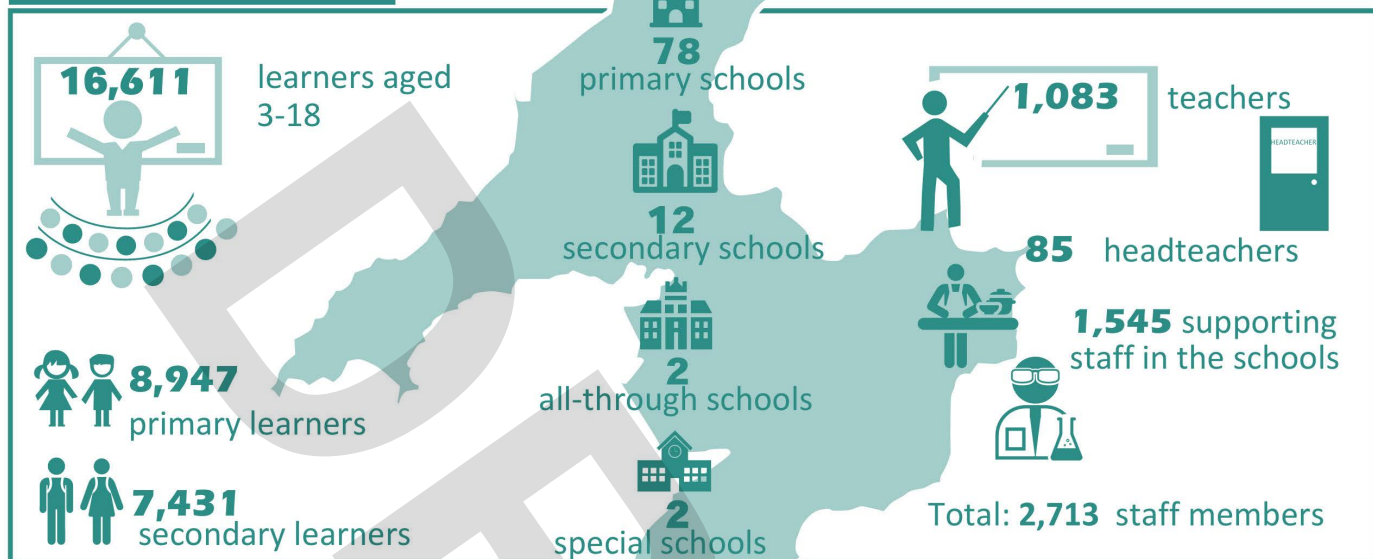
A Welsh Gwynedd highlights how we will promote the growth of the Welsh language in all parts of the county. It is noted in the Council Plan that our ambition is to:

Ensure that every child in Gwynedd can use the Welsh language confidently at school and in their social life.

Support efforts to create new Welsh speakers of all ages.



Education in Gwynedd



What are the four purposes and how would they play a part in our strategy?

The four purposes are the foundation for the new curriculum for Wales and therefore they play a key role in our education strategy here in Gwynedd. The current curriculum is different to the previous curriculum which had stricter guidelines noting what subjects should be taught, with what content and without any defined final aims for the education.

As well as the four purposes for Wales, the traditional school subjects are replaced with Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLEs).

Six Areas of Learning and Experience have replaced traditional subjects, namely:

| | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Science and Technology | Mathematics and Numeracy | Expressive Arts |
| Humanities | Health and Well-being | Languages, Literacy and Communication |

The four purposes are a desire and a final aim for the curriculum planned by Gwynedd schools. The aim of every school curriculum in Gwynedd is to support our learners to become:

ambitious, capable learners who are ready to learn throughout their lives

enterprising, creative contributors who are ready to play a full part in life and work

ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world

healthy, confident individuals, who are ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

The **Four Purposes** are integral to our educational ambition, and they are the foundation of the new strategy. Our aim is to empower our schools to design and present a modern, inspirational and ambitious curriculum that ensures that every learner has the opportunity to achieve these purposes.

We welcome the new curriculum as a golden opportunity to re-design the learning experiences of our children and young people. Although such changes bring natural challenges, they also offer a huge possibility to ensure education that is more relevant, creative and inclusive than ever.

Our strategy will play a key part when supporting Gwynedd schools to make the most of this opportunity, ensuring the support, the resources and the confidence that they require to fulfil the Four Purposes – and therefore, enable every child to grow into ambitious learners, confident individuals, enterprising contributors and ethical citizens.

What is our vision for education in Gwynedd?



Our vision is to have a fair education system that addresses the needs of all our learners and ensures that every learner reaches their full potential.

Your background, where you live or your circumstances should not determine your choice or your future path. We want to see a system based on equality that fosters and promotes well-being, provides the highest quality education and training, expanding horizons, nurturing skills that are required in the local economy, regionally, nationally and internationally, to ensure a robust path towards prosperity for every young person.



What are the values that we have used to shape the education system in Gwynedd for the future?

To shape the system for the future we have determined eight core values. Whatever the changes that we will consider for the future, we want to commit to these values:

- 

To offer the best possible learning experiences for our learners, ensuring an exciting and broad curriculum that motivates learning and understanding and leads to improving standards and outcomes for all.
- 

To promote and support our learners' physical health, emotional needs and well-being, ensuring that our schools play a key role when planning and delivering integrated services to children, young people and their families.
- 

To ensure that children and young people (aged between 0 and 25) who have additional learning needs have access to opportunities and gain experiences that are planned effectively, to allow them to make progress according to their ability.
- 

To ensure a system that keeps our learners safe and protects them from any abuse.
- 

To prepare young people for the world of work – ensuring that they have the correct skills for employment, especially within the local economy.
- 

To create a first-class learning environment by improving facilities and buildings, ensuring that schools are designed to respond to the changes in contemporary teaching and educational learning processes and practices, especially using Technology.
- 

To develop educational establishments as a hub for public and community services where appropriate.
- 

To strengthen the Welsh language as an educational and social medium enabling children and young people to have access to Welsh and bilingual education and training.

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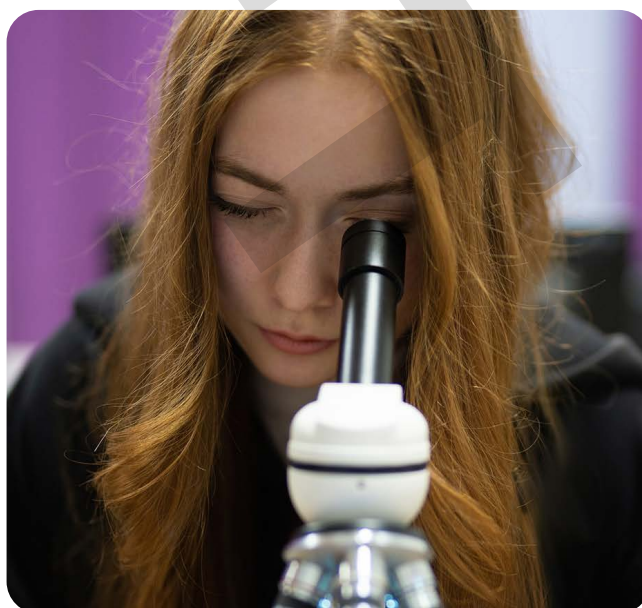
To offer the best possible learning experiences for our learners, ensuring an exciting and broad curriculum that motivates learning and understanding and leads to improving standards and outcomes for all.

Education and training are the foundation to every aspect of children and young peoples' lives – a key fundamental right that can break the cycle of poverty and disadvantage and create new life opportunities. Receiving the highest quality education in modern and suitable establishments gives children and young people an excellent start in life, offering the skills, information and the confidence required to succeed and thrive. This contributes to reducing inequality and nurturing ambition in every learner, regardless of their background.



Although the performance of Gwynedd learners is already amongst the best in Wales, our ambition is to go a step further. We are determined to improve the results for every child and young person, with special focus on the most vulnerable ones and those learners who often face barriers with engaging. Addressing this inequality will be a cornerstone to our strategy.

We will ensure equal access to high-quality education at every stage – from the early years, through primary and secondary education, on to post-16 education, training and the world of work. There will be an integrated system of early years care and education that is strong, sustainable and rooted in the Welsh language, health, childcare and support for families to give every child a strong foundation. Expanding provision such as Flying Start, and the Childcare Offer ensures that our children get the best possible start to their educational journey and their life.



The **Curriculum for Wales** is a unique opportunity to achieve this. With support and vision, our schools can create learning experiences that are truly meaningful and suitable for the 21st century – experiences that nurture information, creativity, emotional resilience and strong ethics. Our responsibility is to ensure that the education workforce receives the training, resources and the support to design an innovative curriculum, assess learners' progress effectively, and offer feedback that drives high-quality learning.

We also wish to see our schools **thriving as teaching establishments**, that they work closely, share expertise and plan improvements jointly. By strengthening this collaboration, we can ensure that strengths are shared across the system, and every member of our education workforce feels confident and are empowered to further raise standards.



Ultimately, our aim is to ensure that **every pupil is given the support and the opportunities to fulfil their full potential** – nurturing ambitious, confident and inspirational young people who are ready for life and work in the future.



To promote and support our learners' physical health, emotional needs and well-being, ensuring that our schools play a key role when designing and delivering integrated services for children, young people and their families.

Gwynedd children and young people show strong awareness of the importance of well-being, understanding the challenges that they could face when growing up in a society that changes rapidly. By supporting their physical, emotional and mental well-being, we can empower them to stay healthy, build positive relationships and develop the skills to navigate life changes with confidence.

Good well-being is central to every aspect of a child's life – it fosters resilience, prepares learners to fully engage with their education, and ignites curiosity and a creative mind about the world around them. It offers permanent advantages, such as stronger self-confidence, better social skills, less anxiety and depression, and emotional intelligence development – valuable features that will support them throughout their lives.

A **whole-school** approach of promoting well-being is essential to create a positive environment. By embodying well-being as an integral part of Gwynedd schools' life, we will build a culture where every child and young person are supported to thrive – personally, academically and socially.

This will happen in schools where teachers and staff feel that they are also appreciated and supported. By putting well-being at the root of everything that we do, we can ensure that Gwynedd schools are a place where learners develop into confident, resilient and inspirational individuals, who are ready to fulfil their full potential.



3

To ensure that children and young people (aged between 0 and 25) who have additional learning needs have access to opportunities and gain experiences that are planned effectively, to allow them to make progress according to their ability.

In terms of learners with Additional Learning Needs (ALN), our clear commitment is to continue to fully implement the requirements of the new Act, alongside the Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Strategy. The aim of the strategy is to ensure that every child and young person (aged between 0 and 25) with ALN have access to training and education experiences and opportunities that are appropriate and inclusive, enabling them to make progress, develop skills and gain confidence, to fulfil their potential in settings that are suitable to their individual needs.

We are very proud that Gwynedd stands out as the only county in Wales where every staff member of the ALN&I Service supports schools completely bilingually. This ensures that specialist support and advice is available naturally through the medium of Welsh and English, offering a rich linguistic and cultural experience to children, young people and their families.

We also acknowledge that recruiting expert staff – such as bilingual qualified Educational Psychologists, Sensory Impairment Teachers, School Assistants and other experts – is an increasing challenge across Wales and therefore sets a new emphasis on the work of fostering and attracting this skilled workforce locally. Although this is challenging, we see a huge opportunity to invest in our people, develop clear career pathways, and attract enthusiastic individuals to join the sector, to ensure continuous excellence and sustainability in provision, including in our special schools.

In doing so, our ambition is to ensure that no child or young person in Gwynedd is left behind, and that they get the education and the support they need to thrive and reach their full potential.



4**To ensure a system that keeps our learners safe and protects them from any abuse.**

Every local authority, school and college in Wales has a legal and ethical duty to safeguard and promote the well-being of children and young people under 18 years old. Due to their daily and continuous contact with learners, education settings are in a unique situation to notice any signs of abuse, neglect or harm early.

Our aim is to ensure that our schools and colleges receive the guidance, training and full support that they require to keep children safe, to respond effectively when required, and to create positive environments that promote well-being, safety and trust.

By working together as an education community, we can ensure that every child and young person in Gwynedd are not only safeguarded from harm but also get the opportunity to thrive and fully develop in a safe and supportive environment.

5**To prepare young people for the world of work – ensuring that they have the correct skills for employment, especially within the local economy.**

It is essential that we ensure clear and effective education pathways for those learners who face additional barriers and challenges – such as Looked-after Children, young people who receive education otherwise than at school (EOTAS), and those eligible for free school meals. Our aim is to open doors for rich learning opportunities and suitable experiences that will enable them to thrive, foster confidence and develop their future wishes.

Developing an integrated model of education is central to this – a model that puts the learner at the centre of the system, ensuring equal access to learning that is carefully planned around their individual needs throughout their educational journey. This will build on the strong culture of inclusion that is already a key feature in our schools in Gwynedd, ensuring that every learner is appreciated, supported and continue to be an active part of the school's life.

At the same time, we are determined to enrich the experiences of the most able and talented learners, extending their academic and creative opportunities to enable them to challenge themselves, develop new skills and reach their true potential.

By combining strong support with challenging and exciting opportunities, our ambition is to ensure that every child and young person in Gwynedd receive the support, and the experiences required to fulfil their dreams and thrive in the future.

6



To create a first-class learning environment by improving facilities and buildings, ensuring that schools are designed to respond to the changes in contemporary teaching and learning educational processes and practices, especially using Technology.

Over the last decade, a significant investment of over £80 million has improved learning facilities in schools across Gwynedd. Despite this, we acknowledge that there is a need to continue to modernise many buildings to ensure that they are completely suitable to support the Curriculum for Wales and learners' needs today and in the future.

Through the Welsh Government's Sustainable Learning Communities Programme, and through further investments from the Council, our aim is to create modern, flexible and innovative schools that offer high-quality learning, sports and outdoor facilities. These environments will support creative and various learning approaches, providing children and young people with the opportunities to thrive in and out of the classroom.

The Gwynedd Digital Education Strategy, adopted in 2021, is key to this vision. By ensuring equal access to high-quality technology, we empower learners and teachers to develop the digital, creative and constructive skills required for the future.

In addition, Cyngor Gwynedd is committed to be net-zero carbon and ecologically positive by 2030. Therefore, when planning new buildings, we will prioritise schools that are environmentally friendly, are efficient in terms of resources and promote a green ethos and active travel.



With a new national investment programme announced in 2023, we will set our priorities for the next nine years. Our ambition is to create a sustainable, modern and eco-friendly school estate that supports first class teaching standards and is able to respond to the County's changing social and demographic needs.





To develop educational establishments as a hub for public and community services where appropriate.

Developing educational establishments as a hub for public and community services is essential to foster stronger, more coherent and sustainable communities. Schools and colleges can go beyond their traditional role, by becoming settings that unite people and offer support and extensive opportunities to the whole community.

By working closely with local organisations, businesses and public services, schools and colleges can provide various and meaningful learning experiences that increase skills, expand wishes and strengthen social links.

As learning establishments, schools build partnerships with parents, other schools, universities, businesses and public organisations. Through this collaboration, they can respond flexibly to change, share expertise and innovation when developing new opportunities to learn and grow together.

In this manner, our schools and colleges become central spaces for community life, playing an essential part not only in supporting academic progress, but also in nurturing social cohesion, developing life skills and creating a better future for all.





To strengthen the Welsh language as an educational and social medium enabling children and young people to have access to Welsh and bilingual education and training.



According to the

2021

Census,

70.9% of children
aged 3-4 years

in Gwynedd can speak Welsh
– evidence of the strong
foundation that already
exists in our communities.

Setting this foundation as early as possible is essential to ensure that children are prepared for Welsh and bilingual education in our schools in due course.

It is encouraging that a high proportion of three-year-olds receive nursery education through the medium of Welsh, but we acknowledge that there are recruitment challenges in the field. To maintain the standards and the best opportunities for children to develop their Welsh skills from an early age, there is a need to plan carefully to ensure that our workforce continues to have the necessary language skills and receive opportunities to develop further.

We acknowledge that the same bilingual and Welsh medium opportunities are currently not available in every school, especially the three transitional schools in the county. However, joint plans between these schools and the Education Department are already bearing fruit, and progress can be seen. Time will be needed for the Welsh language to fully embed into these schools, but we are committed to ensure that every learner gets the same opportunity as their peers in Gwynedd. This will continue to be a priority for this Strategy, our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, and it directly contributes to the national vision of Cymraeg 2050.



97.3%

of

primary teachers

and

86.3%

of

secondary teachers

in Gwynedd are confident to teach through the medium of Welsh – which is a unique
fundamental strength in the county.



Yet again, recruiting Welsh-medium teachers continues to be a challenge, especially in specialist subjects and some specific areas. Retaining and recruiting school assistants is also an increasing challenge.

Our response will be to continue and expand the opportunities for the workforce to develop their Welsh skills, provide training and language lessons to staff, and promote attractive careers through the medium of Welsh in Gwynedd schools. In doing so, we will ensure a future where every learner benefits from education that nurtures their bilingual skills and empowers them to live and work fully through the medium of Welsh and English.

When we reach September 2035, how will we know that this strategy has succeeded to put the needs of all our learners at the centre of our provision and ensure that every learner reaches their full potential?



Our ambition is to give the best possible start in life to every child and young person in Gwynedd. We believe that every child deserves to feel safe, appreciated and to get the necessary support to thrive. We will foster their physical and emotional well-being, protect them from harm, and offer early life experiences enabling them to grow into confident, enthusiastic and creative individuals.



We will ensure that every learner has access to first-class learning opportunities – opportunities that develop their knowledge, skills and values to enable them to reach their full potential. We wish to see our learners grow into responsible global citizens, ready to face the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities that belong to the 21st century. This will mean operationally addressing the gaps in opportunities and inequalities, ensuring that no one is left behind.



We will promote and develop learners' skills further – not only the academic qualifications, but also key life skills such as creativity, innovation, entrepreneurship, resilience and perseverance. We will ensure that every young person in Education, Employment or Training, is supported to follow lively and purposeful pathways that lead them to productive and fulfilling lives.



We will support Gwynedd schools to develop a local curriculum that reflects our history, our language, our culture and our unique environment. This will foster pride in our communities and create a deeper understanding of their responsibilities towards the planet. We will also promote the Welsh language as a central part of our vision, ensuring an equal opportunity for everyone to benefit from, and will be innovative in the way we support latecomers to master the language.



We acknowledge that our staff is our biggest asset. We will respect and empower our teachers and wider education workforce, ensuring their well-being and offering opportunities to develop professionally. This will enable us to create a culture where learning, innovating and supporting each other is central.



The voice of the learner will be at the root of every decision we make. We will actively promote the Rights of the Child, and include children and young people in planning work, monitoring and evaluating the services that impact their lives.



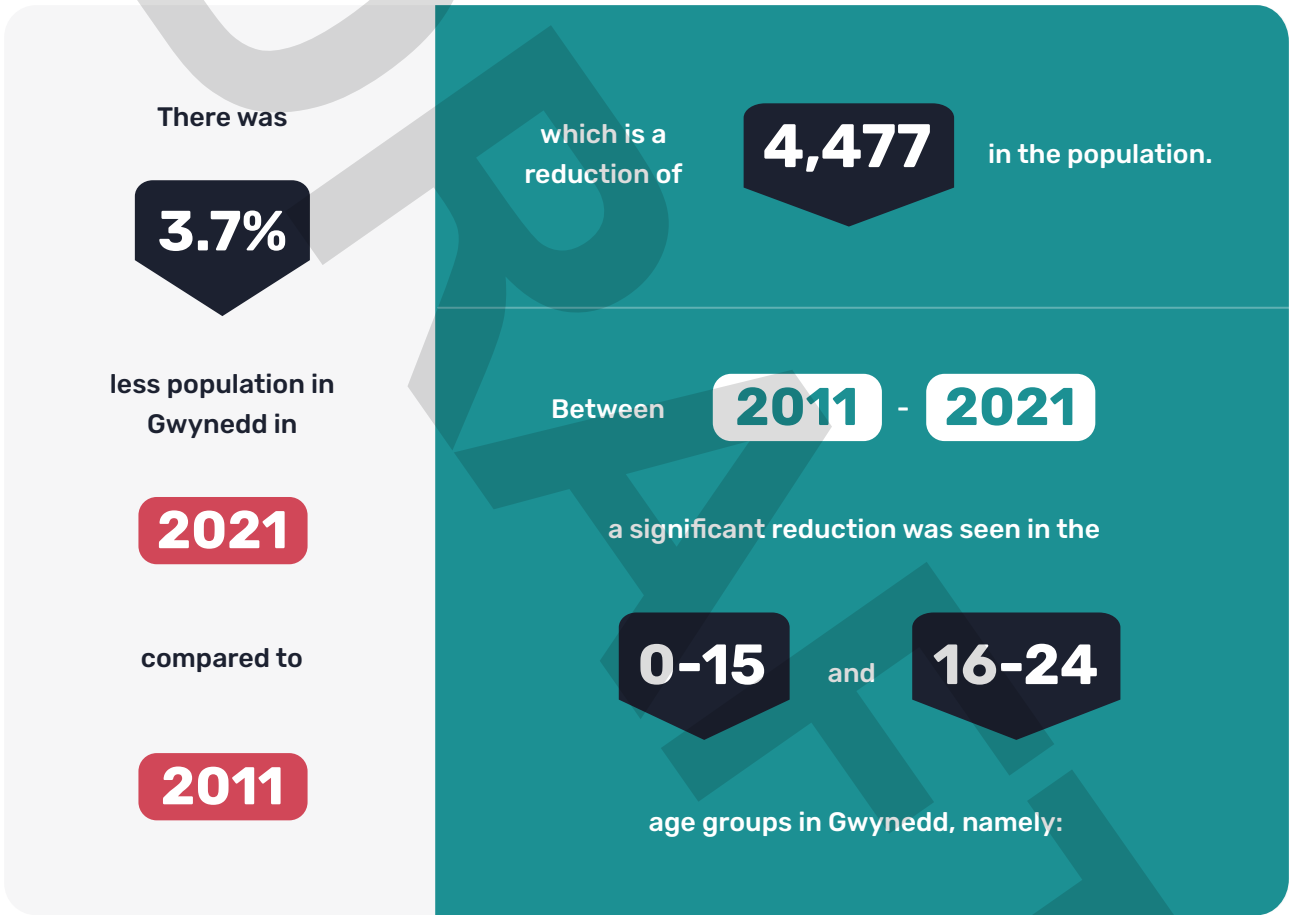
By providing high education standards in modern, flexible and eco-friendly environments, and by using technology creatively to support learning, we will build an education system that prepares our children and young people for life and work in the future. Working in partnership with other departments, agencies and the local community allows us to offer services that are fair, inclusive and offer good value for money.



Above all, we will celebrate our learners' successes and appreciate every achievement, big and small. Through collaboration, we can ensure a future where every child and young person in Gwynedd thrives – creating communities that are stronger, more coherent and full of hope for the future.

Why do we need to look at modernising schools here in Gwynedd?

Impact of Demographic Change on the Number of Learners:



| Age Group | 2021 | 2011 | +/- |
|-----------------|---------|---------|--------|
| 0-15 years old | 19,423 | 20,951 | -7.3% |
| 16-24 years old | 14,260 | 16,723 | -14.7% |
| All ages | 117,397 | 121,874 | -3.7% |



Over the same period,
the number of births in
Gwynedd has reduced

by

25%

with a steady decrease every year
between 2012 and 2022 from 1,327
in 2012 to 997 in 2022. For the first
time, we have seen the number of
births in Gwynedd reduce under

1,000 per year.



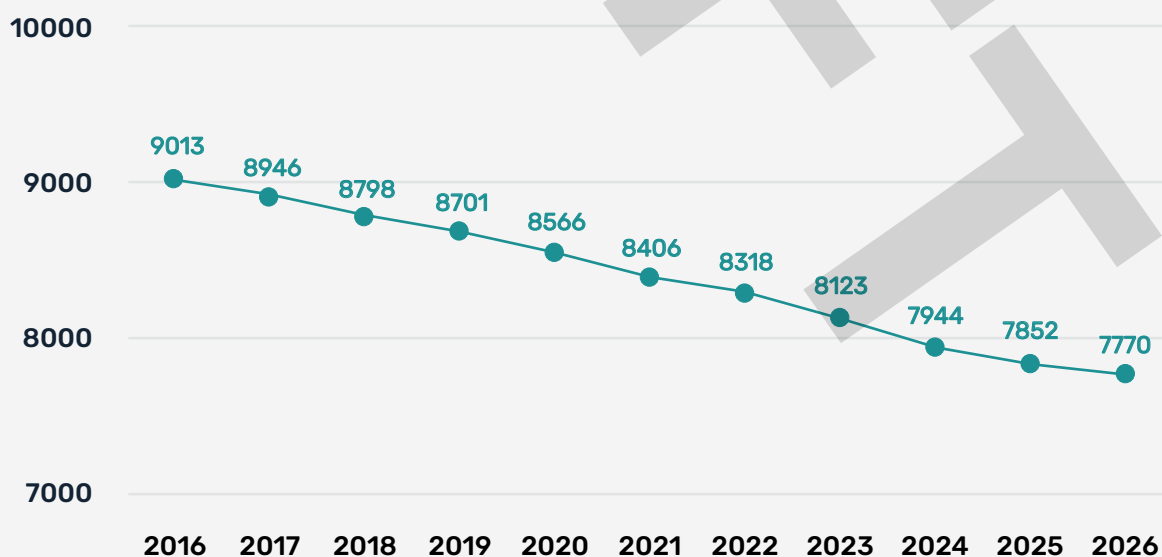
The steady decrease in the number of births in Gwynedd over the last decade has had a clear impact on the number of children in the above age groups, and as a result, has also had an impact on the number of children in our schools. The table below shows the number of learners in Gwynedd primary schools between 2016 and the numbers anticipated by 2026, which is a reduction of 1,243 (-14%):

A reduction of

1,243
(14%)
is anticipated

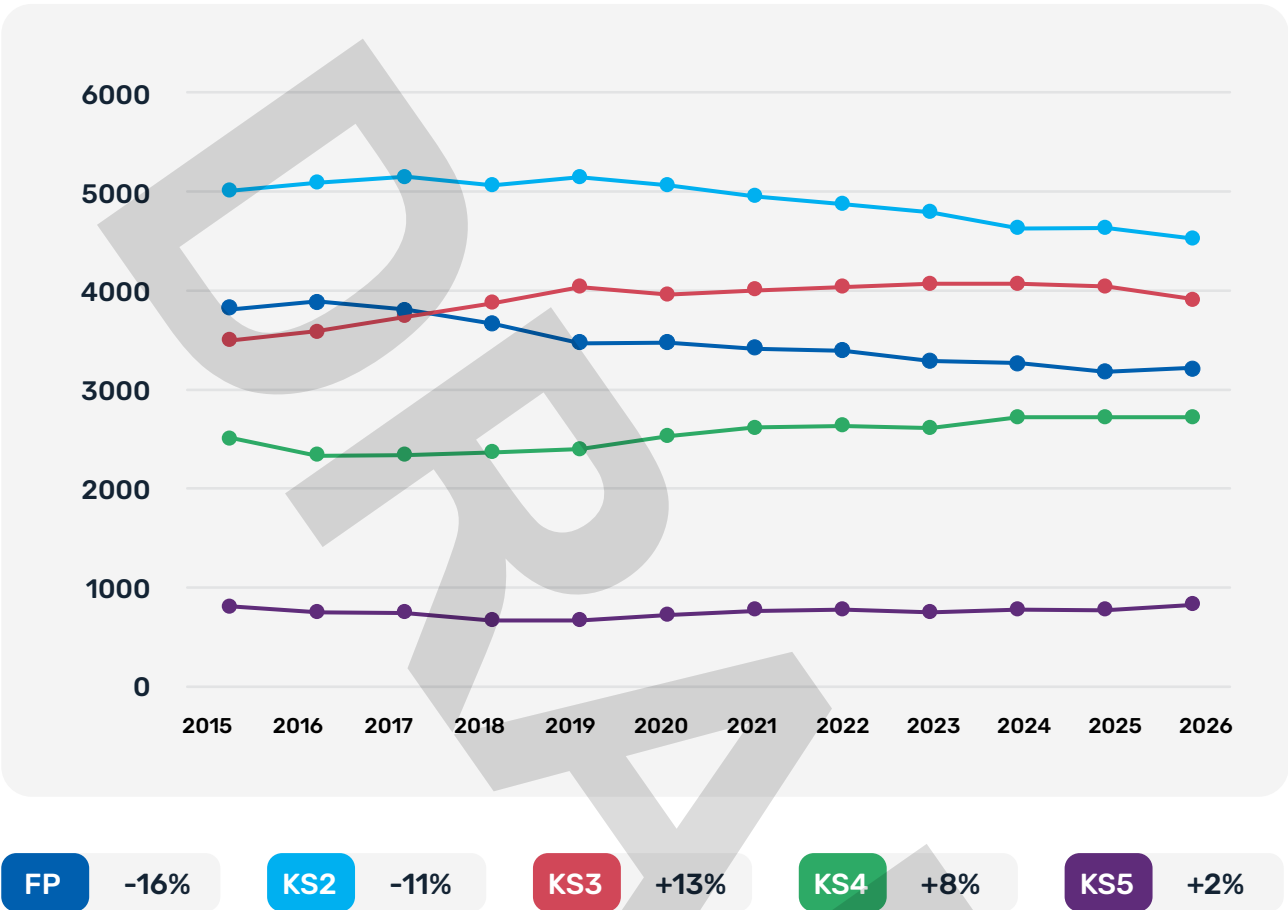
in the numbers of
learners in
Gwynedd primary
schools by

2026



2016-2026 Numbers

Currently, we are seeing the impact of this reduction at its worst in the primary sector in Gwynedd, with the biggest reduction seen in the Foundation Phase as shown in the table below:



We are also aware that the impact of the demographic change and the reduction in the number of children is seen more intensely in some areas and catchment areas in Gwynedd. Given the primary system in its entirety, from the 78 primary schools in Gwynedd, one lifelong school and 5 Ysgol Bro Idris primary sites, there are 25 of them with less than 42 learners.

There are 15 schools in Gwynedd in financial protection, with less than 30 learners, and from those, 6 have less than 20 learners.

The substantial reduction in the number of pupils mean that Gwynedd has high levels of empty spaces in our Primary and Secondary schools. In 2024, 24% of Gwynedd's total capacity was unfilled, namely the highest percentage in Wales. This is equivalent to over 4,700 empty spaces between our Primary and Secondary schools.

Financial Fairness

The Gwynedd school funding system is based on allocation per pupil, which is a fair and transparent way of distributing resources according to the number of learners. However, we acknowledge that this alone is not enough to ensure consistency and fairness for every child, especially in smaller schools or rural areas where the number of pupils is low.

This is the purpose of the protection scheme – a unique mechanism that ensures that every school can maintain the minimum level of staffing to provide high-quality education. Without it, some schools would be in a situation where it was not possible to provide a teacher for a whole class.

Through this scheme, up to **8%** of Gwynedd's children benefit from additional resources,



with a contribution of approximately

£1m

in **2024/25**

Currently, 23 primary schools and one lifelong school are part of the scheme, and it is likely that this number will increase over time. This reflects the ongoing deterioration in the number of pupils and means that more schools will rely on this support to ensure high-quality educational provision. Although this is positive for the schools receiving the direct support, it is important to note that the resources are funded by reducing the allocation to the rest of Gwynedd schools.

This situation can lead to clear differences between schools. For example, there is a difference of over

£10,500+

per capita between the allocation of primary schools receiving protection and a school without it, and approximately

£1,500

per capita in the secondary sector.

Three small schools



66

children

6

teachers

Individual school



66

children

2

teachers

In some cases, this leads to situations where three small schools with a total of 66 children can employ 6 teachers, whilst an individual school with the same number of pupils but without protection support would only be able to afford 2 teachers.

We understand that this can be frustrating for headteachers and larger schools, creating a sense of inconsistent work circumstances. This is why we are committed to review and evolve the funding arrangements continuously, with a focus on ensuring:

Consistency and fairness for every child, regardless of the size of their school.

Sustainable support for small schools that are an integral part of our rural communities and contribute significantly to maintaining the Welsh language and local culture.

Transparency and an open dialogue with headteachers and schools of every size to ensure that everyone understands the rationale and the principles behind the allocations.

The protection scheme is therefore a reflection of our commitment to ensure that every child in Gwynedd has the same opportunity to receive high-quality education, but also reminds us of the need to find a fair and meaningful balance when sharing resources across the county. By working together – large and small schools, communities and headteachers – we can ensure a funding system that is fair, sustainable and enables every learner to thrive.

Leadership

Strong and inspiring leadership is essential to ensure a successful future for our children and young people in Gwynedd. While there are many challenges facing the education system at the moment – such as recruitment, leader retention and workload management – we see this as an opportunity to reshape and strengthen the way we support school leaders at all levels.

We recognise that headteachers, senior and middle managers need to be given more non-contact time and support so that they can focus on what matters – leading effectively and inspiring their teams. It is also important for us to make the journey between the role of middle leader and the position of headteacher more attractive, clearly demonstrating the personal and professional development opportunities available.

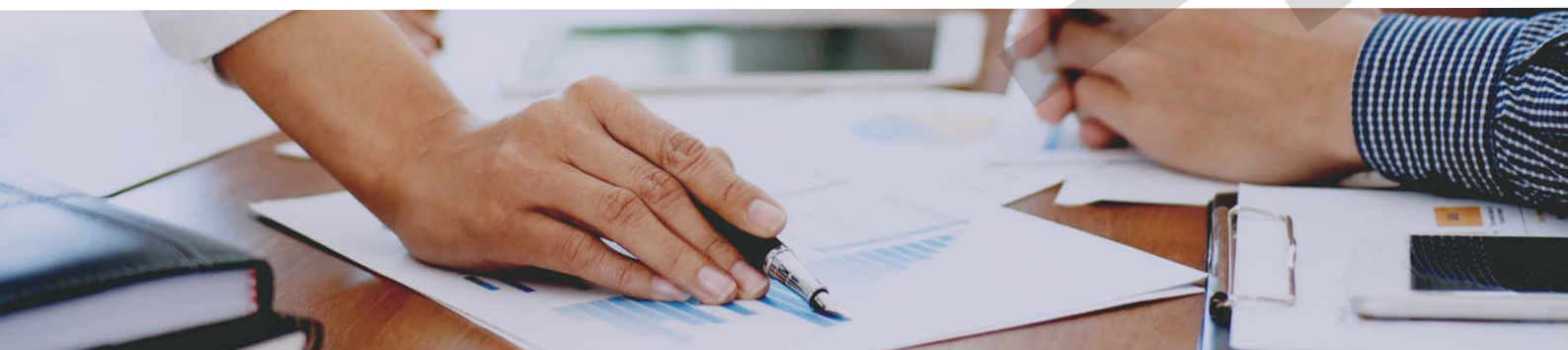
To ensure robust succession arrangements, we will strengthen the collaboration between the Authority, governors and headteachers. This will include identifying talented individuals early, offering mentoring and development opportunities, and creating clear pathways to leadership. This will enable us to nurture young leaders who are confident, skilled and ready to step up to senior roles when needed.



We are aware that the age profile of our current leaders means that we will need to invest in the next generation of leaders over the next few years. By working proactively and offering opportunities to develop leadership skills, we can ensure continuity and stability for our schools and communities.

Currently, the number of candidates for leadership positions is relatively small. However, we are determined to change this by creating a system that attracts, retains and nurtures world-class leaders, making school leadership in Gwynedd an attractive and valuable career option.

Ultimately, our goal is to build a sustainable leadership ecosystem that offers support, opportunities, and collaboration. This will ensure that every child and young person in Gwynedd benefits from an education that is led by enthusiastic, skilled and ambitious individuals who set high standards and inspire success.



Safeguarding

Safeguarding children and ensuring the well-being of staff is an ongoing priority for us in Gwynedd. Our internal arrangements and the guidance given to schools are robust, creating a strong foundation to ensure a safe and supportive system for all.

We recognise, however, that the size of some schools can create practical challenges. In situations of staff absence or a supply teacher shortage, it can be difficult to maintain the ideal adult-to-child ratio, and sometimes this can mean closing classes or schools for a short period. While challenging, this underlines the importance of proactive planning and developing more resilient systems to ensure safe staffing levels in all schools.

The use of digital systems to record well-being concerns is already excellent practice in the vast majority of our schools. This approach ensures that information is shared quickly and accurately, and enables the Authority to monitor effectively remotely. We recognise that the cost of software can be a barrier for some smaller schools, and therefore there is a clear opportunity for us to consider more sustainable ways of ensuring that all schools benefit from the same support and level of technology.

As well as these practical arrangements, we understand that a positive school culture is the key to ensuring lasting well-being for pupils and staff. Any negative culture, wherever it arises, can have an adverse effect on the entire school community. That is why we are determined to create environments that promote respect, trust and support, ensuring that every child feels safe and valued.

Physical safety requirements are also increasing. Secure access arrangements need to be ensured, infrastructure upgraded and fencing installed where appropriate. While managing so many schools across a large area means budgets are tight, we are determined to prioritise investing in modern and safe infrastructure.

Looking ahead, our ambition is to ensure that every child and young person in Gwynedd can learn in a safe, supportive and inclusive environment, where well-being and safety are at the foundation of everything we do. By strengthening staffing, expanding digital access, promoting a positive culture and upgrading our facilities, we can be confident that our schools will continue to be places where all learners and staff thrive.

Geography

Here in Gwynedd, the close link between our population and our unique countryside creates a special pattern that has a great influence on the education sector. The county is home to vast natural landscapes and strong rural communities, as well as more populous towns such as Bangor and Caernarfon. This mix is part of our character, and offers opportunities and challenges to how we organise and deliver education for our children and young people.



In rural areas, a lower population and dispersed communities can result in a smaller number of children in the school catchment areas. There are even examples of primary schools where there are no longer 10 children living in the catchment area. This change is not just being seen in rural communities – some wards in Bangor and Caernarfon are also experiencing a reduction in the number of children.

We recognise that schools play a central role in rural communities – not only as places of learning, but as centres that foster the Welsh language, culture and social cohesion. However, it is clear that we cannot continue to provide education just as we currently are in communities where there are not enough children to sustain a sustainable system.

Rather, this is an opportunity for us to rethink and reshape education provision in a way that ensures that all children, regardless of where they live, have access to high-quality, up-to-date education that suits their needs. Through careful planning and working with communities, we can create a network of schools that is sustainable, fair and robust – a network that respects our unique rural landscape and offers rich learning opportunities for all children and young people in Gwynedd.



Transport

The provision of education transport is an essential part of the way we support learners in Gwynedd, particularly due to the rural nature of the county and the dispersed distribution of the population. The Council is responsible for organising and funding transport for eligible pupils, ensuring that they are able to travel safely from their homes to the designated school. This includes a variety of transport, from buses to taxis, and pays special attention to those with special educational needs.

In 2024/25, it is anticipated that Gwynedd will invest around £8.5 million in pupil transport – which is 7.25% of the county's Education budget. This is testament to our commitment to ensuring equal access to quality education for all children and young people, regardless of where they live.

We are also aware of the environmental demands and rising costs associated with transportation. That is why we are working to create a more efficient and sustainable system, including planning more cost-effective transport routes, reducing emissions, and promoting alternatives such as walking buses and cycle schemes where feasible.

When making decisions about the future of education provision in Gwynedd, the impact on transport will always be considered as a core part of the process. This ensures that learners not only receive quality education, but also that the system supports a greener, more sustainable future and compatible with our commitment to net zero by 2030.



Standards

It is difficult to directly measure the impact of the structure of our education system on standards, but it is encouraging to see that education standards in Gwynedd are robust, and Estyn reports consistently reflect this across all sectors and school sizes. This is testament to the strength of our schools, to effective leadership and to the dedication of our teaching staff.

However, we recognise that standards are fragile when any weakness appears. In a county like Gwynedd, where there are many smaller organisations, a lack of structural resilience can mean that any change – such as the loss of a subject leader or headteacher – has a significant impact. It is often challenging to find a successor for specialist or senior roles, and this highlights the need to build capacity and plan for succession.

This is the main risk to future standards – not a lack of teaching quality or existing robustness, but a lack of long-term resilience if this is not intentionally formulated.

This challenge is also an opportunity: an opportunity to create a more flexible and collaborative leadership system. By fostering stronger expertise networks between schools, sharing subject leaders and developing shared leadership models, we can ensure that expertise is available to everyone, not just one school. Continuous professional development will be key to preparing more individuals to step into leadership roles, ensuring continuity and stability.

Looking ahead, our strategy will focus on reducing the risk of leadership gaps and on strengthening resilience across the county. Through robust succession plans, ongoing support and a commitment to collaboration, we can ensure that Gwynedd's education standards are not only maintained but also raised further. This will provide reassurance to our communities and parents, and ensure that every child and young person in Gwynedd benefits from the highest quality education.



Catchment Areas and Communities

Each school has its own unique catchment area and community to serve. Since the 1990s, parents have been able to express their right to choose a school for their children, and this has led to an increase in the number of people choosing schools outside their traditional catchment area. There are many reasons for this – from ease of travel, the availability of a pre- or after-school club, and an impression on the quality of learning experiences, to an extended family setting or social network.

As a result, almost every school in Gwynedd now contains a mix of children from its catchment area and neighbouring catchment areas. In some cases, this has led to significant depopulation in certain catchment areas, to the extent that there are not enough local children to sustainably run a school.

Despite this, schools continue to be seen as the heart of Gwynedd's communities. In many villages and communities, the school is often one of the few public institutions that remains operational, and the effort to secure its future is seen as synonymous with safeguarding the future of the whole community. This shows how central schools are to our local identity, to maintaining the Welsh language, and to fostering a sense of belonging and cohesion.

As the connection between families and their catchment areas changes, so does the relationship between schools and their communities. We therefore see an opportunity to redefine the idea of a catchment – not just as an administrative boundary, but as a solid foundation that provides the best learning experiences while focusing on the well-being and success of each child.

Our ambition is to ensure that every school, regardless of location, is part of a sustainable network that reflects its community and offers high-quality education. By doing this, we can ensure not only that Gwynedd's schools continue to thrive, but also that our communities remain alive, strong and ready for the future.



Property

Gwynedd has a high number of schools compared to the numbers of children attending, and this creates a significant demand in terms of the maintenance of the buildings. Nevertheless, it is encouraging to note that the state of our schools' reports are generally positive, reflecting the investment and care work that has taken place over the last few years.

We are aware that inflationary pressures and constraints on revenue budgets are likely to make it difficult to maintain all buildings to the highest standard at all times. However, this is an opportunity for us to examine the issue more strategically and on the long term. Careful planning will enable us to make the most effective use of the resources available, prioritising those projects that bring the greatest benefits to our learners and communities.

Significant investments have already been made – with over £73 million of capital expenditure over the last decade combined with Welsh Government grants such as the community schools grant and the ALN grant. These have improved the infrastructure of many schools, strengthening the learning environment and ensuring more modern facilities. These are clear examples of how capital investment has transformed learning experiences in many communities.

Looking ahead, we must recognise the reality that some new buildings may be more expensive to maintain than the old ones, but the benefits to learning and to the health and well-being of our learners are significant. We will need to be critical of our investment decisions, and that will mean, in some cases, not investing in certain schools over an extended period of time to ensure that resources are focused on the places where they have the greatest impact.

By adopting a long-term planning approach, integrating our use of revenue and capital budgets, and building on the strengths of our current investment programme, we can ensure that our schools continue to offer modern, safe and inspiring environments for our children and young people. This is not just about maintaining buildings, but about creating a sustainable future for our entire education system.



Energy

Energy use plays a key role in the sustainability of our schools, and is an opportunity for us to lead positive change. Wales and Cyngor Gwynedd are committed to reducing our carbon footprint and achieving ambitious environmental targets. In this context, Gwynedd's schools are in a strong position to make an important contribution – not only by reducing their energy use, but also by fostering sustainability awareness and skills among the next generation.

Currently, Gwynedd schools use around

17,000,000 kWh



of energy each year, with a combination of electricity, gas, oil and biomass. This equates to around

3104 tonnes



of carbon emissions – a level that would require around 147,000 trees to be planted each year to offset.



147,000

It is clear that newer and modern schools are already much more efficient – almost twice as good – and that use per pupil is significantly lower in larger schools. This highlights the great opportunity to improve efficiency as we plan for the future.

The positive impact of reducing energy use goes far beyond carbon targets alone. Effective energy management creates more comfortable and healthy learning environments, avoiding rooms that are too cold or too hot, and helping pupils to concentrate and succeed academically. In addition, the financial savings from managing energy wisely free up valuable resources that can be reinvested in what matters most – rich learning experiences, new resources and support for the well-being and development of our children and young people.

There is also a key educational aspect: by implementing energy conservation practices, our schools become living models of responsible behaviour, showing pupils how to live sustainably. This strengthens their understanding of the world around them and empowers them to take positive steps towards a better future.

To deliver on our commitments to reduce our carbon footprint, we will need to consider energy use when strategically planning for the long term. By investing in more efficient buildings, promoting renewable energy, and encouraging a culture of sustainability in all schools, we can create an education system that is responsible, sustainable, and inspires the next generation to do the same.

MODERNISING EDUCATION

In order to plan and manage change effectively, it is essential that we have a clear, robust and practical strategy that sets the direction for the future. This should not be just an administrative document, but rather a roadmap that offers vision and creates momentum for improvement. The strategy must clearly reflect our desire to create a range of schools that offer the highest quality educational experiences, ensuring that they are suitable for today's pupils and flexible enough to respond to the needs of future generations.

We have already set out our core principles, but the next step requires clear and coherent strategic objectives that inform all decisions and investments. These objectives will act as pillars to sustain the modernisation of the education system in Gwynedd, ensuring that all sectors – from early years to secondary and on to post-16 education – move forward with a common purpose.

This means creating a structure where all decisions about schools are based on values such as equality, inclusion, sustainability, and collaboration. It is not only about ensuring modern buildings and suitable resources, but also about fostering an ethos in which strong leadership, high-quality learning, and pupil well-being are placed at the heart of every step.

In practice, such a strategy will define priorities by sector, offer clear solutions to the challenges we face, and put in place mechanisms to monitor progress and measure success. In doing so, we can ensure that modernisation is not a short-term reaction to pressure, but a long-term plan that prepares our schools to thrive in an ever-changing social, economic and environmental context.

Ultimately, a clear and inspiring strategy will give confidence to our communities, provide concrete leadership for our schools, and offer reassurance to our learners that they are part of an education system that is being shaped with their future at the heart of it.



What are the strategic objectives guiding the modernisation of the education system in Gwynedd?

Develop a network of schools that are educationally excellent and resource efficient and sustainable, ensuring a secure future for our education provision in the long term.

Create a pattern of provision that enables all learning settings to offer high-quality education to all their learners, whether as an individual school or as part of a federation or collaborative arrangement with other settings and providers.

Ensure school environments that inspire learners to access a rich and stimulating curriculum, encouraging them to achieve their full potential, alongside a programme of extra-curricular activities that promote health, well-being and personal development.

Develop a modern infrastructure in all schools that supports high-quality education in the 21st century, and enables academic standards to be raised, maintains excellent performance and creates vibrant learning experiences.

Strategically invest in capital and integrate this with plans to rationalise and strengthen provision across the school network, ensuring a flexible and effective response to demand.

Rebuild, remodel, refurbish or modernise schools that are to be maintained in the long-term, so that they meet the highest possible design standards and offer an attractive, up-to-date and effective learning environment.

Contribute positively to wider policy objectives – such as community regeneration, promoting healthy lifestyles, and increasing well-being opportunities – by developing modern and inclusive infrastructure that supports these aims.

Improve the efficiency and quality of provision by reducing the number of empty places to a reasonable level, responding flexibly to demographic changes and supporting parental choices where possible.

Ensure that the infrastructure of our schools is fully accessible, enabling all learners, whatever their individual needs, to access high-quality and equal education.

Develop creative and innovative solutions, whether individual or collaborative, which strengthen the whole education system across Gwynedd and ensure a sustainable future for our learners and communities.

What will be the principles we will follow in order to realise our vision in the primary sector in Gwynedd?

Each school will have enough pupils to ensure sustainable and sound leadership, with leaders who are free to focus on leading and managing effectively, inspiring learners and staff.

Schools will be financially sound and operate confidently in the long term, offering stability and certainty without relying on protection schemes or additional budgets.

All schools will have access to attractive and bespoke outdoor facilities that enhance learning experiences and support physical health, emotional well-being and connection with the environment.

The schools will be fully inclusive and accessible to all, ensuring equal opportunities for all learners regardless of their background or individual needs.

Modern and state-of-the-art facilities will support creative digital learning, ensuring that all learners develop the skills needed for life and work in the 21st century.

Learning environments of the highest quality will foster the well-being, confidence and progress of all learners, supporting outstanding achievements across a wide range of skills, subjects and curricular experiences.



What can we consider to enable this?

1. Strong and sustainable leadership

Prioritise the creation of flexible leadership models, including the sharing of leadership across more than one site, to ensure headteachers and managers have the time and resources to lead effectively.

Develop a succession programme to identify and support future leaders at an early stage, ensuring continuity and innovation.

2. A sustainable and effective school network

Consider the future of all schools supported through the protection scheme, looking at long-term solutions that offer greater stability to communities and pupils.

Where necessary, close some schools, and where possible, consider creating new provision while ensuring fair access for every community.

Ensure that all sites are financially viable, with sufficient pupils and facilities to provide high-quality learning experiences.

3. Modern and inclusive learning environments

Invest in buildings and infrastructure that are contemporary, flexible and suitable for the Curriculum for Wales, including full access to quality digital facilities and outdoor spaces.

Ensure that all sites are fully accessible and offer inclusive experiences to all learners, regardless of their individual needs.

4. Well-being and broad learning opportunities

Foster a culture of care and well-being where the school environment supports physical and emotional health.

Offer a rich curriculum and extracurricular opportunities that inspire learners to reach their potential.

5. Financial and environmental sustainability

Manage resources effectively by integrating capital investments with plans to rationalise the school network, ensuring value for money in the long term.

Reduce energy use and strengthen the ethos of sustainability across all schools, contributing to Gwynedd's commitment to be net zero by 2030.

What will be the principles we will follow in order to realise our vision in the secondary sector in Gwynedd?

Create education sites that are suitable, flexible and viable for the needs of Gwynedd today, and ready to respond to the challenges and opportunities of the future.

Ensure sufficient pupils to enable strong and sustainable leadership, with our leaders free to focus on leadership and inspire, raising standards across the system.

Offer enough pupils in each school to ensure that all subjects are taught by skilled and specialist teachers, providing a rich learning experience for all.

Provide a wide and consistent range of learning opportunities from the beginning to the end of statutory education, providing clear pathways for all learners to reach their potential.

Enable schools to be financially viable, operate sustainably in the long term, and be able to invest in their learners rather than relying on protection schemes.

Ensure all learners have access to quality physical and outdoor education facilities, fostering health, physical and emotional well-being while supporting creative learning.

Create schools that are fully inclusive and accessible to all, celebrating diversity and ensuring equal opportunities for all children and young people.

Develop state-of-the-art facilities that support digital learning, preparing learners to thrive in an ever-changing technological world.

Ensure high-quality learning environments that support the well-being of all learners, fostering progress, attainment and a wide range of skills across the curriculum.

What can we consider to enable this?

1. Strong and sustainable leadership

Prioritise the creation of flexible leadership models to ensure headteachers and managers have the time and resources to lead effectively.

Develop a succession programme to identify and support future leaders at an early stage, ensuring continuity and innovation.

Modernise the school pattern by merging and strengthening, so that fewer more viable schools operate on the same number of sites, ensuring stronger resources and better opportunities for learners.

Ensure that all sites are financially viable, with sufficient pupils and facilities to provide high-quality learning experiences.

Share leadership at different levels across multiple sites, fostering a flexible and collaborative leadership team that shares responsibility and expertise.

Share subject expertise across sites, so that all learners – regardless of the size of their school – have access to teaching from experts.

Move staff between sites rather than learners, reducing the need for children to travel and ensuring continuity and consistency in their educational experience.

2. Modern and inclusive learning environments

Delve deeper into the use of distance learning, including innovative technologies such as VR, to expand the range of GCSE subjects and upgrade learning experiences.

Invest in buildings and infrastructure that are contemporary, flexible and suitable for the Curriculum for Wales, including full access to quality digital facilities and outdoor spaces.

Ensure that all sites are fully accessible and offer inclusive experiences to all learners, regardless of their individual needs.

3. Well-being and broad learning opportunities

Foster a culture of care and well-being where the school environment supports physical and emotional health.

Offer a rich curriculum and extracurricular opportunities that inspire learners to reach their potential.

Ensure that all schools offer inclusive provision, which can respond to the diverse needs of every child and young person, fostering positive behaviour, respect and a culture of care in all school communities.

4. Financial and environmental sustainability

Map and plan budgets over a longer period than a financial year, creating greater clarity, predictability and financial stability for schools and the authority.

Manage resources effectively by integrating capital investments with plans to rationalise the school network, ensuring value for money in the long term.

Reduce energy use and strengthen the ethos of sustainability across all schools, contributing to Gwynedd's commitment to be net zero by 2030.

What will be the principles we will follow in order to realise our vision in the special sector in Gwynedd?

We will ensure that our most vulnerable learners have access to the highest quality educational and care provision, in environments that reflect respect, dignity and care. Our decisions will be guided by the following principles:

Create sufficient appropriate space and resources to provide specialist education and care that meets the full range of learners' needs, ensuring that they are supported to thrive.

Ensure that all special schools and specialist provision are fully inclusive and accessible to all, giving all children equal opportunity to access high-quality educational experiences regardless of their individual needs.

Invest in modern facilities and digital technology, creating innovative and flexible learning opportunities that support independence, creativity and life skills development.

Develop warm, safe and caring learning environments that support learners' physical and emotional well-being, building resilience and self-confidence, and create the best possible conditions to improve progress and achievement across a wide range of skills and curriculum areas.



What can we consider to enable this?

1. Strong and sustainable leadership

Specialist capacity and space planning – ensuring sufficient physical space and resources to meet the growing demand, including space for therapies, individual support and flexible provision. This may include building or modifying purpose-built learning spaces.

Share expertise across sites – develop models where specialist staff (e.g. therapists, ALN teachers, support workers) work across more than one school, sharing knowledge and skills to consistently raise standards across Gwynedd.

Collaborate with the mainstream sector – strengthening links between special schools and primary and secondary schools to facilitate learner involvement in appropriate activities and sharing good practice.

Prioritise the creation of flexible leadership models to ensure headteachers and managers have the time and resources to lead effectively.

Develop a succession programme to identify and support future leaders at an early stage, ensuring continuity and innovation.

Invest in leadership and succession plan – ensure that every special school has a strong leadership team, with opportunities to develop new leaders through mentoring, training and networks across Gwynedd.

Strategically plan for a sustainable workforce – attracting and retaining specialist staff through the provision of ongoing training, well-being support and attractive career options, including opportunities to develop further expertise in the field.

2. Modern and inclusive learning environments

Use digital technology and distance learning – widening access to digital resources, innovative approaches (e.g. VR, interactive apps) and communication support to enable all learners to access up-to-date learning experiences, whatever their needs.

3. Well-being and broad learning opportunities

Foster a culture of care and well-being where the school environment supports physical and emotional health.

Access to community and health resources – strengthening partnerships with health, social care and third sector services to offer integrated provision that supports learners and their families.

Accessibility and sustainable energy – ensuring that all special school buildings are fully accessible to all, and in line with eco and net zero standards, creating modern, healthy and green learning environments.



IDENTIFYING GWYNEDD SCHOOLS

In the face of constant change in our society and population, we have a unique opportunity here in Gwynedd to reshape the future of our school network for the benefit of all children and young people. Our ambition is to ensure that every school is a place where learners are inspired, supported and empowered to achieve their full potential, while remaining at the core of their local communities. Through regular and transparent review, we can make wise evidence-based decisions, invest wisely in our schools, and create modern, inclusive, and sustainable learning environments fit for the 21st Century and future generations.

How will we come to a decision on whether the future of a school or catchment area needs to be reviewed?

Before considering the future of any particular school or catchment, we must look carefully at a wide range of factors. At the beginning of each calendar year, we will undertake a comprehensive review of the educational situation in Gwynedd. This gives us the flexibility to keep the programme current and sensitive to changes in education policies, while ensuring that we continue to meet the needs of an ever-changing society. In the current climate, where the number of learners is falling significantly in some areas, this approach is even more essential to ensure that our decisions are fair, transparent and sustainable for the future.

Who will consider the current situation of the schools?

The panel will include Education Officers along with representatives from Headteachers and Governors of Gwynedd schools. There will be Officers from other Council departments including Finance, Property and Economy.

What will be considered before reviewing a school or catchment?

Each school is evaluated against a set of evidence-based criteria, which allow for an assessment of the school's operational viability, and decisions to be made based on each school's relative investment need.

This will enable us to objectively set a programme for the strategic review of the school network and invest in the modernisation of the school estate in a transparent and fair manner.

Each school will be put in a category in terms of viability, to confirm the position for that school. A summary of the viability assessment shall form the basis for identifying modernisation projects and rationalisation proposals within the overall programme.

A viability assessment and conclusion for each school will be based on mainstream provision and other modes of provision such as early years, additional learning needs, behaviour and post-16 will be informed by separate strategies.

What will be the criteria that will be used by the review panel?

Quality and Standards in Education:

Prioritising high standards for all learners through clear measures and Estyn inspections. Where additional support is needed, that will be a trigger to strengthen provision to ensure excellent learning experiences for all.

Leadership:

Ensure strong and sustainable leadership, with our leaders free to lead and possess the appropriate skills and qualifications to lead schools to long-term success.

Number of Pupils:

Maintain pupil numbers that enable sustainable and effective provision, ensuring that all schools have the capacity to maintain robust staffing structures and a rich learning environment.

Trends in Pupils:

Analyse longer-term patterns to ensure we plan proactively, responding promptly to changes and protecting learning opportunities for all children.

Projected Number of Pupils:

Ensure long-term planning by anticipating demographic trends, so that each school can remain viable and relevant to its community in the years to come.

Empty Places:

Using spaces efficiently to ensure resources are used wisely, creating a network of schools that is sustainable and able to offer high-quality learning experiences.

Financial Viability:

Strengthen the financial stability of schools, ensuring that they are able to operate effectively within a national funding framework and plan confidently for the future.

Condition of School Buildings:

Invest in buildings that are safe, comfortable and suitable to create an engaging learning environment that inspires children and young people.

Suitability of School Buildings:

Ensure that school buildings and sites are fully suitable for the Curriculum for Wales and are a valuable resource for the wider community.

Collaborative Funding/Regeneration Opportunities:

Welcome partnerships and engage with external funding to strengthen schools, support community regeneration, and promote healthy and sustainable lifestyles.

What guidance and legislation will we follow when reviewing the future of a school or catchment area?

Any transformational change to the school estate depends on the following:

School Organisation Code (2018) – statutory guidance setting out the Local Authority's responsibilities in relation to school reorganisation and the formal requirements for regulated changes.

The Federation of Maintained Schools in Wales – statutory guidance on the establishment of school federations and the relevant governance arrangements.

The Welsh Government's Sustainable Learning Communities Programme – a national capital investment programme that provides collaborative funding opportunities through a formal business case process.

Local Authority Capital Programme – a five-year funding plan that defines the resources available to schools and the Education Department.

The Democratic Decision-Making Process – Cyngor Gwynedd's formal process for deciding on school organisation proposals; the County Council is the final decision-making body.

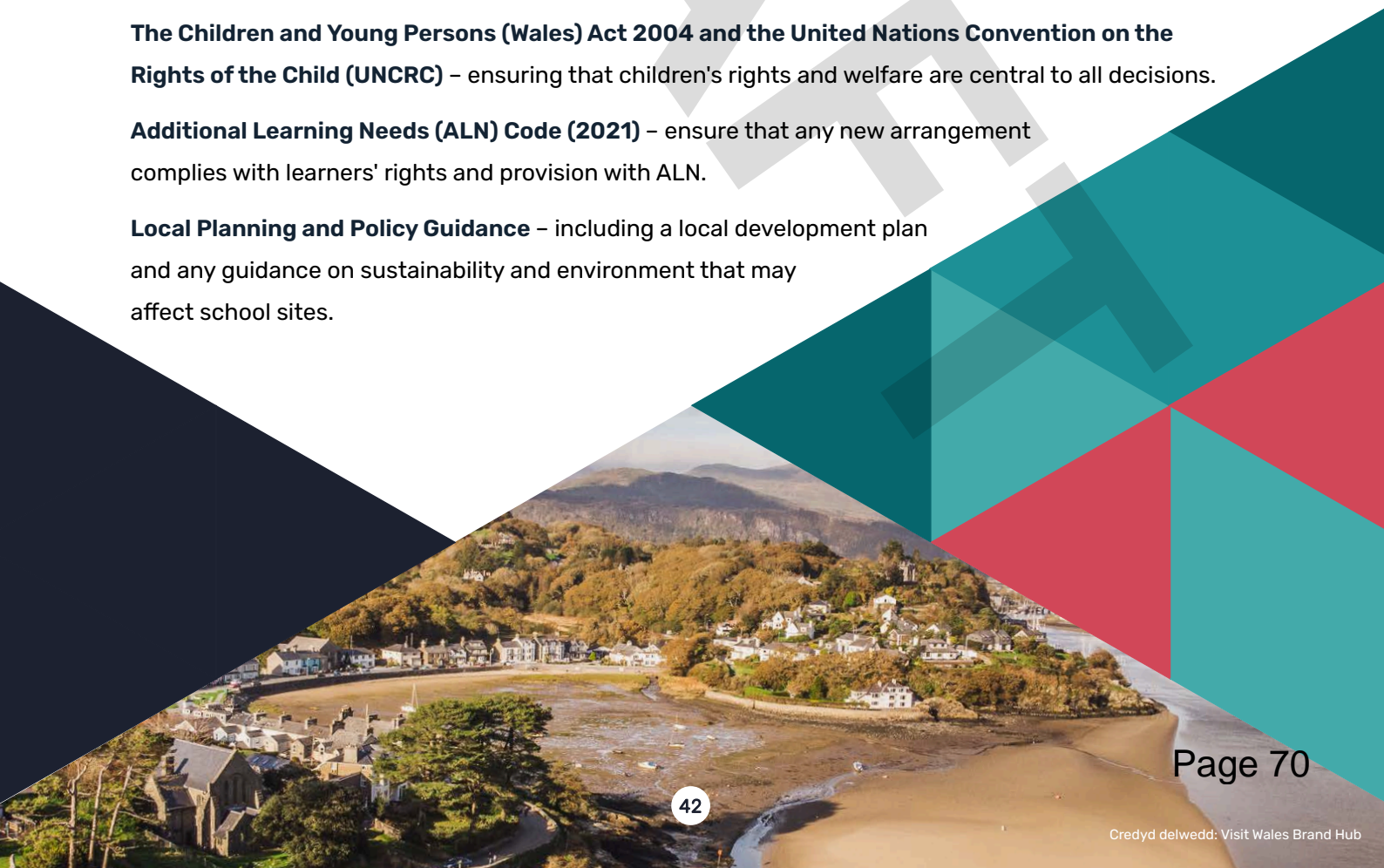
The Education Act 1996 and the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 – the statutory framework that sets out legal duties in relation to the organisation of schools.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 – to require any change to promote sustainable development and contribute to national well-being goals.

The Children and Young Persons (Wales) Act 2004 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) – ensuring that children's rights and welfare are central to all decisions.

Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Code (2021) – ensure that any new arrangement complies with learners' rights and provision with ALN.

Local Planning and Policy Guidance – including a local development plan and any guidance on sustainability and environment that may affect school sites.





CYNGOR
GWYNEDD

DRAFT

Assessing the Impact on the People of Gwynedd

This document assesses what impact the policy, procedure, plan, etc. will have on the county's population and will be implemented based on a number of legislations.

- **Equality Act 2010.** The Act places a duty on public organisations to give due attention to the impact of any new (or amended) policy, procedure or plan, etc. on persons with protected characteristics. We are required to
 - eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act.
 - promote equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

In Wales, the specific duty notes the need to undertake an impact assessment following specific guidelines to consider the impact that any changes in policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure), will have on persons with protected equality characteristics. A timely assessment should be made before any decision is taken on any relevant change (i.e. that affects people with protected equality characteristics).

- **Socio-economic Duty.** Wales has implemented this further duty which is part of the Equality Act 2010 and places a duty to address socio-economic disadvantages in strategic decisions.

- **Welsh Language Standards (Section 44 Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011).** The Council is required to consider the impact that any change in policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure), will have on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than English. This document therefore ensures that these decisions safeguard and promote the use made of the Welsh language.
- **Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015.** The Council has a duty to put the five ways of working in place and to respond to the seven national well-being goals.
- **Armed Forces Act 2021.** Councils must give due attention to the impact of this proposal on those who serve or who have served in the Armed Forces, as well as their families.

Equality Impact Assessment

Author: Gwern ap Rhisiart, Head of Education

Date: 01/11/25

Version: Draft 1

STEP 1 - Main Aims and Objectives of the Policy or Practice

1. What kind of document or procedure is being assessed?

New and revised policies, practices or procedures (which modify service delivery or employment practices)

2. What are the aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the policy or practice?

The original Strategic Programme Strategy "Towards 2025": The Future of Education and Training for Children and Young People in Gwynedd was published in 2010 to set a direction for education and training in Gwynedd up to 2025. The new draft Schools Strategy before us builds on the foundations of this Strategic Programme for the next decade up to 2036.

The new Strategy plays a prominent role in the Council Plan, which sets a clear direction for us as an authority up to 2028, and ensures that we deliver on the Council's ambition. 'Gwynedd Yfory' (Tomorrow's Gwynedd) highlights how we will ensure the best possible start for our children and young people.

The Education Department has produced the Gwynedd Schools Strategy 2026-2036 to set a clear direction for the schools' provision over the next decade. It must be acknowledged that there have been far-reaching changes in education in Wales over recent years, and the new Strategy responds to national changes such as the Curriculum for Wales and the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act (2018) along with increasing expectations on schools, and the need to modernise buildings and resources.

To shape the system for the future we have determined eight core values. Regardless of the changes that we will consider in future, we are committed to these values:

- 1) Offering the best possible learning experiences for our learners, ensuring an engaging and broad curriculum that motivates learning and understanding and leads to improving standards and outcomes for all.
- 2) Promoting and supporting our learners' physical health, emotional needs and well-being, ensuring that our schools play a key role when designing and delivering integrated services for children, young people and their families.
- 3) Ensuring that children and young people (aged between 0 and 25) who have additional learning needs have access to opportunities and gain experiences that are planned effectively, to allow them to make progress according to their ability.
- 4) Ensuring a system that keeps our learners safe and protects them from any abuse.
- 5) Preparing young people for the world of work – making sure that they have the right skills for employment, especially within the local economy.
- 6) Creating a first-class learning environment by improving facilities and buildings, ensuring that schools are designed to respond to the changes in contemporary teaching and learning processes and practices, particularly in the use of Technology.
- 7) Developing educational establishments as a hub for public and community services where appropriate.
- 8) Strengthening the Welsh language as an educational and social medium enabling children and young people to access Welsh and bilingual education and training.

3. Who are the main consultative groups (stakeholders)?

Pupils

Parents

Headteachers

Governors

Education Staff

STEP 2 - Engagement Data and Impact Assessment

4. Has there been any attempt to comply with the duty to engage in accordance with what is described above and has enough information been gathered to move forward?

Yes

Details of engagement. Note any consultation or engagement you have conducted or intend to conduct.

| Action | Dates | Information |
|---|---------------|--|
| Primary and Special Catchment Advisory Group | February 2025 | Discussion on the main themes of the Strategy and agreement to proceed with the development of the Strategy. |
| Secondary Strategic Planning Group | February 2025 | Discussion on the main themes of the Strategy and agreement to proceed with the development of the Strategy. |
| Meeting with Education Department Staff | March 2025 | Discussion on the main themes of the Strategy and agreement to proceed with the development of the Strategy. |
| Meeting with the County Children and Young People's Forum | March 2025 | Discussion on the main themes of the Strategy and agreement to proceed with the development of the Strategy. |
| Meeting with Education Department Staff | November 2025 | Presentation of the Draft Strategy |
| Secondary Strategic Planning Group | December 2025 | Presentation of the Draft Strategy |
| Primary and Special Catchment Advisory Group | December 2025 | Presentation of the Draft Strategy |

| | | |
|---|---------------|------------------------------------|
| Meeting with the County Children and Young People's Forum | December 2025 | Presentation of the Draft Strategy |
| Meeting with Gwynedd Governors' Forum | December 2025 | Presentation of the Draft Strategy |
| Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee | December 2025 | Presentation of the Draft Strategy |

5. What information is available about the impact on each of the following characteristics and subjects?

| | Evidence, Information and Relevant Data | Potential Positive and/or Negative Impact |
|-------------|--|--|
| Race | <p>Gwynedd schools have relevant policies in place to protect individuals from any discrimination based on race, such as Equality, Inclusion and Anti-bullying Policies. The Anti-bullying Policy provided by Cyngor Gwynedd sets out anti-bullying guidelines and procedures based on factors such as race in the school.</p> <p>All schools have their own anti-bullying policies to safeguard children with certain equality characteristics.</p> | Positive |

| | | |
|-------------------|---|----------|
| | <p>In addition, the Equality policy implemented by Gwynedd primary schools states that the schools “... oppose all forms of prejudice and discrimination and recognise that pupils have different needs, requirements and objectives.”</p> <p>To shape the system for the future we have determined eight core values. Number 1 (see question 2) states that we will aim to improve outcomes for our most vulnerable learners, and groups of learners who often face barriers to engaging with education.</p> | |
| Disability | <p>To shape the system for the future we have determined eight core values. Number 1 (see question 2) aims to improve outcomes for our most vulnerable learners, and groups of learners who often face barriers to engaging with education. As regards children and young people with Additional Learning Needs, number 3 (see question 2) states that we will ensure that children and young people with additional learning needs have access to opportunities and gain experiences that have been planned effectively to enable them to progress according to their ability.</p> <p>The Strategy sets out that we will ensure that the infrastructure of our schools is fully accessible, enabling all learners, regardless of their individual needs, to access high quality and equal education.</p> | Positive |

We will continue to implement the requirements of the Additional Learning Needs and the Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018, as well as the Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Strategy. The aim of the ALN&I Strategy is to ensure that children and young people (aged between the ages of 0 and 25) who have additional learning benefit from education opportunities and experiences that have been appropriately planned for them, to enable them to progress and achieve their potential in education settings that are suitable for their needs.

It is anticipated that number 2 of our values (see question 2) will also contribute positively to this feature by incorporating good well-being into Gwynedd's schools; creating a supportive atmosphere where children and young people are encouraged to achieve their personal and academic potential, where they thrive, learn and develop emotionally, with the support of teachers and staff who operate in a culture that values their well-being. Ensuring that regular physical activity is a lifelong practice will be a vehicle to improve the health of children and young people now and as they become older, contributing to improved overall happiness and resilience.

| | | |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| Gender | | Premature to identify any impact at this point |
| Age | Our vision is to ensure a fair and inclusive education system that meets the needs of all learners in the County, and gives them the opportunity to reach their full potential. | Positive |
| Religion and Belief | <p>Gwynedd schools have relevant policies in place to protect individuals from any discrimination based on race, such as Equality, Inclusion and Anti-bullying Policies. The Anti-bullying Policy provided by Cyngor Gwynedd sets out anti-bullying guidelines and procedures based on factors such as race in the school.</p> <p>All schools have their own anti-bullying policies to safeguard children with certain equality characteristics.</p> <p>In addition, the Equality policy implemented by Gwynedd primary schools states that the schools “... oppose all forms of prejudice and discrimination and recognise that pupils have different needs, requirements and objectives.”</p> <p>To shape the system for the future we have determined eight core values. Number 1 (see question 2) states that we will aim to improve outcomes for our most vulnerable learners, and groups of learners who often face barriers to engaging with education.</p> | Positive |
| Sexual Orientation | Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a statutory requirement in the Curriculum for Wales framework and is published under section 71 of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 and is mandatory for all learners between the ages of 3 and 16. RSE has | Positive |

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| | a positive and empowering role in learners' education and plays a vital role in forming and maintaining a range of relationships, all based on mutual trust and respect, which is the foundation of RSE. These relationships are critical to developing emotional well-being, resilience, and empathy. An understanding of sexuality with an emphasis on rights, health, equality and equity empowers learners to understand themselves, take responsibility for their own decisions and behaviours and form relationships. | |
| Gender reassignment | The Equality policy implemented by Gwynedd schools states that the schools "... oppose all forms of prejudice and discrimination and recognise that pupils have different needs, requirements and objectives." | Positive |
| Marriage and Civil Partnership | | Premature to identify any impact at this point |
| Pregnancy and Maternity | | Premature to identify any impact at this point |
| The Welsh Language | To shape the system for the future we have determined eight core values. It is anticipated that number 8 in the Draft Strategy (Strengthening the Welsh Language as an educational and social medium and enabling children and young people to access Welsh and bilingual education and training) will contribute positively to this aim by ensuring that all children and young people benefit from first- | Positive |

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|----------|
| | <p>class Welsh and bilingual education provision, as well as access to specialist support and services through the medium of Welsh that enable them to succeed, thrive, and realise their aspirations for the future.</p> <p>It is anticipated that this will also contribute to supporting staff to improve their Welsh language skills or to boost their confidence to use the language as well as promoting the benefits of Welsh and bilingual education among parents. In addition, this will promote employment through the medium of Welsh in Gwynedd schools and within the Education Department.</p> | |
| Socio-economic Considerations | <p>To shape the system for the future we have determined eight core values. It is anticipated that number 1 (see question 2) will contribute positively to this aim by ensuring that all children and young people have access to the highest possible quality education and training that enable them to thrive and achieve their potential.</p> <p>Further expansion of the existing Flying Start provision areas and the childcare offer will ensure the best start for children from the early years onwards and will contribute positively to this aim by ensuring access to childcare and early years services for families in deprived areas of the county.</p> | Positive |

| | | |
|--|--|----------|
| | <p>We also recognise the impact of the increase in current costs of living, including the increasing costs of everyday materials such as school uniform, food, transport and stationery, impacting the well-being of children, young people and families. The free school meals scheme for all primary learners will be of great help to families in reducing socio-economic disadvantage, and the commitment to re-examine the costs of sending children to school with a view to reducing them is also likely to reduce socio-economic disadvantage.</p> | |
| Those Who Serve or Who Have Served in the Armed Forces, As Well As Their Families | <p>Our vision is to have a fair education system that meets the needs of all our learners and ensures that every individual learner is reaching their full potential.</p> | Positive |
| Human Rights | <p>Our vision is to have a fair education system that meets the needs of all our learners and ensures that every individual learner is reaching their full potential.</p> | Positive |

6. Are there any data or information gaps, and if so, what are they and how do you intend to address them?

The stakeholder engagement process is ongoing and we will update the Impact Assessment as the direction of the work becomes clearer.

7. When considering other key decisions that affect these groups, is there an increasing impact (cumulative impact)?

There may be additional pressure on schools and teachers if there are insufficient resources or support to implement the Strategy.

8. What does the proposal include to demonstrate you have given due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (to promote equal opportunity; help to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, or victimisation and foster good relations and wider community cohesion) as covered by the three aims of the General Duty in the Equality Act 2010?

To shape the system for the future we have set out eight core values (see question 2). It is anticipated that number 1 “Offering the best possible learning experiences for our learners ensuring an engaging and broad curriculum that will stimulate learning and understanding and lead to improved standards and outcomes for all” will positively impact this duty by ensuring that all children and young people can access the highest possible quality education and training that enables them to thrive and achieve their potential.

It is anticipated that number 8, “Strengthening the Welsh Language as an educational and social medium and enabling children and young people to access to Welsh and bilingual education and training” will positively impact this duty by ensuring that all children and young people can fully benefit from the Welsh and bilingual provision found in Gwynedd schools.

Relationships and sexuality education (RSE) is a statutory requirement in the Curriculum for Wales framework and is published under section 71 of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 and is mandatory for all learners aged 3 to 16. RSE has a positive and empowering role to play in learners' education and is essential to form and maintain a range of relationships, all based on mutual trust and respect, at the core of relationships and sexuality education. These relationships are critical to developing emotional well-being, resilience, and empathy. An understanding of sexuality with an emphasis on rights, health, equality and equity empowers learners to understand themselves, take responsibility for their own decisions and behaviours and form relationships.

It is anticipated that number 2 of the values in the draft Strategy “Promoting and supporting the physical health, needs and emotional wellbeing of our learners, ensuring that our schools play a key role in the planning and delivery of integrated services for children, young people and their families” will contribute to fostering good relationships as the children and young people of Gwynedd are aware of the importance of well-being, and are aware of the various problems they often face in terms of staying safe, staying healthy, managing relationships, and dealing with the challenges of growing up in such a changing society.

9. How does the proposal show that due regard has been given to the need to address inequality due to socio-economic disadvantage? (Note that this relates to closing the inequality gap, rather than just improving outcomes for everyone.)

In order to shape the education system for the future, we have set out eight core values. It is anticipated that number 1 “Offering the best possible learning experiences for our learners ensuring an engaging and broad curriculum that will stimulate learning and understanding and lead to improved standards and outcomes for all” will positively impact this duty by ensuring that all children and young people can access the highest possible quality education and training that enables them to thrive and achieve their potential. Further expansion of the existing Flying Start provision areas and the childcare offer will ensure the best start for children from the early years onwards and will contribute positively to this aim by ensuring access to childcare and early years services for families in deprived areas of the county.

We also recognise the impact of the increase in current costs of living, including the increasing costs of everyday materials such as school uniform, food, transport and stationery, impacting the well-being of children, young people and families. The free school meals scheme for all primary learners will be of great help to families in reducing socio-economic disadvantage, and the commitment to re-examine the costs of sending children to school with a view to reducing them is also likely to reduce socio-economic disadvantage.

10. How does the proposal show implementation in line with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011), to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than the English language, and to ensure opportunities for people to use the Welsh language? Also, how does the proposal operate in accordance with the requirements of the Council's Welsh Language Strategy to take advantage of every opportunity to promote the Welsh language (beyond providing bilingual services) and increase opportunities to use and learn the language in the community?

To shape the system for the future we have determined eight core values. It is anticipated that number 8 “Strengthening the Welsh Language as an educational and social medium and enabling children and young people to access Welsh and bilingual education and training”, will contribute positively to this aim by ensuring that all children and young people benefit from first-class Welsh and bilingual education provision, as well as access to specialist support and services through the medium of Welsh that enable them to succeed, thrive, and realise their aspirations for the future.

11. How does this proposal meet the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act by implementing the five ways of working, and respond to the seven national well-being goals, including creating a More Equal Wales?

Well-being Goals:

A prosperous Wales - This draft Strategy is intended to be of benefit to all children and young people in Gwynedd. It will seek to address some challenges that the system is likely to face now and, in the future, such as:

- Maintaining and strengthening our education and training provision to enable children and young people in Gwynedd to reach their full potential and to develop the qualifications and skills that enable them to live and thrive.
- Maintaining and strengthening the Welsh language in all aspects of the school's life and communities served in light of the 2021 Census results.
- Ensuring excellent well-being support services for children and young people in Gwynedd to help them to overcome barriers and reach their full potential.
- Strengthening leadership on all levels and responding to the challenge of recruiting teachers and assistants in our schools.

- Ensuring the viability and resilience of our schools when there is a reduction in the number of learners as a result of low birth rates, an ageing population and rural depopulation. Improving our school estate to ensure the best possible learning environment for our children and young people when we have so many buildings to maintain, and an expectation for the school estate to be zero carbon over the next period.
- Responding to the challenge of maintaining the education system in an unprecedented period of cuts to Local Authority budgets.

A resilient Wales - The draft Strategy contributes positively to this aim through the values, number 6 in particular “Creating a first-class learning environment by improving facilities and buildings, and to ensure that schools are designed to respond to changes in contemporary teaching and learning practices and processes, particularly in the use of Technology”. The purpose of this is to try and ensure that Gwynedd's schools offer a safe, inspiring and sustainable learning environment of the highest quality for learners and teachers in the county, and that they are organisations that have a strong link with their communities.

A healthier Wales - The draft Strategy contributes positively to this aim through the values, in particular number 2, “Promoting and supporting the physical health, needs and emotional well-being of our learners, ensuring that our schools play a key role in the planning and delivery of integrated services for children, young people and their families”. The purpose of this is to ensure that every child and young person in Gwynedd is ready to learn and can fully benefit from the education and training available, and can easily access support to improve their emotional, mental and physical well-being.

A more equal Wales - The draft Strategy contributes positively to this aim through the values, in particular number 1, “Offering the best possible learning experiences for our learners, ensuring an engaging and broad curriculum that motivates learning and understanding and leads to improved standards and outcomes for all”. The purpose of this is to try and ensure that all children and young people can access the highest possible quality education and training that enable them to thrive and achieve their potential.

A Wales of cohesive communities - The draft Strategy contributes positively to this aim through the values, in particular number 6 “Creating a first-class learning environment by improving facilities and buildings, and to ensure that schools are designed to respond to changes in contemporary teaching and learning practices and processes, particularly in the use of Technology”. The purpose of this is to try and ensure that Gwynedd's schools offer a safe, inspiring and sustainable learning environment of the highest quality for learners and teachers in the county, and that they are organisations that have a strong link with their communities.

A Wales of vibrant culture where the Welsh language thrives - The draft Strategy contributes positively to this aim through the values, in particular number 8, “Strengthening the Welsh language as an educational and social medium and enable children and young people

to access Welsh and bilingual education and training”. The purpose of this is to seek to ensure that all children and young people benefit from the provision of first-class Welsh and bilingual education, as well as access to specialist support and services through the medium of Welsh that enable them to succeed, thrive, and realise their aspirations for the future.

A globally responsible Wales - It is not anticipated that the proposal is likely to have an impact on this goal.

5 ways of working:

Long-term - The Strategy sets out a long-term vision that will set the direction for education and training in Gwynedd up to 2035.

Prevention - This draft Strategy is intended to be of benefit to all children and young people in Gwynedd. It will seek to address some challenges that the system is likely to face now and, in the future, such as:

- Maintaining and strengthening our education and training provision to enable children and young people in Gwynedd to reach their full potential and to develop the qualifications and skills that enable them to live and thrive.
- Maintaining and strengthening the Welsh language in all aspects of the school's life and communities served in light of the 2021 Census results.
- Ensuring excellent well-being support services for children and young people in Gwynedd to assist them to overcome barriers and reach their full potential
- Strengthening leadership on all levels and responding to the challenge of recruiting teachers and assistants in our schools.
- Ensuring the viability and resilience of our schools when there is a reduction in the number of learners as a result of low birth rates, an ageing population and rural depopulation.
- Improving our school estate to ensure the best possible learning environment for our children and young people when we have so many buildings to maintain, and an expectation for the school estate to be zero carbon over the next period.
- Responding to the challenge of maintaining the education system in an unprecedented period of cuts to the budgets of Local Authorities.

Integration - This draft Strategy is intended to be of benefit to all children and young people in Gwynedd. It will seek to address some challenges that the system is likely to face now and, in the future, such as:

Collaboration - During February 2025, the Education Department held discussions with the Headteachers of Secondary, Primary and Special Schools on the draft vision and objectives for the new Schools' Strategy.

Involvement - During February 2025, the Education Department held discussions with the Headteachers of Primary, Secondary and Special Schools on the draft vision and objectives for the new Schools' Strategy. In addition, engagement sessions have been arranged with the Headteachers of Primary, Secondary and Special Schools, including a meeting with the County Young People's Forum and Gwynedd Governors' Forum. The Impact Assessment will be updated following these sessions.

Following consideration and assessment in accordance with the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, the 7 aims of the Well-being Act have been considered and it is concluded that no negative impacts are anticipated to arise from the Strategy. The aim of the Strategy and its fundamental intention is to have an education system that puts the needs of all our learners at the heart of our provision, by maintaining and strengthening our education and training provision to enable Gwynedd's children and young people to reach their full potential and to develop the qualifications and skills that enable them to live and thrive.

STEP 3 - Procurement and Partnerships

12. Will this policy or practice be carried out wholly or partly by contractors or in partnership with another organisation(s)?

No.

What action will be taken to comply with the General Equality Duty, Human Rights and Welsh language legislation and the Socio-Economic Duty in relation to procurement and/or partnerships?

Procurement:

Not applicable at this time.

Partnership:

Not applicable at this time.

STEP 4 - Dealing with Negative or Unlawful Impact and Strengthening the Policy or Practice

I3. When considering proportionality, does the policy or practice have a significantly positive or negative impact or create unequal outcomes?

Significant Positive Impact:

Although it is early days, and the impact assessment is not final, it is anticipated that the Strategy is likely to have a positive impact on the equality characteristics (see question 5). We will update the Impact Assessment as the direction of the work becomes clearer.

Significant Negative Impact:

Although it is early days, it is not anticipated at this time that the Strategy will have a negative impact on any of the characteristics.

14. Any intentional negative impact and why it is believed that there is justification for operating in this way should be explained (for example, on the grounds of improving equal opportunities or developing good relationships between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not or due to objective justification or positive action).

Not applicable at this time.

15. Will any of the negative impacts identified count as unlawful discrimination albeit they are unavoidable (e.g. budget cuts)?

No.

16. What other measures or changes could be included to strengthen or change the policy/practice to demonstrate that due regard has been given to equal opportunity; help to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, or victimisation; and foster good relations and wider community cohesion; as covered by the improvement aim of the General Duty in the Equality Act 2010?

Premature to identify any measures at this point.

17. What measures or other changes could be included to strengthen or change the policy/practice to demonstrate that due regard has been given to the need to reduce inequalities of outcome as a result of socio-economic disadvantage?

Premature to identify any measures at this point.

18. What other measures or changes could be included to strengthen or change the policy/practice to demonstrate that due regard has been given to the need to increase opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and in treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language as set out in the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and to reduce or prevent any adverse effects that the policy/practice may have on the Welsh language?

Our aim is to ensure that all learners have the support and opportunities to achieve their full potential – nurturing ambitious, confident and inspiring young people who are ready for life and work in the future.

19. Is there enough information to make a balanced judgement and to proceed?

Yes

STEP 5 - Decision to Proceed

20. Given the information gathered in Steps 1–4 above, is it possible to move forward with the policy or practice or not, and if so, on what basis? Choice of:

Continuing with the policy or practice in its current form.

STEP 6 - Actions and Arrangements for Monitoring Outcomes and Reviewing Data

The EqlA process is an ongoing one that doesn't end when the policy/practice and EqlA is agreed and implemented. There is a specific legal duty to monitor the impact of policies/practices on equality on an ongoing basis to identify if the outcomes have changed since you introduced or amended this new policy or practice. If you do not hold relevant data, then you should be taking steps to rectify this in your action plan.

To review the EHRC guidance on data collection you can review their [Measurement Framework](#)

21. What actions noted in Steps 1-5 or any additional data collection work would help to monitor the policy/practice when implemented:

| Action | Date | Timetable | Lead Responsibility |
|---|---------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| To present the Draft Strategy to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee | December 2025 | December 2025 | Head of Education |
| Present the Draft Strategy to the Cabinet | February 2026 | February 2026 | Head of Education |

22. What arrangements to monitor and review the ongoing impact of this policy or practice will be implemented, including timeframes for when it should be formally reviewed:

| Monitoring and Review Arrangements (including where outcomes will be recorded) | Timeframe and Frequency | Lead Responsibility |
|--|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Strategy Review | Every 5 years | Head of Education |

Appendix 3 - The Scrutiny Committee's Questions

1) Is it realistic to fulfil the Strategy's vision?

The Gwynedd Schools Strategy 2026-2036 is ambitious, but it is based on robust policies. Its objective is to create a fair, inclusive and sustainable education system, which helps every learner to succeed. The vision is realistic as it builds on national policies such as the Curriculum for Wales, Cymraeg 2050 and the ALN Act.

The Strategy notes clear priorities, including:

- Ensuring welfare, safety and an inclusive and eco-friendly learning environment.
- Investing in the buildings and infrastructure of schools;
- Strengthening leadership and responding to recruitment challenges;
- Developing a skilled, bilingual workforce;
- Supporting small rural schools and promoting financial fairness;

Although the plan is robust, there are key challenges:

- Fewer pupils, especially in the primary sector, which in turn leads to fewer pupils in the secondary sector also.
- Ongoing financial pressure;
- Difficulties with staff recruitment and retention, particularly in rural areas and in Welsh medium areas;
- National policy changes which can increase the burden on schools and the Authority.

The Strategy acknowledges these barriers and offers steps to mitigate them. Therefore, the vision is realistic for 2026-2036, provided there is commitment, digital resources and close collaboration between the Authority, schools and communities.

2) Are the priorities of the Education Department as noted in the Strategy both suitable and timely?

The priorities of the Education Department in the Schools Strategy 2026-2036 clearly reflect the county's existing needs and challenges. They correspond with key national policies such as the Curriculum for Wales, Cymraeg 2050, ALN Act and Well-being Act, ensuring robust strategic direction.

The Strategy's main priorities are:

1. **Raising standards and improving learning experiences** - in line with the Curriculum for Wales, with an emphasis on creativity and equal access.
2. **Promoting Welfare** - essential as a result of the pandemic and the increase in mental health concerns.
3. **Strengthening the ALN provision** - timely when implementing the ALN Act in full.
4. **Developing the workforce and leadership** - important due to the lack of teachers and headteachers.
5. **Investing in modern and sustainable buildings** - which supports digital learning and responds to carbon targets.
6. **Strengthening the Welsh language** - central to the Council's vision and key to reach the aims of Cymraeg 2050.
7. **Reviewing the schools' network** - necessary due to the reduction in pupil numbers and financial pressures.

The priorities reflect the reality of the education sector in the county and focus on fields which make the biggest difference to the quality of the provision and learner welfare. They are suitable and timely, provided that the Department receives the resources and support required for their successful implementation.

3) To what extent do the priorities of the Strategy align with the direction and other corporate priorities of the Council, as well as national priorities?

The Gwynedd Schools Strategy 2026-2036 has been drawn up to align closely with the Council's corporate direction. It reiterates the main policy documents, such as the Council Plan 2023-2028, WESP, the Climate Plan and the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

Main strategic alignment fields:

1. **Corporate priority on welfare and opportunities for children and young people**

The Strategy shares the aim of ensuring fairness, inclusion and support for all learners to reach their potential.

2. **Supporting the Welsh Language**

There is a clear commitment to expand Welsh-medium education and reinforce Cymraeg 2050, in line with the WESP.

3. **Contributing to the Council's climate targets**

By means of eco-friendly buildings, energy efficiency and active travel policies, the Strategy supports the aim of "Net zero carbon status by 2030".

4. **Reconciling with the Medium-Term Financial Plan**

The Strategy considers the financial pressures and promotes a sustainable method of resource management, including supporting small schools by means of fair funding methods.

5. **Supporting the aims of the Well-being Act**

The Strategy reflects the seven well-being goals, including strong communities, lively culture and environmental sustainability.

6. **Working jointly across departments**

The emphasis on partnership with social services, health, children's services and the community, reflects the Council's integrated approach.

In brief, the Schools Strategy is fully in line with the corporate priorities of Cyngor Gwynedd. It provides a practical framework to implement the Council's goals in terms of fairness, sustainability, strengthening communities and promoting the Welsh language over the coming decade.

4) Are additional resources required to realise the aspirations of the Strategy?

Although the Schools Strategy is based on efficient use of existing resources, it is obvious that additional investment will be required to realise this ambition in full. Some of the steps described go beyond the core statutory work of the Education Department, therefore, success will depend on ongoing financial and operational support from the Council and the Welsh Government.

Fundamentally, although the Strategy is an effort to make more efficient use of existing resources, additional investment is needed in the form of capital funding, **people** and **time** to realise the vision. This is especially true in the fields of school buildings, workforce development, extending the Welsh and digital provision, and ensuring equal access in rural areas.

As a result, we will be developing **a clear financial plan** alongside the Strategy, to ensure that resources are in line with the priorities and that Members understand the medium-term implications.

5) What input have key stakeholders had into the Strategy's vision and priorities?

The Strategy has been developed through a process of engaging with the main education stakeholders. This has enabled us to ensure that the vision and priorities correctly reflect the actual needs and expectations of learners, families, professionals and members of the community.

1. Input from schools

Meetings were held with school headteachers across the county to gather views on the future of the schools network, the recruitment challenges and the need for leadership support. Additional sessions to engage with the Headteachers on the draft version of the Strategy have been arranged for December 2025.

2. Contribution from pupils

Discussions were held with young people at a youth forum to note their aspirations and priorities in terms of welfare, skills and learning experiences. An additional session to discuss the draft Strategy has been arranged with the Young People County Forum in December 2025.

3. Ongoing method of engagement

The Strategy is described as a live document, with the intention of carrying out regular reviews and ongoing feedback mechanisms to ensure that the voices of stakeholders continue to steer the implementation process.

It can be confirmed that the input of key stakeholders has been central to the drawing up of the Strategy and its priorities. Consequently, the Strategy is based on a firm understanding of the actual needs of Gwynedd learners, and reflects the partnership and collaboration principles, which are a key feature of the Council's corporate policy.

6) How is it intended to respond to the demographic challenges?

The Strategy acknowledges that demographic changes are a big challenge to schools' sustainability over the coming decade. The number of primary children is reducing substantially, with empty places increasing and a direct impact on funding, the workforce and on the quality of the provision.

Based on the evidence:

- The number of primary learners has reduced by around 14% since 2016.
- Around 24% of school places are empty in the county, which creates huge financial and planning pressures.

In response, the Strategy notes clear steps:

1. Plan a sustainable schools network

- Review and, if needed, restructure or merge schools where numbers are low.
- Develop collaboration models to maintain efficient local provisions.

2. Use data to draw-up the provision

- Integrate population projections and housing developments to plan school capacity.
- Monitor the choices of parents to understand pupil movement patterns.

3. Support rural schools

- Continue with the Protection Scheme for small schools.
- Share resources and expertise between schools, including digital methods.
- Ensure that decisions safeguard the Welsh language and the local community.

4. Invest in modern and flexible schools

- Focus on eco-friendly and flexible buildings through the Sustainable Learning Communities Programme.
- Design schools that adapt to population changes.

5. Consider transport and accessibility

- Review transport policies to ensure fair access.
- Support more efficient and eco-friendly transport methods.

6. Workforce planning

- Manage staffing changes sensitively, with opportunities to re-train where needed.
- Develop a leadership system which reflects the schools network in the future.

In brief, the Strategy offers a proactive approach, which uses data and works closely with communities to create a more sustainable and high-quality schools system. Success will depend on careful planning, strong partnerships, and ongoing financial support from the Council and the Welsh Government.

7) What factors are considered when making decisions to go into a period of consultation on a school closure?

The 2026-2036 Strategy emphasises that closing a school is a serious decision, and the last resort after all other options have been considered. The process is evidence-based, and the welfare of the learners and the sustainability of the education system are central.

When determining whether a consultation on a school closure should be commenced, several factors are considered:

1. Demography

- Pupil numbers and trends in the catchment area.
- The school's capacity and level of empty places.

2. Quality of education

- Estyn Reports, performance and learner progress.
- The ability to offer a broad curriculum and teacher expertise.
- Strength of the leadership and options to improve.

3. Welfare of learners

- Impact on travel, activities and leisure time.
- Social and emotional impact on pupils.
- That alternative arrangements offer an experience of an equivalent or better quality.

4. Financial sustainability

- Cost per pupil.
- The school's ability to maintain safe staffing within the budget.
- Impact on other budgets, including the Protection Scheme.

5. Condition of the building

- Suitability for the Curriculum for Wales and modern teaching methods.
- Maintenance and energy costs and sustainability requirements.
- Impact if the school is a community centre.

6. Impact on the Welsh language

- The impact on Welsh-speaking communities and on the use of Welsh.
- Ensure that new arrangements sustain or strengthen Welsh-medium education.
- Compliance with WESP and the aims of Cymraeg 2050.

7. Transport and accessibility

- Travelling distance and time to other schools.
- Safety of paths and active travel.
- Environmental impact and transport costs.

8. Engaging with the community

- The views of parents, governors and the local community.
- Consider collaboration solutions before moving to close.
- Comply with the requirements of the Schools Organisation Code (Wales).

In brief, consultations on a school closure will only be commenced after full evidence has been analysed and consideration has been given to the impact on education, communities, finance and the Welsh language. The aim of the process is to ensure fair, transparent and sustainable decisions to support all learners in Gwynedd.

8) What is the role of the Schools Support Service in realising the Strategy?

The Gwynedd Schools Support Service plays a central and extended role when implementing and reiterating the Strategy, following the transfer of GwE duties to the Local Authority. This new arrangement ensures a united, local and consistent approach to supporting schools, placing full responsibility for educational improvement within the local education structure.

However, the Support Officers will not lead on the modernisation work, this will be under the care of the Head of Education Department and the Modernisation Team.

1. Ensure education standards and improve ongoing improvement

The Schools Support Officers make direct engagement with schools to monitor teaching standards, learner progress and quality of leadership.

Through regular visits, analysing data and self-evaluation methods, they work alongside headteachers to create practical improvement plans and measure the impact per school.

This local arrangement enables a swifter and more contextual response to the individual needs of schools, strengthening accountability and a constructive professional relationship.

2. Develop professional leadership and practice

The Service leads on ongoing professional development for headteachers and teachers, including mentoring programmes, developing middle leadership and succession.

This is in accordance with the Strategy's priorities to foster resilient, confident and ambitious leaders who can lead schools through periods of change.

Through a local approach, the support is more tailored to the needs of every cluster and individual school.

3. Support the implementation of the Curriculum for Wales

The Schools Support Officers provide practical direction, models and guidance for schools when developing their local curriculum, assessing learners and planning innovative learning experiences.

The Service facilitates collaboration between schools to share good practice and ensure that standards of teaching are consistent across the county.

This ensures that the national education vision is realised locally, reflecting the identity and culture of Gwynedd.

4. Promote the Welsh language and bilingualism

The Officers support schools to improve the workforce's linguistic skills and foster a lively Welsh ethos which corresponds with the ambition of Cymraeg 2050.

By monitoring the linguistic progress of pupils and provide guidance on Welsh education models, the Service ensures consistency and progress across the county.

5. Support the welfare of learners and staff

The Service works closely with the Social Services, the Learner Welfare Service, and Health to ensure an integrated approach to supporting physical and emotional welfare.

The Schools Support Officers provide training, guidance and practical support to schools on safeguarding, positive behaviour and mental health.

This emphasis on welfare complements one of the cross-sectional themes of the Schools Strategy.

6. Strategic planning and local accountability

The Schools Support Service is an integral part of the process of collecting, analysing and reporting on performance data, supporting the Education Department to make evidence-based strategic decisions.

This work includes contributing to reviews of the schools network, workforce planning and local improvement plans.

The new local model ensures clear accountability between schools, officers and the Authority, with shorter lines of communication and more personal support.

With GwE duties now fully integrated to the Council's structure, the Schools Support Service operates as the main mechanism to implement the Schools Strategy. Its role is to transform the strategic vision into a practical impact, ensuring;

- that every school is suitably supported;
- that the standards of education and welfare rise continuously; and
- that the Gwynedd education system is sustainable, bilingual and of a high standard for the future.

9) How will progress be monitored?

The progress with the implementation of the Gwynedd Schools Strategy 2026 - 2036 will be systematically monitored through a combination of formal and partnership processes:

- Annual Action Plans - every strategic priority will be converted into annual targets with clear performance measures, annually reviewed by the Education Department.
- Formal Monitoring Reports - regular progress reports are submitted to the Education Scrutiny Committee, the Cabinet and relevant Elected Members.
- Self-evaluation and Impact Assessment - schools and Schools Support Officers will gather evidence of the impact on standards, welfare and the use of Welsh, steering ongoing improvements.
- Use of Data and Estyn Reports - monitor key indicators such as attainment, attendance and linguistic progress, as well as the findings of Estyn inspections.
- Mid-term Review (2028-2030) - a formal review of the Strategy will be carried out to measure progress against the mid-term targets and to re-emphasise priorities, if required.

The monitoring process will ensure accountability, transparency, and ongoing improvement, giving Members the confidence that the Strategy will be implemented effectively and achieve definitive outcomes for Gwynedd learners.

10) How will the Strategy address matters such as attendance, behaviour and PISA test results?

The Strategy focuses on the welfare of learners, standards and effective leadership. Although it does not specifically refer to PISA, the steps proposed support the same goal of improving attainment.

1. Attendance

- Emphasis on ensuring that every child participates in full in the learning.
- Collaboration between schools, welfare services and families to improve attendance.
- Create attractive learning environments to increase motivation.

2. Behaviour and welfare

- Welfare at the heart of the educational provision.
- Inclusive and restorative method of managing behaviour, which understands the needs of learners.
- Training and sharing good practice to foster positive behaviour.

3. Standards and attainment (including PISA more broadly)

- Raising standards across the county, focusing on progress.
- Emphasis on the quality of teaching, leadership and collaboration between schools.
- Develop a Curriculum for Wales of a high-quality to improve literacy, numeracy and critical thinking.

By placing welfare, attendance, positive behaviour and teaching standards at the root of the work, the Strategy sets firm foundations to improve learner outcomes. Although it does not refer to PISA, it is completely consistent with the principles which form the basis to improving international standards.

11) Does the Strategy address the Language Charter and Secondary Sector Language Strategy and their role as a part of the Strategy?

Yes. The Strategy gives clear and robust attention to the role of the Language Charter and the Secondary Sector Language Strategy as key elements in the work of realising their linguistic and cultural vision.

The Strategy emphasises that promoting and strengthening the Welsh language is at the root of all aspects of education in the county, acknowledging that the education system is the main mechanism to realise the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP 2022-2032) and ambition of Cymraeg 2050.

Specifically:

- The Language Charter (primary sector) is identified as a practical framework to foster positive attitudes towards the Welsh language amongst children, families and school communities, promoting natural use of the language beyond the classroom.
- The Secondary Sector Language Strategy operates alongside the Schools Strategy to continue with the linguistic momentum to the secondary period, supporting schools to plan social and academic opportunities to use Welsh in real-life contexts.

The Strategy gives specific, firm and practical attention to the Language Charter and the Secondary Sector Language Strategy as an integral part of its commitment to foster confident bilingual learners and strengthen the Welsh language as the main living language of education and community in Gwynedd.

12) What consideration is given to alternative uses for closed schools?

The Strategy acknowledges that every school building is a valuable community asset, and it emphasises the need to ensure the best possible use of the educational assets to support sustainable provision for the future.

When a school closes, the Strategy notes clearly that the Authority considers options to reuse the building or site, reflecting educational, community and environmental local needs. This is a part of the commitment to plan a sustainable schools network and manage resources effectively.

In line with the Strategy:

- Every case of changing or closing a school is considered in line with a detailed assessment process, including considering the impact on the community, on the Welsh language, and on the local education provision.
- The Strategy emphasises that the Authority will investigate opportunities to use school buildings for other educational or community purposes, before making any final decision.
- The aim is to ensure that any resource that already exists continues to be beneficial for learners and communities, instead of losing them completely from the educational system or community.
- Reference is also made to the need for long-term planning for school infrastructure, in order to avoid an excess of unnecessary capacity and ensure effective use of buildings and sites.

The Strategy does not note specific details on creating alternative education hubs, but it provides a clear principle: when a school closes, the Authority considers alternative educational or community use as part of the commitment to ensure a sustainable, efficient schools system, which is beneficial to the local community.

13) What support is available for governors in the Strategy?

The Strategy acknowledges that school governors play a key part when realising the vision for high-quality and sustainable education. The document emphasises the need to ensure ongoing support and professional development for governors as part of the educational leadership system.

In line with the Strategy:

- The work of strengthening school leadership, including developing and engaging with governors as operational partners in the process of raising standards.
- The Strategy outlines the proposal to provide training and ongoing support to governors, ensuring that they are confident when carrying out their strategic duties and financial accountability.
- There is a reference to the importance of open communication between governors, headteachers and the Authority, as part of the work of strengthening leadership and plan for school improvement.
- The Strategy emphasises that support for governors is a part of the broader method of fostering strong leadership at all levels, including headteachers, senior teams and governing bodies.

14) What will be the impact of financial cuts on schools in the future, particularly in the secondary sector, with the reduction in pupil numbers?

The Strategy clearly acknowledges that there is substantial financial pressure on the education system, and that this is likely to continue over the years to come. This financial challenge is acknowledged as one of the main risks to the sustainability of the schools network, particularly as the pupil numbers reduce.

According to the Strategy:

- Pupil numbers are expected to reduce by around 14% by 2026, reducing school income as a result of a funding formula that is based on pupil numbers.
- The secondary sector is facing the greatest impact in terms of maintaining a broad curriculum and offering a full range of subjects as numbers reduce.
- The Strategy notes that the schools network will need to be reviewed to ensure that every school continues to be financially viable and is able to provide a quality education.
- There is commitment to ensure financial fairness, by reviewing the Protection Scheme for small schools and ensure that resources are being used efficiently across the county.
- The Strategy emphasises the need to invest wisely in infrastructure and human resources, focusing on long-term sustainability rather than short-term measures.

The Strategy acknowledges that there will be financial cuts, and the demographic reduction will have a substantial impact on schools. The Strategy's response is to plan pro-actively, ensure efficient use of resources, and maintain a sustainable education provision that is able to offer a quality curriculum for every learner, despite the financial pressure.

15) What is the provision that will be offered to children that are unable to attend school for various reasons?

The Schools Strategy emphasises the commitment to ensure that every child and young person obtains a suitable education, regardless of their circumstances. This includes specific provision for learners who are unable to attend mainstream schools for medical, emotional, social or other reasons.

According to the Strategy:

- The Authority commits to providing a suitable provision for learners who are unable to attend school, in order to ensure that they continue to gain access to a quality education and make progress.
- There is an alternative education provision and individual support for children who require a different method of learning, according to their specific needs.
- This includes support through the Learner Welfare, Emotional Health and ALN Services, ensuring a multi-agency and inclusive method.
- The Strategy also acknowledges the importance of careful transition back to school where possible, with individual support plans to facilitate the return of pupils to mainstream education.
- In accordance with the principle of an inclusive and fair education, the Authority ensures that every learner has equal opportunities to reach their potential, regardless of their situation.

The Strategy provides for a flexible, individual and inclusive provision for children who are unable to attend school. The focus is placed on ensuring that every learner continues to receive a quality education and multi-agency support, reflecting the Council's commitment to welfare and educational equality for all.

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| MEETING OF | Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee |
| DATE | 11 December 2025 |
| TITLE | Performance Report of the Cabinet Member for Education |
| REASON FOR SCRUTINY | To ensure effective performance management |
| AUTHOR | Gwern ap Rhisiart – Head of Education |
| CABINET MEMBER | Cllr Dewi Jones |

1. Why is scrutiny required?

To ensure that Committee Members undertake scrutiny of performance matters within the Department.

2. Background / Context

2.1 Background / Introduction

The purpose of this report is to update you on what has been achieved in the area for which I am responsible as Cabinet Member for Education. This includes outlining the latest with the pledges in the Council Plan and the Department's performance measures.

We are implementing the Council Plan 2023-28, and herein I report on the progress up to the end of September 2025, recognising that it is still early days in respect of some of the pledges that are new in the document since April 2024. Nevertheless, all matters have been the subject of discussion and have been challenged by me at a performance challenge meeting, and I am satisfied with the performance of the Department.

2.2 Rationale and justification

2.2.1 Performance of Pledges in the Council Plan Projects

I am very satisfied with the work carried out during the period in question, and **Appendix 1** provides updates on all of the Education Department's Council Plan projects. I would like to draw your attention to the following projects:

2.2.2 Modernising buildings and the learning environment

There are plans to make significant improvements to Ysgol Hiracl, with the first phase of the construction work having commenced on the site of the Bangor Byw'n lach car park to upgrade the area and create parking spaces for Ysgol Hiracl staff so that the school is a car-

free site. The tendering process for appointing contractors to design and make improvements to Ysgol Hirael is still ongoing.

There are also plans to build a new school for Ysgol Ein Harglwyddes on the site of Ysgol Glanadda (now closed) in Bangor. The construction work is still underway with the aim for the new school to open in the Summer term of 2026.

2.2.3 Transforming education for children in their early years

The admissions policy for Gwynedd schools has been operational since September 2025 and notes that children attending Nursery class in Gwynedd schools are expected to be fully toilet-trained before they start. We continue to share resources with parents and share information through social media.

The work of rolling out the childcare provision for two-year-olds to new areas is underway, with 30 childcare settings providing a service for two-year-olds through the medium of Welsh or bilingually since September 2025. The team of Advisory Teachers and the Childcare Officers are supporting the new settings through visits, support and start-up grants to invest in bespoke resources to ensure that standards can be raised to meet Flying Start requirements.

2.2.4 Promote the well-being of children and young people and reduce the cost of sending children to school

Following the receipt of almost 800 survey responses in 2024 from parents, learners, staff and school headteachers, the financial challenges of sending children to school have been clearly highlighted. Every day, families face the costs of school uniform, school trips and the costs of dinner/break times (secondary schools) and the findings of the surveys reflect this.

The individual schools have received a detailed breakdown of the findings and a working group has met to establish a Cost Friendly School Charter. This Charter will include a number of measures for schools to attain to be recognised as a 'Cost Friendly' School.

The Cost Friendly School Audit planned by the working group was shared with schools in November. All schools will receive a copy of the responses in the form of a plan so that they can implement the aspects which they have identified as needing attention.

3. The Department's Performance

The Department's Services are performing well and I confirm that I am satisfied with their current performance. The following information does not refer to all Services in the Department, please see below some of the highlights. For full details of performance against the Department's measures, refer to **Appendix 2**.

Catering

Since 1 September 2023, I am very proud that every primary-age learner from Reception to Year 6 in Gwynedd is able to receive free school meals, a year ahead of the national timetable.

During 2024/25, Cyngor Gwynedd served 902,160 free school meals, compared to 896,083 in 2023/24. A total of 71.3% of Gwynedd primary school children have taken up the offer of free school meals during September 2025. I am extremely proud of this achievement, and I am also eager for the Department to further promote the offer amongst children and families to encourage more take-up by families.

The Sustainable Schools Challenge

Following the success of the bid to the Welsh Government's Sustainable Schools Challenge, it is a pleasure to report on the progress of a project in which the input of all stakeholders is central to the vision of building an eco-friendly school and community facilities. The project aims to meet the Welsh Government's ambitious carbon target of 350 kgCO₂/m² by 2030 by focusing on the Circular Economy principles with the re-purposing of building materials from other buildings that are no longer in use in a new building.

Learners at Ysgol Bontnewydd have now settled at the temporary school which is on the site where the new building will be built. During the next phase, a range of construction and environment related activities and STEM subject learning resources will be developed with the school, to include Mathematics in Construction and Environmental Workshops, to ensure that all learners are fully involved in the construction process from the outset.

Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion service

There has been an increase in the demand for the Counselling Service due to the number of referrals being made, particularly primary age learners. We are trying to respond to this demand by adapting counselling time for the primary, and monitoring waiting lists carefully.

We continue to look at the capacity of our special schools and centres. Additionally, the work of adapting some classrooms at Ysgol Pendalar has been completed, and a 'pod' has also been installed to promote learners' life skills and independence. This has been an excellent development and much welcomed by learners.

Attendance

Attendance is still a high priority for us and levels have not returned to what they were before the pandemic. The Authority's attendance percentage is increasing, with the average for the academic year to date being 91.92% (the Welsh average was 91.9% in October 2025). There has been an upward trend in the last three years but we acknowledge that work is still ongoing to raise attendance to pre-pandemic levels.

There is a particular focus on vulnerable groups (e.g. pupils eligible for free school meals, pupils with Additional Learning Needs and Looked After Children), and a range of strategies are implemented to uphold this positive trend, including support from the Welfare Officers.

Exclusions

Another area that has received attention over the past year is fixed-term and permanent exclusions as a result of challenging behaviours within our schools. Following an in-depth review of the Inclusion Service, work has been carried out to strengthen the provision which has involved moving forward to develop a Pupil Referral Unit, working with schools on a new Inclusion Strategy and remodelling the outreach provision which is the support available to schools.

Pupil Referral Unit - Camu i'r Copa

I am delighted to report that the Pupil Referral Unit located on the former Ysgol Felinwnda site in Llanwnda, is now operating as a registered provision and has started to support learners. This Centre will be an essential resource for young people in the area who require tailored educational support, helping them to thrive in a safe and nurturing environment and which is responsive to their individual needs.

As a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), Canolfan Felinwnda - known as *Camu i'r Copa* - offers a specialist provision for pupils who may be experiencing difficulties in mainstream education. The Centre offers small classrooms, personalised learning plans, and comprehensive emotional, social and behavioural support.

Our mission is to restore pupils' confidence, build their resilience and equip them with the tools that they need to reintegrate into mainstream education where possible, or to make a positive transition to further education or vocational pathways. By offering a broad curriculum, therapeutic support, and with a dedicated team of staff, our aim is to ensure that all pupils reach their potential and improve their well-being alongside their academic attainment.

Located in the heart of the community of Felinwnda, the centre also underpins our commitment to inclusion. By delivering a local provision, we are reducing barriers in terms of access and ensuring that young people do not have to travel far for specialist support. This aligns with Cyngor Gwynedd's wider vision for modernising education.

Youth Service

The Youth Service provision offered involves community work with local partners, along with support in secondary schools and the community to promote personal and emotional well-being. The Service also provides support for young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs) including advice on employability, health and housing matters.

Between April 2025 and September 2025, there were 3,240 participants in the project for 11–19-year-olds. Over the past few months, the Service has continued to roll out and strengthen its community provision with a marked increase compared to data for the previous year, including four new community youth clubs at Ty'n Llan (Llandwrog), Trawsfynydd, Tywyn and Mynytho, and a further two clubs to open in the new year in Aberdyfi and Bala.

There are currently 32 projects and community clubs running on a weekly basis across Gwynedd; 16 are located in Arfon, 9 in Meirionnydd and 7 in Dwyfor. This provision includes 10 clubs funded by local councils, three Friendly Clubs in co-operation with Derwen, 18 mobile community clubs and one Neuro club, which ensure a balanced mix of general provision and specialist provision to meet the various needs of young people in the county.

In addition to the mobile service, ten fixed community clubs are still operating regularly with funding from local town councils, providing a total of 12 evenings per week. These are located in Bethesda, Caernarfon, Bethel, Rhiwlas, Llanrug, Deiniolen, Blaenau Ffestiniog and Penygroes. These clubs play a central role in fostering a sense of belonging to the community and providing young people with opportunities to socialise, develop new skills and partake in positive activities.

Looking to the future, two new community clubs have already been confirmed for the new year, along with the intention to open a further two clubs in the next academic year. This reflects the continuous growth and increasing demand for a community-based youth provision across all parts of Gwynedd, further strengthening the capacity of the Youth Service to respond to the needs of young people at a local level.

4. Consultation

The report has been created based on the information and content of the Education Department's latest performance challenge meeting, with the Chief Executive, Head of Department, Service Managers and I attending this meeting.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Report on the Council Plan projects 2025-26

Appendix 2: Education Department Performance Measures

Quarter 2 Update 2025-26

| Department and Project | What we want to achieve during the third year 2025-26 (milestones): | Update on the milestones to date: | Is the milestone completed/likely to be completed by the end of the financial year? (Yes/No) |
|---|---|---|--|
| Education Department Transform education for children in their early years | <p>1. Change the Toileting Policy for Gwynedd Schools by September 2025 and prepare families for the change by working collaboratively cross-departmentally and with the Health Board.</p> <p>2. Extend the childcare scheme for two-year-olds to more areas by September 2025, namely Tywyn, Harlech, Llandderfel and Llanuwchllyn, Penrhyndeudraeth, Efailnewydd/Buan, Aberdaron/Botwnnog/Tudweiliog, Cricieth, Waunfawr, Seiont 1 – Caernarfon, Llanberis, Arllechwedd and Porthmadog West, providing services for two-year-olds through the medium of Welsh or bilingually.</p> | <p>1. We have acted on changing the Policy since September 2025.</p> <p>2. We have taken action by extending the childcare scheme to more areas, providing a service for two-year-olds through the medium of Welsh or bilingually.</p> <p>Applications have opened online for families to register their children on the Scheme. We are currently in the process of re-advertising to appoint staff to the Early Years Teachers team. We are working with the IT Department to develop a system to administer the applications.</p> | <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|-----|
| Education Department Promote the well-being of children and young people and reduce the cost of sending children to school | 1. Compile and distribute a 'Cost of attending school' audit for each school to evaluate existing arrangements. | 1. A 'Cost Friendly School' audit was circulated to all schools in Gwynedd in November 2025. | Yes |
| | 2. Analyse the findings of the audit. | 2. It is expected that it will be possible to analyse the responses in December 2025, after the schools have had the opportunity to finalise them through discussion with the school's Governors. | Yes |
| | 3. Share findings with schools in the form of an individual action plan for each school. | 3. The findings will be shared with the schools after the analysis period. This is expected to be completed in December 2025. | Yes |
| Education Department Extend opportunities for play and socialising for the county's children and young people | 1. Engage with Town and Community Councils with a view to increasing the number of community clubs across the county. | 1. There are 32 community projects/clubs delivered across Gwynedd on a weekly basis; 16 are based in Arfon, nine in Meirionnydd and seven in Dwyfor. This provision includes 10 clubs funded by local councils, three Friendly Clubs in co-operation with Derwen, 18 mobile community clubs and one Neuro club. Four new community clubs have opened in Trawsfynydd, Tywyn, Ty'n Llan (Llandwrog) and Mynytho, and two additional clubs will open in the new year in Aberdyfi and Bala. The Youth Service co-funds the Urdd Youth Worker post which runs four branches across the county as well as a number of after-school clubs. | Yes |
| | 2. Align the local authority's strategy with the Welsh Government's five-year plans. | 2. We have carried out extensive consultation with young people across Gwynedd through a series of face-to-face events, questionnaires and participatory workshops. Meetings have been held with partner organisations, including statutory agencies and the third sector, to ensure that local priorities are reflected in the new final Strategy. We are awaiting guidance from the Welsh Government on the structure and content of the strategy to reflect the new legislation. | Yes |
| | 3. Identify ways of engaging more broadly with young people and, in particular, specific groups of young people. | 3. The Youth Service has made significant progress towards identifying more inclusive approaches to engaging with young people, with a particular focus on reaching under-represented groups. Through local data and direct input from young people, we have mapped gaps in provision and are piloting new approaches such as theme-specific sessions, mobile youth work, and partnerships with schools and third sector organisations. This has led to an increase in engagement from young people with additional needs, rural | Yes |

| | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| | 4. Develop a memorandum of understanding with secondary schools to ensure planning and reviewing of cohesive youth provisions within a school context, contributing to the well-being and positive behaviour of young people aged 11-18. | <p>communities, and those not participating in education or training. We will continue to pilot new approaches to ensure equal access for all. Forums have been developed across the county to receive feedback from young people through the Youth Service, schools and the wider/third sector services to get a broad overview of the county's input.</p> <p>4. A specific plan has been identified individually with each secondary school to outline the Youth Service's offer for the term. We will be holding an end of term meeting to showcase the work that has been done with the young people to check if the objectives have been achieved.</p> | Yes |
| Education Department Formulate and implement a 10-year strategic direction for education in Gwynedd | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engagement on the draft Strategy. 2. Present the Education Strategy to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee. 3. Submit the final Education Strategy to the Cabinet with the Strategy becoming operational. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Three informal sessions were held with the Cabinet members – June, July, September 2025. We will engage with the Heads of Primary, Secondary and Special Schools, the Children and Young People's County Forum, as well as the Governors' Forum in December 2025. 2. The Strategy will be presented to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee on 11 December 2025. 3. We will present the final Strategy to Cabinet in early 2026. | <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> |
| Education Department Review and improve the range of inclusion provisions in Gwynedd. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consult, restructure, and appoint staff. 2. Register the provision as a Portfolio Pupil Referral Unit. 3. Form a Management Committee for the PRU. 4. Induct and train staff. 5. Launch an Inclusion Strategy. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The work of restructuring and appointing staff has been completed. 2. The provision has been registered. 3. A Management Committee has been formed and the first meeting will be held in November 2025. 4. The staff induction sessions have been delivered at the start of term, with training on systems and strategies completed. 5. Strategy to be published in the autumn term. | <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> |

Gwynedd Gymraeg (A Welsh Gwynedd): Ensuring that our residents can continue to live in a naturally Welsh speaking community

| Department and Project | What we want to achieve during the third year 2025-26 (milestones): | Update on the milestones to date: | Is the milestone completed/likely to be completed by the end of the financial year? (Yes/No) |
|--|---|--|--|
| Education Department Modernising and extending the immersion provision to teach Welsh to children | 1. Ensure that the organisation in relation to the provision for newcomers to Welsh-medium education is communicated in a clear and effective manner with parents and carers. Prepare new resources and presentations for parents outlining the benefits of bilingualism. | 1. The immersion system's new website is currently under development. Work is underway to prepare new resources. This is a priority within the Immersion System Development Plan 2025-26 and responds to the findings and recommendations of the Bangor University Study examining the efficiency of the Immersion model. The resources for the children attending the immersion units have been updated. | Yes |
| | 2. Establish a WESP Outcome 5 Project Board to ensure collaboration and communication with relevant stakeholders with a view to mapping the activities offered by partnerships within the county and be able to deliver them to parents and families. | 2. We are working with the language adviser within the Corporate Services Department on this milestone. Work is underway to gather the information that is shared with members of Fforwm Iaith Gwynedd (Language Forum) to create a corporate resource. This milestone will be discussed with the Language Forum at its meeting in January 2026. | Yes |
| | 3. Equip the Foundation Phase workforce in terms of the principles of immersion education. Conduct regular training for Foundation Phase staff to share the principles of successful immersion. Ensure that they have access to pre-prepared, standard immersion resources on a user-friendly digital platform. | 3. An immersion teacher continues to support three schools in the Bangor catchment area with best practice in immersion. We are currently working with Bangor University where the immersion unit staff are providing training to prospective teachers in October 2025. A training programme for the rest of the workforce will launch in terms 2 and 3. The collation and introduction of immersion resources along with preparing training is a priority within the Immersion System Development Plan 2025-26. | Yes |

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|---|--|---|-----|
| Education Department Review Gwynedd's Education Language Policy and conduct an evaluation of the Immersion System to ensure that all the education policies and services provided to children and young people in Gwynedd set a firm foundation for the Welsh language | 1. Language Policy: i. Engagement on the draft Language Policy | 1. Language Policy: i. Draft Policy submitted to the Task and Finish Group and the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee. | Yes |
| | ii. Presentation of the model Language Policy to the Cabinet | ii. We will be presenting a model Language Policy to the Cabinet for approval in December 2025. | Yes |
| | 2. Immersion System: i. Complete the Report on the Evaluation of the Immersion Education System by Bangor University (Bangor University Research Team was commissioned to evaluate the Immersion Education System in Gwynedd in 2024-25) | 2. Immersion System: i. Report completed by Bangor University in July 2025. | Yes |
| | ii. Present the Report to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee on 16 October 2025 | ii. The Report was submitted to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee on 16 October 2025. | Yes |
| | iii. Respond to the findings of the Bangor University Report – Evaluation of the Gwynedd Immersion System by reviewing the practical arrangements of the 10-week course and strengthening the after-care provision | iii. A response to the recommendations was prepared, highlighting the pros and cons of potential models. The recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee will be presented to the Cabinet. | Yes |
| | iv. Respond to the findings of the March 2025 Estyn report – continue to provide accessible after-care resources on a digital platform and strengthen the System's self-appraisal processes | iv. A response to Estyn's findings was prepared. Discussions have taken place to design and launch a new digital platform. Arrangements to strengthen the System's self-appraisal processes are included within the priorities of the 2025-26 Development Plan. Following the recent inspection, Estyn has made a request to include a snapshot of innovative practice in its Annual Report. | Yes |

Performance of the Education Department

64

Indicators



52

Amount of Green

81.25%

% Green

11

Amount of Amber

17.19%

% Amber

1

Amount of Red

1.56%

% Red

Reporting period 21/7/2025 - 26/9/2025

"Promoting the achievement and wellbeing of Gwynedd's children and young people by ensuring effective governance, leadership and management of our schools"

Acronyms

| | |
|----------------|--|
| FSM | Free School Meals |
| PLASC | Pupil Level Annual School Census |
| LAC | Looked After Children |
| PEP | Personal Education Plan |
| SMART | Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-Bound |
| DBS | Disclosure & Barring Service |
| ALN | Additional Learning Needs |
| CQB | County Quality Board |
| LA | Local Authority |
| IDP | Individual Development Plan |
| WESP | Welsh in Education Strategic Plan |
| WEMWBS | Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale |
| VAWDASV | Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence |

"Promoting the achievement and wellbeing of Gwynedd's children and young people by ensuring effective governance, leadership and management of our schools"

Education Indicators

Catering

% of Gwynedd primary school learners taking advantage of free school meals offer

71.30

Catering

% of Gwynedd school learners who are satisfied with the quality of school lunches

59.00

Catering

% of eligible schools (schools with 16% or more FSM) participating in the Food and Fun programme

27.00

Catering

% of School Food Hygiene and Standards Audit reports rated 5

80.00

Business Support

% of invoices processed within 7 days (5 working days) of receipt

90.00

Business Support

% of schools (out of those surveyed) that were satisfied with Business Centre support

100.00

Education Transport

Number of transport complaints

20

Safeguarding

% difference between presence of LAC and not LAC

0.49

Safeguarding

% of scrutinised Personal Education Plans containing suitable educational targets

80.00

Safeguarding

% of Department of Education staff with a current DBS check (out of required staff)

100.00

Safeguarding

% of school staff with a current DBS check

99.04

Safeguarding

% of schools that have received a monitoring visit and are in good or better compliance with the Safeguarding requirements

94.00

Safeguarding

% of schools that have received a monitoring visit in the last calendar year

53.20

Safeguarding

Number of days LAC have been out of education in an academic year

0.00

Education Indicators

Governors

% of governors (who have responded to the training evaluation process) who feel more confident after training

67.00

Governors

% of new Chairs of Governing Bodies attending training for Chairs (Chairs new to the role during the current academic year)

80.00

Governors

% of governors attending induction training

80.00

Modernisation

% of capital projects progressing as expected

80.00

Modernisation

% of non-capital projects progressing as expected

100.00

School Admissions

Number of school admission appeals received during the period

0

School Admissions

Number of School transfer applications received during the period

139

School Admissions

% of entry applications to an admission year where a place is offered on a first-choice basis

98.66

School Admissions

% of entry applications to year 7 where a place is offered on a first preference basis

100.00

School Standards

% of users who are satisfied with the support of the service

100.00

School Standards

Average number of days taken to respond to barriers reported by Schools or by others about issues with Schools

5.00

Data Unit

% of 'customers' reporting that the data received was of a high quality and that the information/data received led to decisions

80.00

ALN Indicators

Quality and Administrative ALN

Number of cases that progressed to tribunal level

8

Quality and Administrative ALN

% of schools in need of support beyond the usual – visits at least every half term (or the number of schools being upgraded to the CQB system due to ALN quality)

0.48

Early Years ALN

% of users who are satisfied with the support of the service

100.00

Early Years ALN

% of cases matching the statutory timetable

100.00

Administrative

% of Panel and Forum decisions recorded in the IDP within 2 weeks

100.00



Inclusion Indicators

Elective Home Education

Number of Elective Home Education learners

3

240

Elective Home Education

% of pupils receiving education suitable for their ability

1

100.00

Elective Home Education

% of families receiving home visits

2

18.00

Counselling

% of users who are satisfied with the support of the service

1

100.00

Counselling

Mean number of days required to wait for service

2

19.25

Inclusion

Number of permanent Primary exclusions

1

0

Inclusion

Number of permanent Secondary exclusions

1

1

Welfare

% attendance of Primary pupils

1

93.53

Welfare

% attendance of Secondary pupils

2

90.53

Welfare

% of pupils (that are open to the Welfare Service) whose parents have received prosecutions under 444 (1)

1

2.90

Welfare

% of pupils open to the Wellbeing Service reporting improvement in attendance

2

78.00

English as an Additional Language

% attendance of pupils receiving support

1

90.00

Family Engagement Officers

% of Year 6 pupils receiving support successfully transition to Secondary

1

73.00

Family Engagement Officers

% of pupils who have received support report well-being progress

1

67.00

Family Engagement Officers

% of pupils attending our community activities

1

60.00



Welsh Language Indicators

Language Centres

% of children and young people achieving Level 1 or above at the end of their period in a Language Centre (Primary)

100.00

Language Centres

% of children and young people reaching Level 2 at the end of their period in a Language Centre (Primary)

80.00

Language Centres

% of children and young people achieving Level 1 or above at the end of their period in a Language Centre (Secondary)

100.00

Language Centres

% of children and young people who reach Level 2 at the end of their period at a Language Centre (Secondary)

82.00

The Welsh Language

% of whole school primary learners undertaking at least 70% of their school activities (curricular and extra-curricular) in Welsh - Gwynedd

97.00

The Welsh Language

% of whole school secondary learners undertaking at least 70% of their school activities (curricular and extra-curricular) in Welsh - Gwynedd

79.24

The Welsh Language

% of Year 10 and 11 subjects taught through the medium of Welsh

73.58

The Welsh Language

% of primary teachers who are confident to teach through the medium of Welsh

97.90

The Welsh Language

% of secondary teachers who are confident to teach through the medium of Welsh

86.20

Youth Service Indicators

Youth Service

% of young people who would like to continue attending wellbeing sessions in the future.

97.00

Youth Service

% of young people whose Wellbeing has improved after attending the service

95.00

Youth Service

% of young people who have achieved the objectives of their personal plans

81.00

Youth Service

% of young people who have improved their well-being over a 3 month period (16-25 team)

73.00

Youth Service

% of young people who have enjoyed the service provided

96.00

Youth Service

Youth Support Service Case Loads 16-25 year olds

87

Youth Service

Number of accreditations the young people have completed (measured every 3 months)

172

Youth Service

Number of participations of young people who have used Youth Community Service

1,573

Youth Service

Number of participations of young people who have used the Youth Support Service aged 11-19

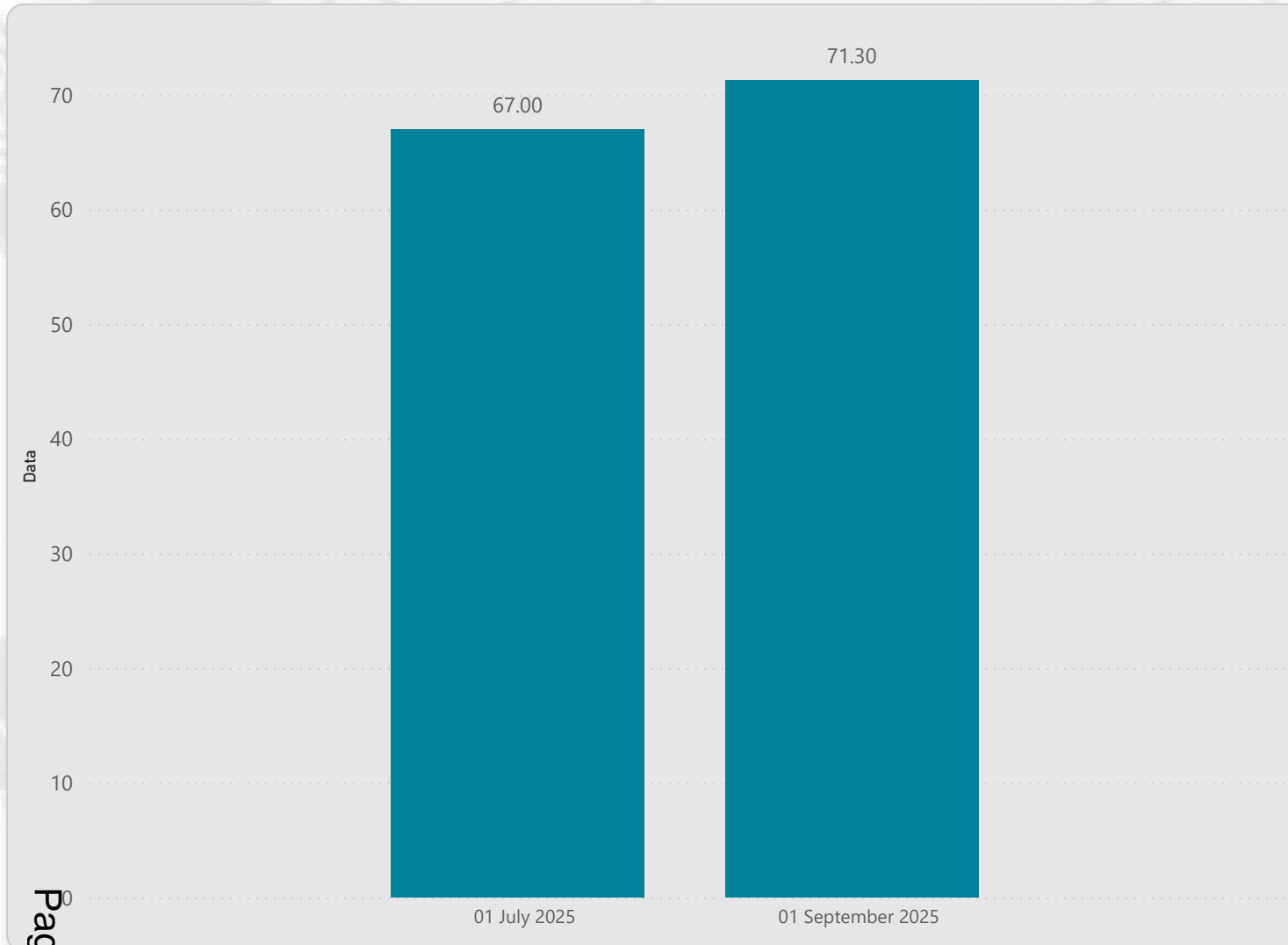
3,180



Catering

Purpose: Providing nutritious and healthy food to pupils in Gwynedd schools

Indicator: % of Gwynedd primary school learners taking advantage of free school meals offer



71.3% of primary age learners have taken advantage of the offer of free school meals in September 2025

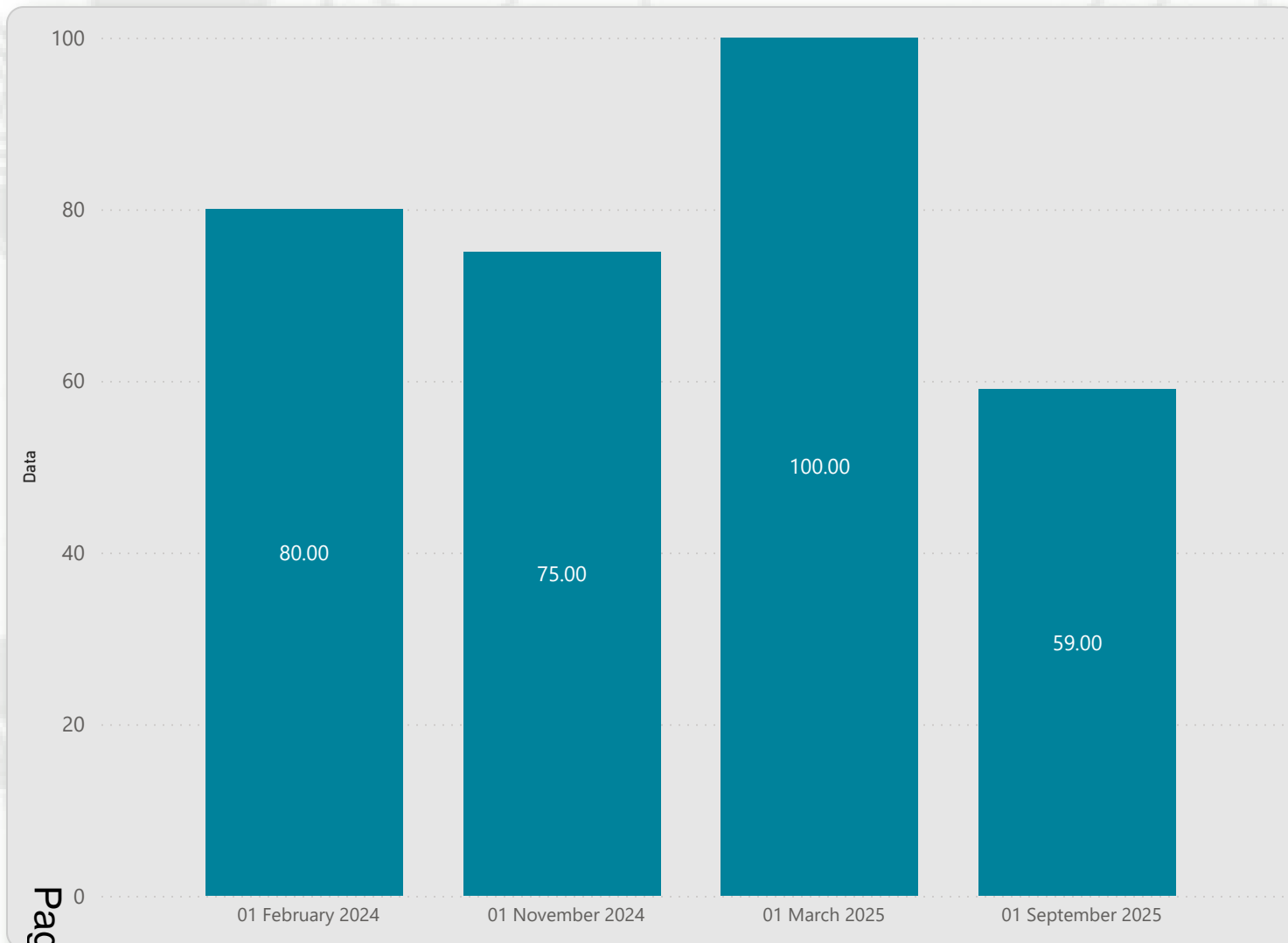
Monthly

Rhian Eifiona Hughes (ADDYSG)

Catering

Purpose: Providing nutritious and healthy food to pupils in Gwynedd schools

Indicator: % of Gwynedd school learners who are satisfied with the quality of school lunches



The number of schools that completed the customer satisfaction survey was not high for September, so we do not have a detailed overview across our schools. 21 schools completed the survey, covering a total of 659 primary-aged learners.

Of the learners who completed the survey, 97% were either satisfied or neutral:

59% were satisfied (happy face)
38% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (neutral face)
3% were dissatisfied (sad face), indicating that they did not like the food.

40 learners noted that they did not like the food, while 99 learners said the food was tasty. A new menu has been in place since 3 November 2025, and the Service will be working on a programme to promote free school meals, so it is hoped that this will encourage more learners to take advantage of the offer.

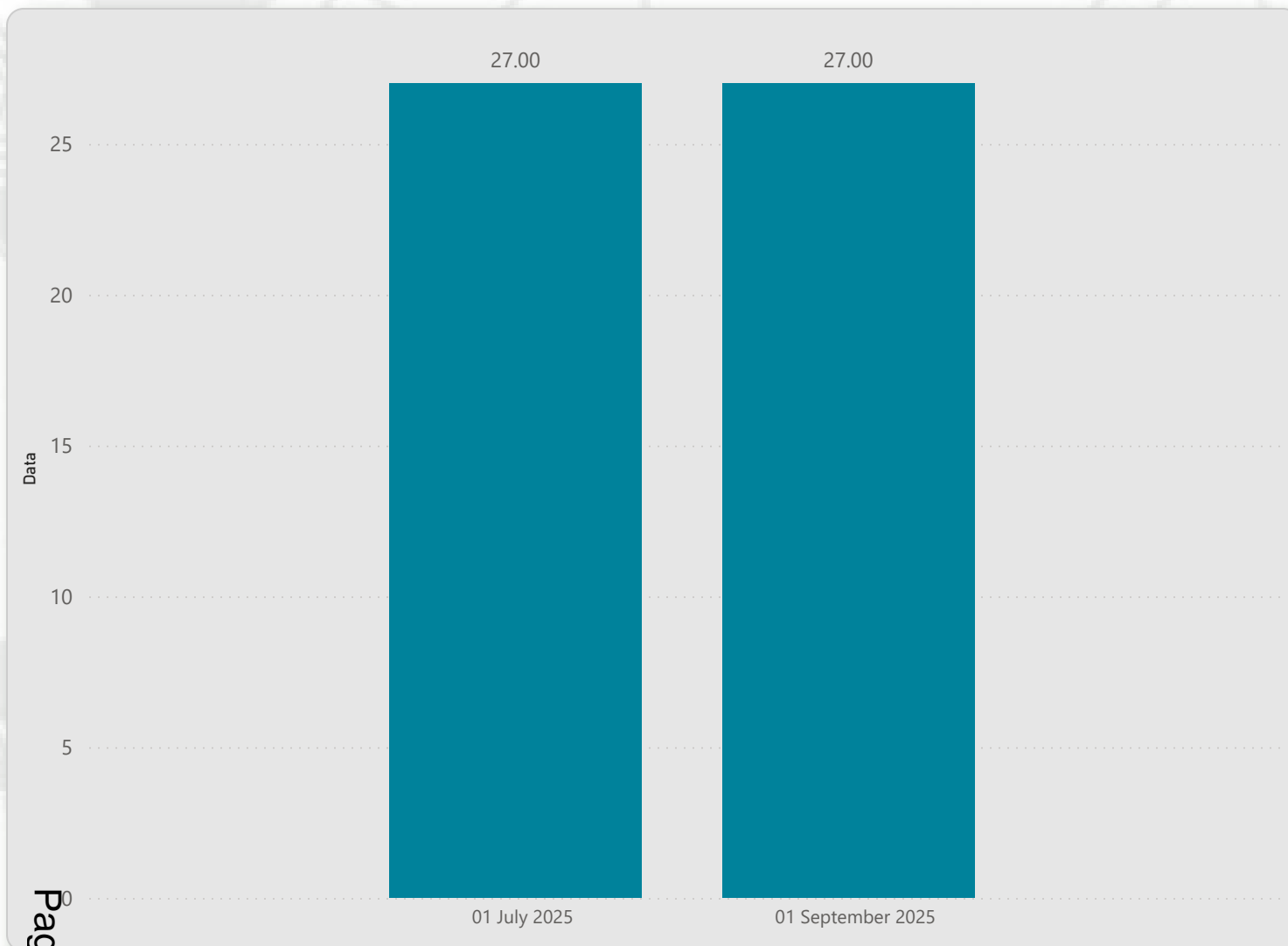
Monthly

Rhian Eifiona Hughes (ADDYSG)

Catering

Purpose: Providing nutritious and healthy food to pupils in Gwynedd schools

Indicator: % of eligible schools (schools with 16% or more FSM) participating in the Food and Fun programme



Four schools participated last year. We have doubled the numbers this year, with 8 schools taking advantage of the Food and Fun Scheme during Summer 2025 (30 schools are eligible, PLASC data January 2025).

Although the Food and Fun Scheme is an excellent initiative, fully funded by the Welsh Government and offering valuable opportunities to our learners over the summer, it is challenging to get schools to commit to working 12 days during the summer holidays. Working during the holidays is not part of the employment contracts for many school staff, nor for Education Catering and Cleaning staff, so we rely on the goodwill of staff to participate. To support this, we have collaborated with Community and Family Engagement Officers and external agencies to assist in some schools this year.

Some schools participating for the first time this year have expressed that Nutrition Skills for Life (Level 2) training, which is essential to running the programme, is a barrier, as staff need to be released to attend the course. It is now possible to complete the course online, which makes it easier for schools to take part.

At present, we are awaiting confirmation from schools on whether they are interested in participating next year. Our hope is to have more schools involved, in order to provide the best possible opportunities for our learners while easing the pressure on families regarding living costs and childcare over the summer.

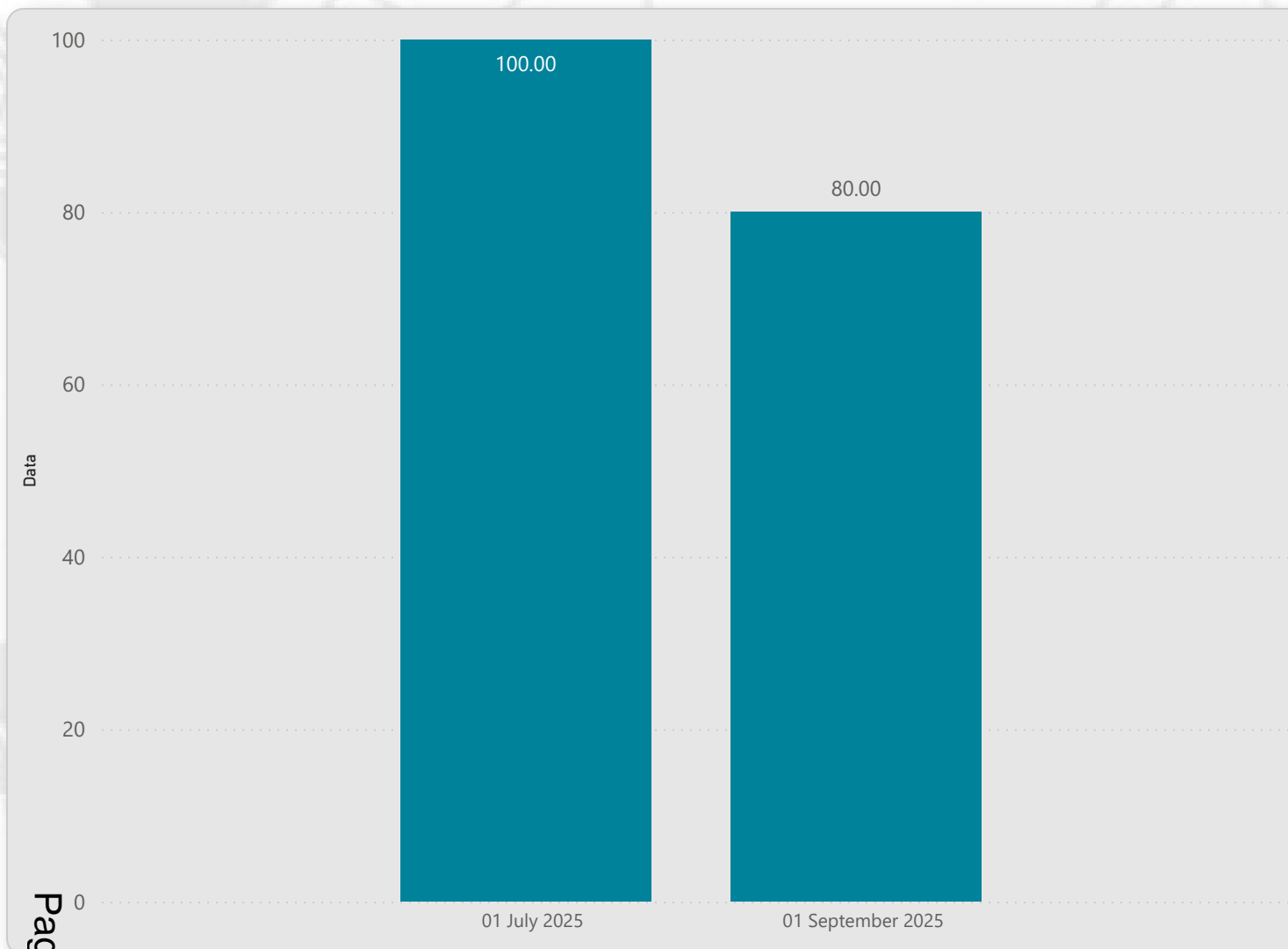
Monthly

Rhian Eifiona Hughes (ADDYSG)

Catering

Purpose: Providing nutritious and healthy food to pupils in Gwynedd schools

Indicator: % of School Food Hygiene and Standards Audit reports rated 5



80% of school food hygiene and standards inspection reports received a score of 5 (4 schools). 20% received a score of 4 (1 school).

Arfon – 3 schools received a score of 5
Meirionnydd – 2 schools were visited. 1 school received a score of 5, and 1 school received a score of 4 due to a hot water tap being stuck on the day of the visit. The problem with the faulty tap has now been resolved.
Dwyfor – No schools were visited during the period.

All schools in Gwynedd currently have a score of 4 or 5.

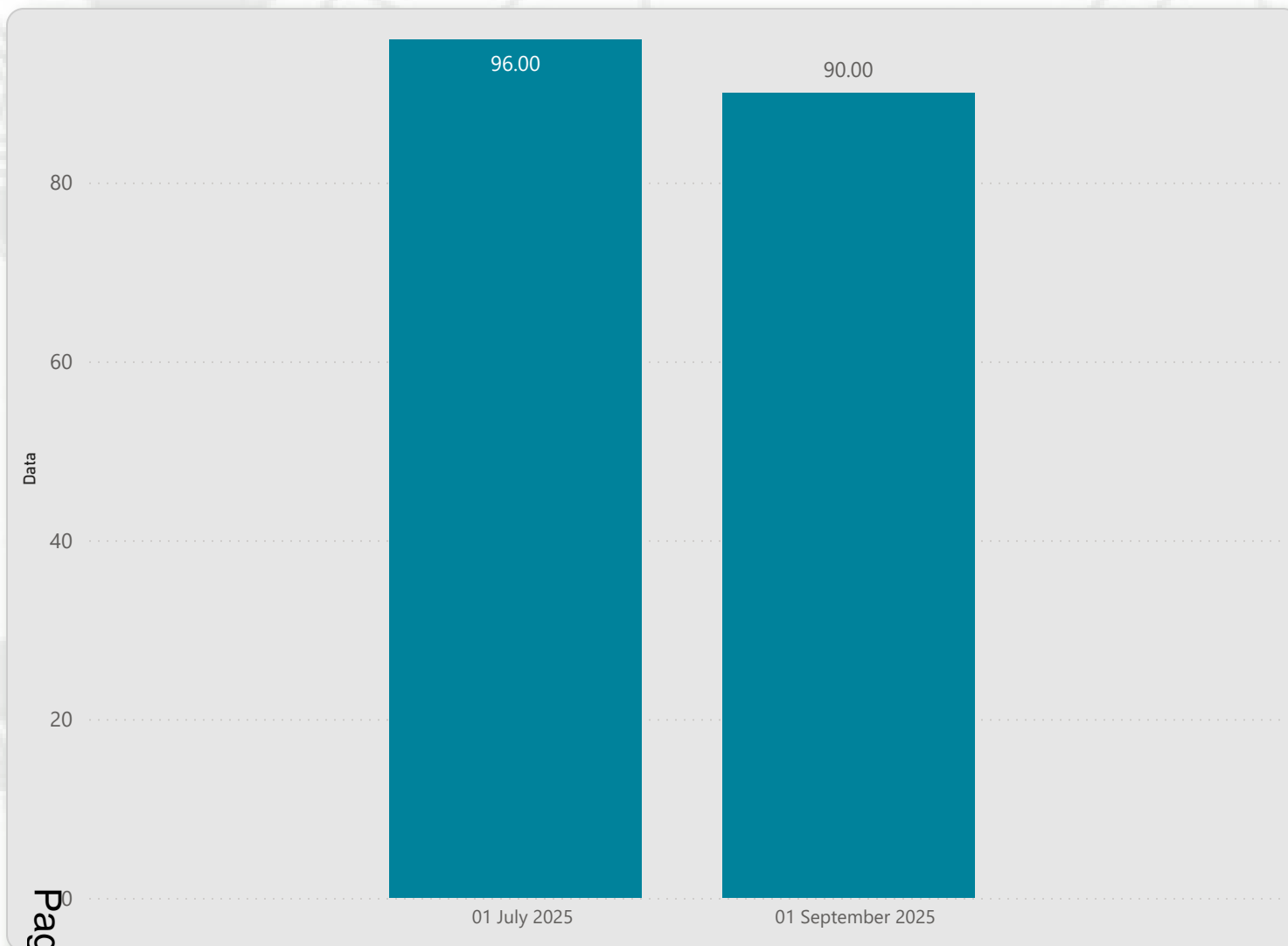
Monthly

Rhian Eifiona Hughes (ADDYSG)

Business Support

Purpose: Providing effective business support to Gwynedd's primary schools

Indicator: % of invoices processed within 7 days (5 working days) of receipt



The Education Business Centre processed 1,120 invoices in the last period. 90% of them were processed within 7 days (which is 5 working days). The percentage is lower than last period but that is to be expected as the summer holidays have been during the period. A large proportion of the Centre's staff work term time only and therefore the staff would only have worked a few days during the holidays.

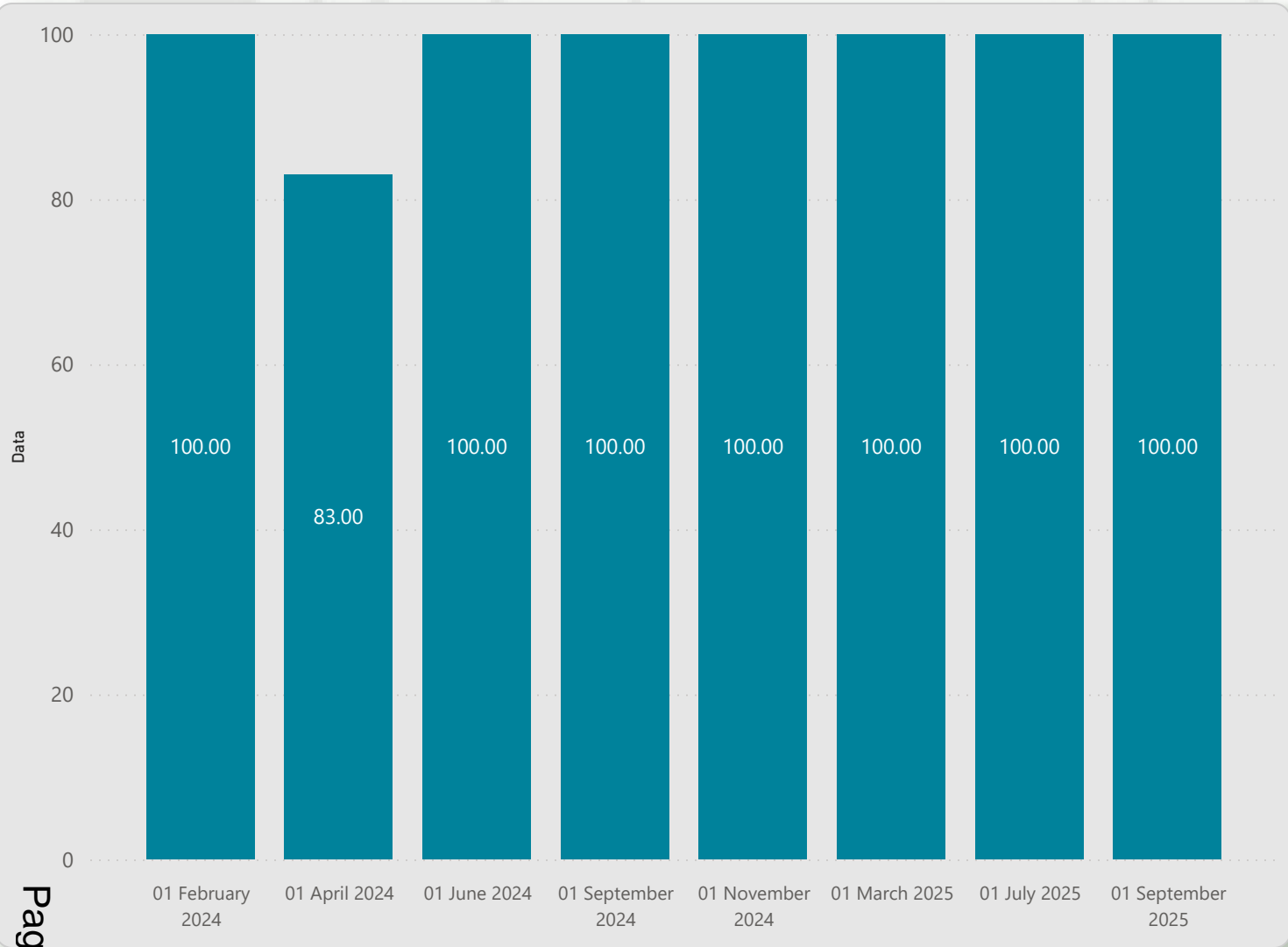
Monthly

Kathryn Aveline Roberts (ADDYSG)

Business Support

Purpose: Providing effective business support to Gwynedd's primary schools

Indicator: % of schools (out of those surveyed) that were satisfied with Business Centre support



At the end of September, 4 Headteachers were contacted by telephone to enquire about their satisfaction of the service. The Headteachers were very pleased with the service which is very encouraging.

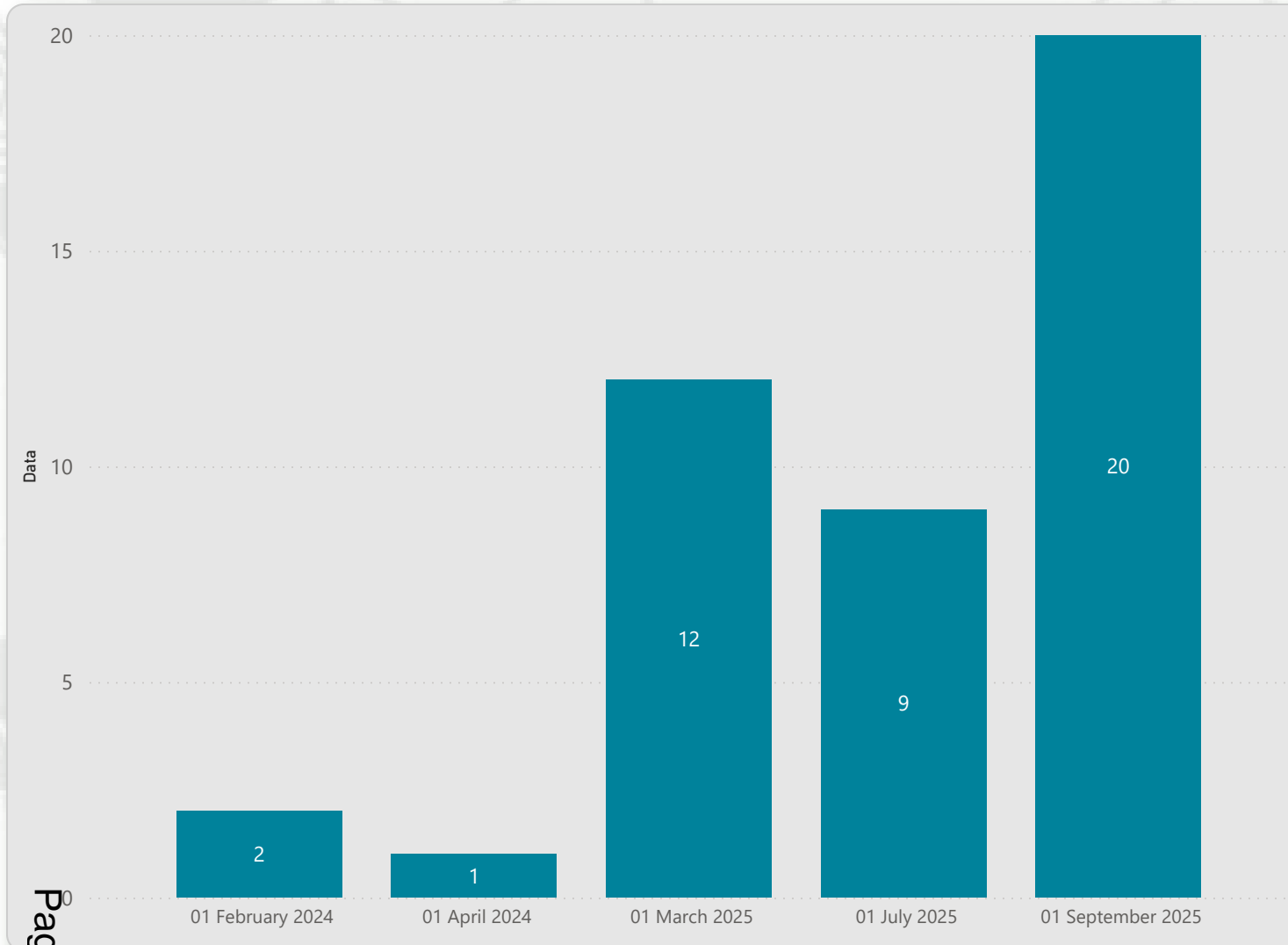
Monthly

Kathryn Aveline Roberts (ADDYSG)

Education Transport

Purpose: Provide suitable transport to take pupils to school or college

Indicator: Number of transport complaints



September is the busiest time of the calendar year as new transportation arrangements come into effect. As a result, the data collection period in question includes correspondence from various parties, and therefore we received a higher percentage of complaints compared to the rest of the year.

We received 9 complaints relating to a change of operator due to the re-tendering of a special school contracts. These were parents' concerns likely due to the impact any change would have on learners' well-being. Following prompt correspondence and professional and efficient collaboration between officers, parents and operators, a positive arrangement was reached and bespoke transport has been provided since the start of the term. Lessons have also been learned from the Transportation Unit regarding the timing of informing parents of the changes in the middle of the summer holidays.

Another area on which 6 complaints were received was the availability of seats on school transport. As a result of this, the provisions in question were reviewed and suitable seats were identified and these were offered under our empty seats scheme ensuring suitable and efficient transport for our learners.

We received 2 complaints relating to the punctuality of school buses but following a monitoring review, it was concluded that the cause was a disturbance caused by temporary road works.

There was 1 complaint about the condition of the road surface on the route of a school bus, co-operation with an area engineer was carried out to find a solution and it was agreed that the route was now safe.

Following plans to change the provision of one school bus route to public transport provision due to a reduction in the number of eligible learners, 2 complaints were received about this change. It was decided not to proceed with this scheme, as there was an increase in learners by the start of the current academic year.

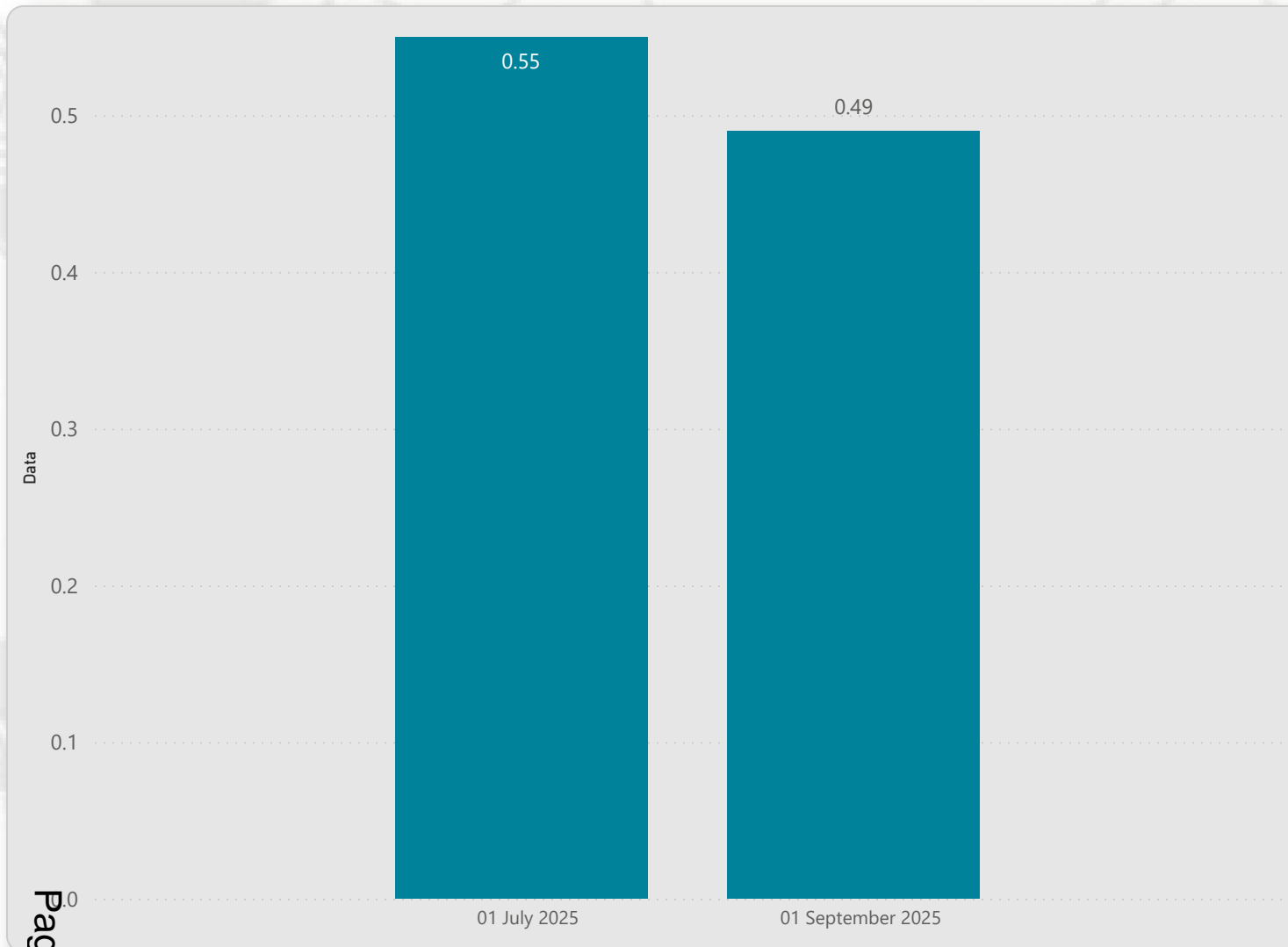
Monthly

Robert John Jones (ADDYSG)

Safeguarding

Purpose: Safeguarding the welfare of Gwynedd's children and young people

Indicator: % difference between presence of LAC and not LAC



0.49% is the difference between the attendance of Looked After Children (LAC) and the average attendance of all pupils in Gwynedd schools.

In the Primary sector, the attendance of LAC is 1.97% higher than the average attendance. In the Secondary sector, the average is 3% lower than % of LAC attendance. This reflects the additional challenges faced by pupils with care experience as they move to Secondary.

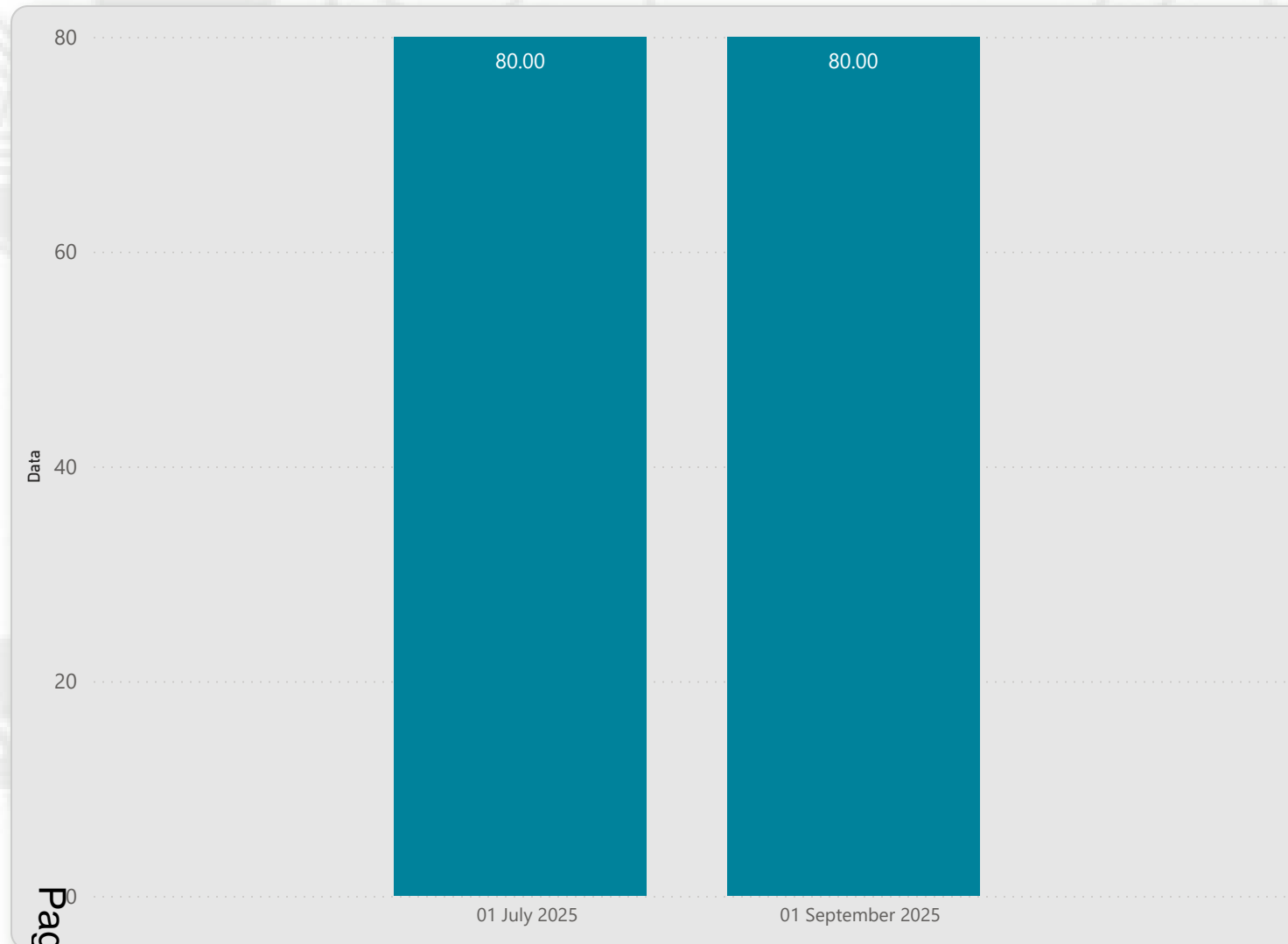
Monthly

Llion Williams (ADDYSG)

Safeguarding

Purpose: Safeguarding the welfare of Gwynedd's children and young people

Indicator: % of scrutinised Personal Education Plans containing suitable educational targets



Recently, all Personal Education Plans (PEP's) for Children Looked After in Gwynedd schools have been evaluated using a new formal audit. Analysis of the audit shows that all PEP's have targets. 80% of the PEP consists of suitable targets and 20% with limited targets. Limited means that SMART targets need to be ensured and/or the pupil's voice is included in the plans. These findings will be shared with schools during the Autumn term and support will be available to schools that need to improve the quality of the targets.

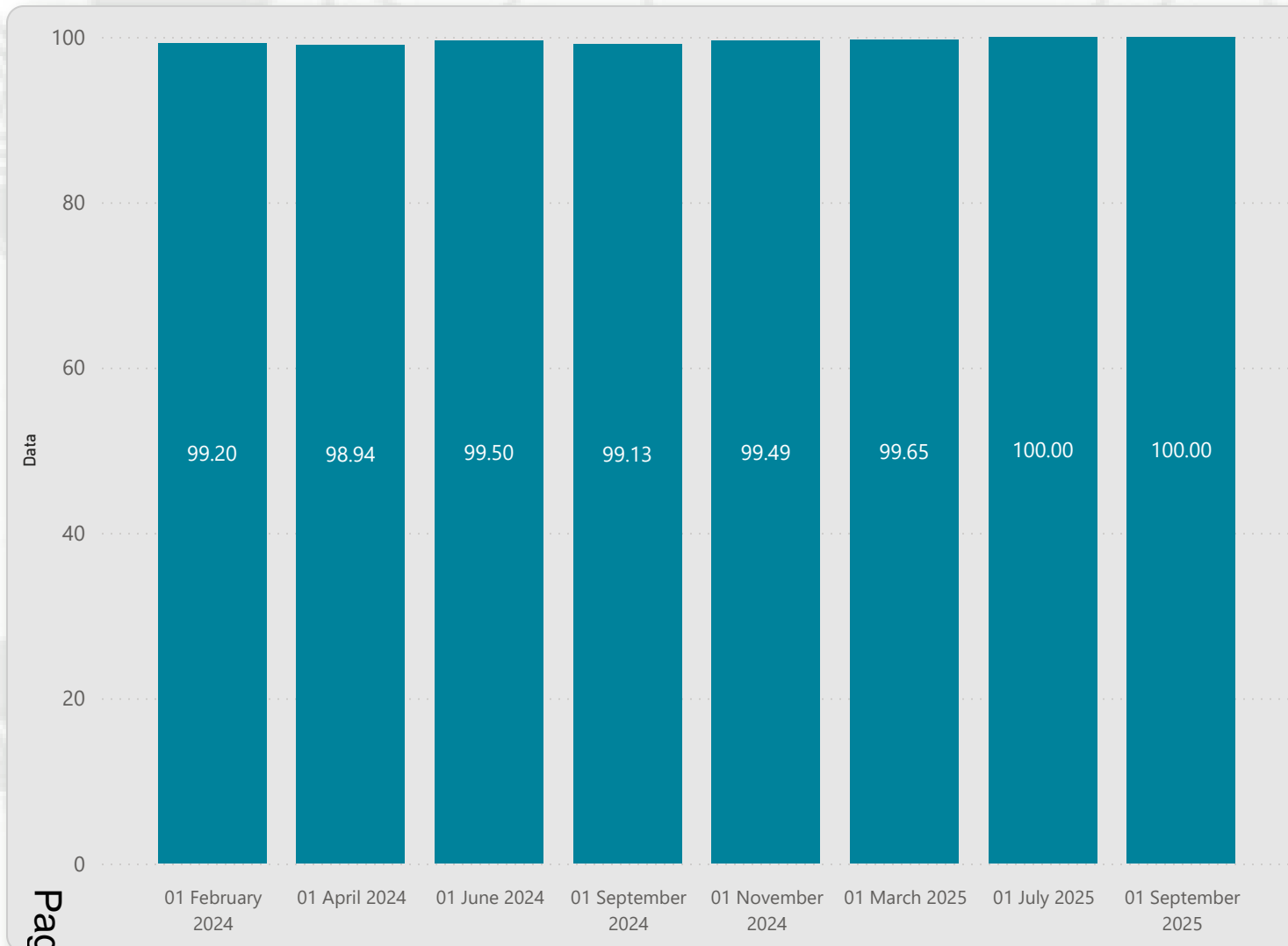
Monthly

Llion Williams (ADDYSG)

Safeguarding

Purpose: Safeguarding the welfare of Gwynedd's children and young people

Indicator: % of Department of Education staff with a current DBS check (out of required staff)



All members of the department (not counting school staff and support staff working in schools - data above) have a current DBS check.

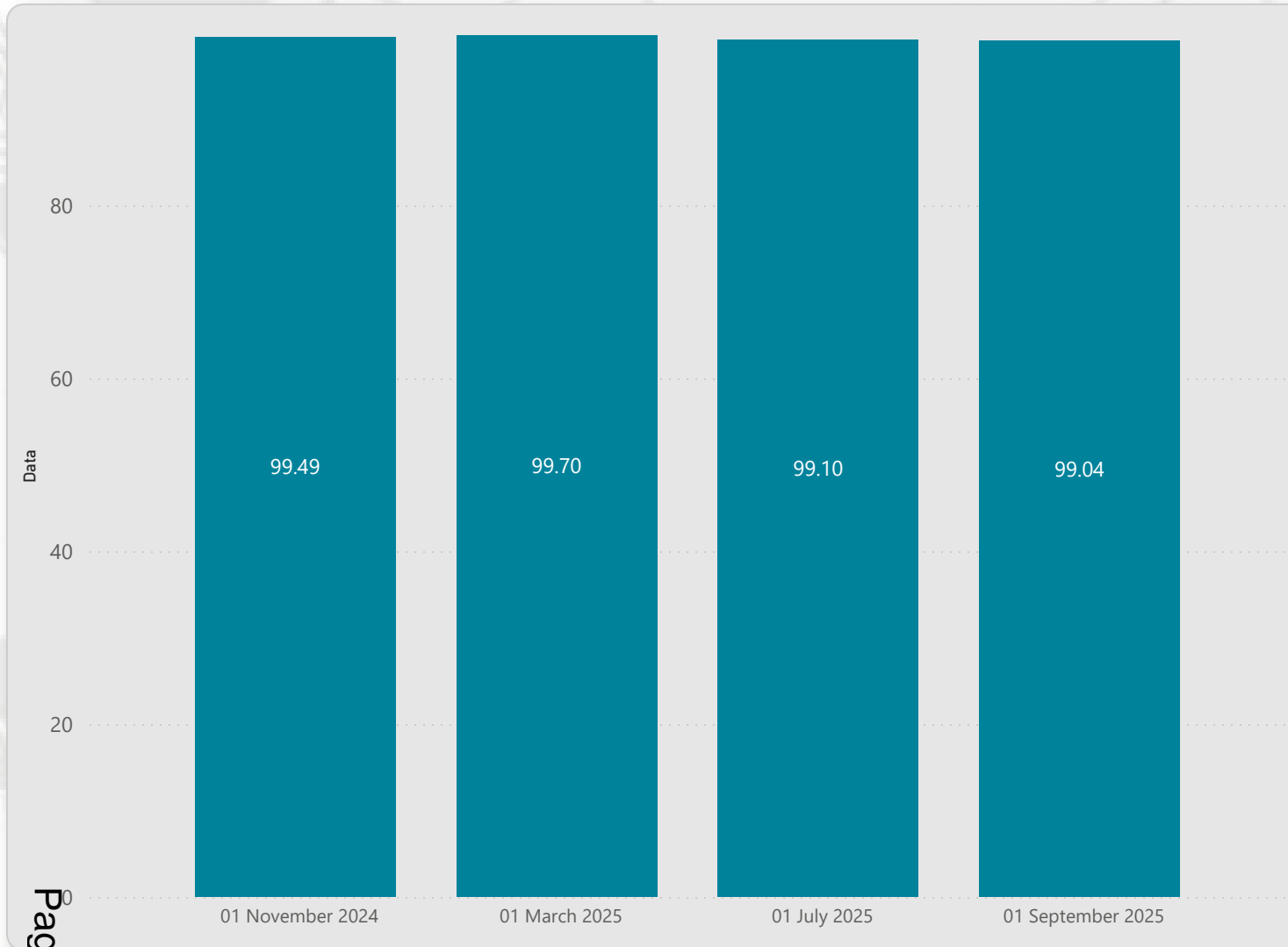
Monthly

Llion Williams (ADDYSG)

Safeguarding

Purpose: Safeguarding the welfare of Gwynedd's children and young people

Indicator: % of school staff with a current DBS check



28 members of staff need to complete a DBS update. 3 of the 28 are teachers and these three are currently away from work. 9 of the 28 are casual assistants and supply teachers, of the 9, 2 are away from work and the rest are in the process of renewing. 1 of these are Catering/Cleaning staff and are in the process of updating DBS, and 10 are occasional Catering and Cleaning staff. The rest are in the process of renewing and in casual jobs. No one gets to start working at a school for the first time without a higher level DBS check.

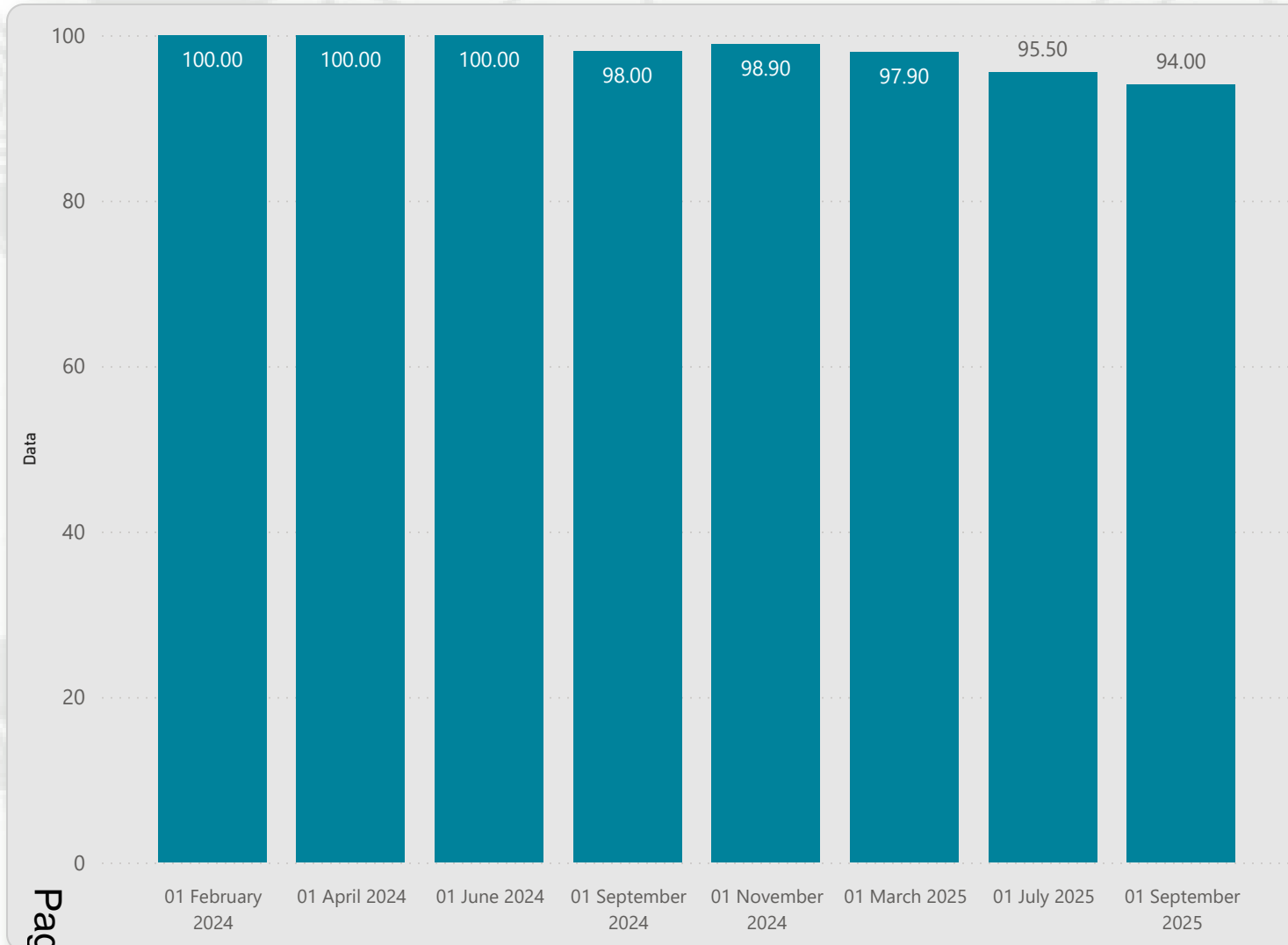
Monthly

Llion Williams (ADDYSG)

Safeguarding

Purpose: Safeguarding the welfare of Gwynedd's children and young people

Indicator: % of schools that have received a monitoring visit and are in good or better compliance with the Safeguarding requirements



47/50 who have received a quality visit as of September 1st are in good or better compliance with the safeguarding requirements. Three schools are receiving a second visit or further support in order to check and support aspects such as attendance/absence recording arrangements and the contents of Safeguarding posters. These three schools are receiving additional support visits in order to monitor that actions are being carried out promptly.

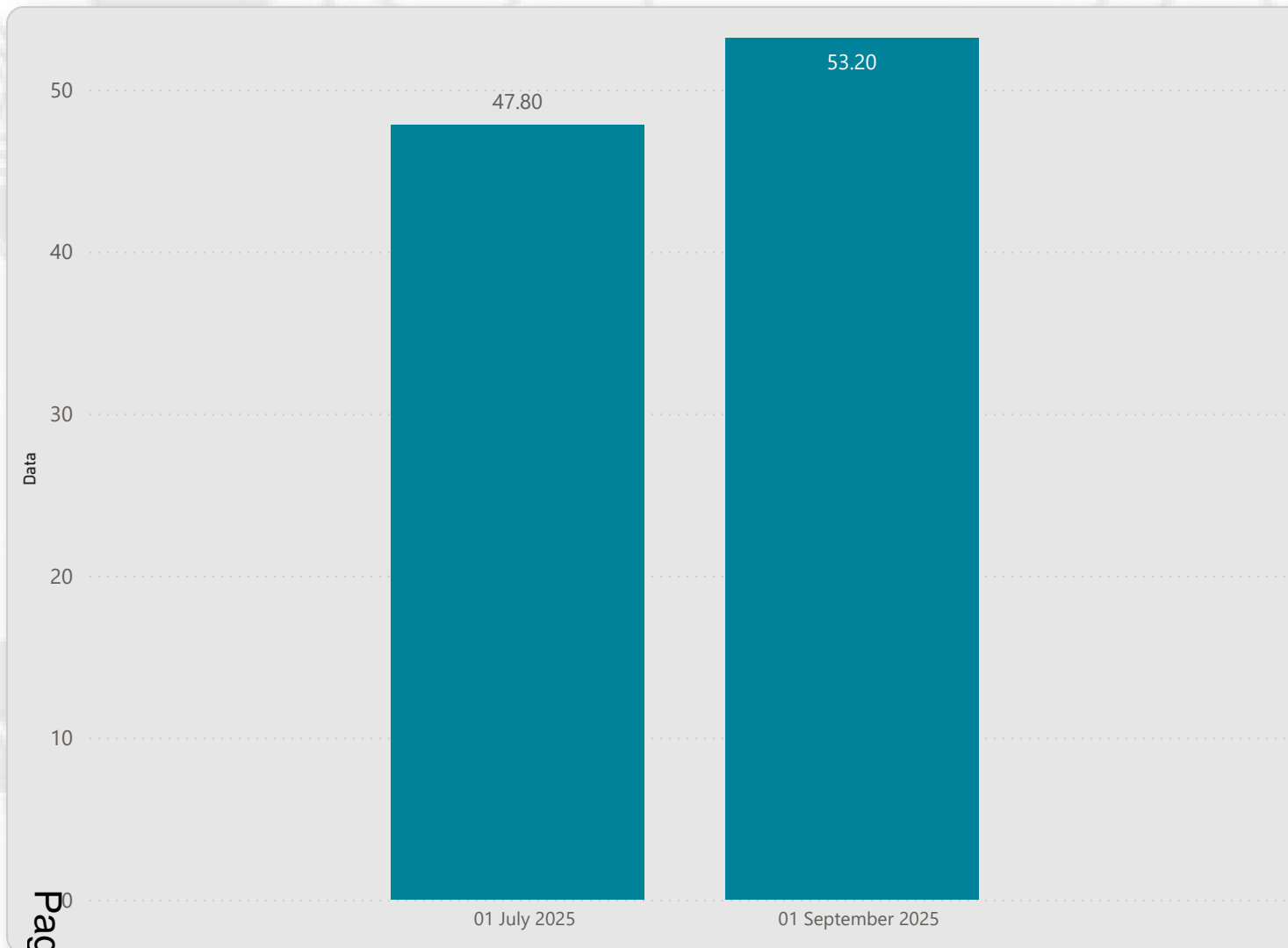
Monthly

Llion Williams (ADDYSG)

Safeguarding

Purpose: Safeguarding the welfare of Gwynedd's children and young people

Indicator: % of schools that have received a monitoring visit in the last calendar year



Since January 2025, the Safeguarding and Wellbeing Team has begun a new cycle of school quality assurance visits. By September 1st, 53.2% of Gwynedd schools (50 schools) had received a quality assurance visit from the Safeguarding Team. From these visits, 3 schools have received a second visit in order to check aspects such as attendance/absence recording arrangements and the contents of the Safeguarding posters. These three schools receive regular supportive visits to monitor that the required actions are being completed. A further 12 school visits were carried out in October, with another 15 scheduled before Christmas.

Although the new cycle of visits began in January 2025, the Safeguarding Team was not established until March 2025, meaning that the increase in staff required to raise the visit rate could not be implemented until March 2025. This means we are working towards being able to visit every school by the end of this calendar year. Historically, schools received quality assurance visits every two years.

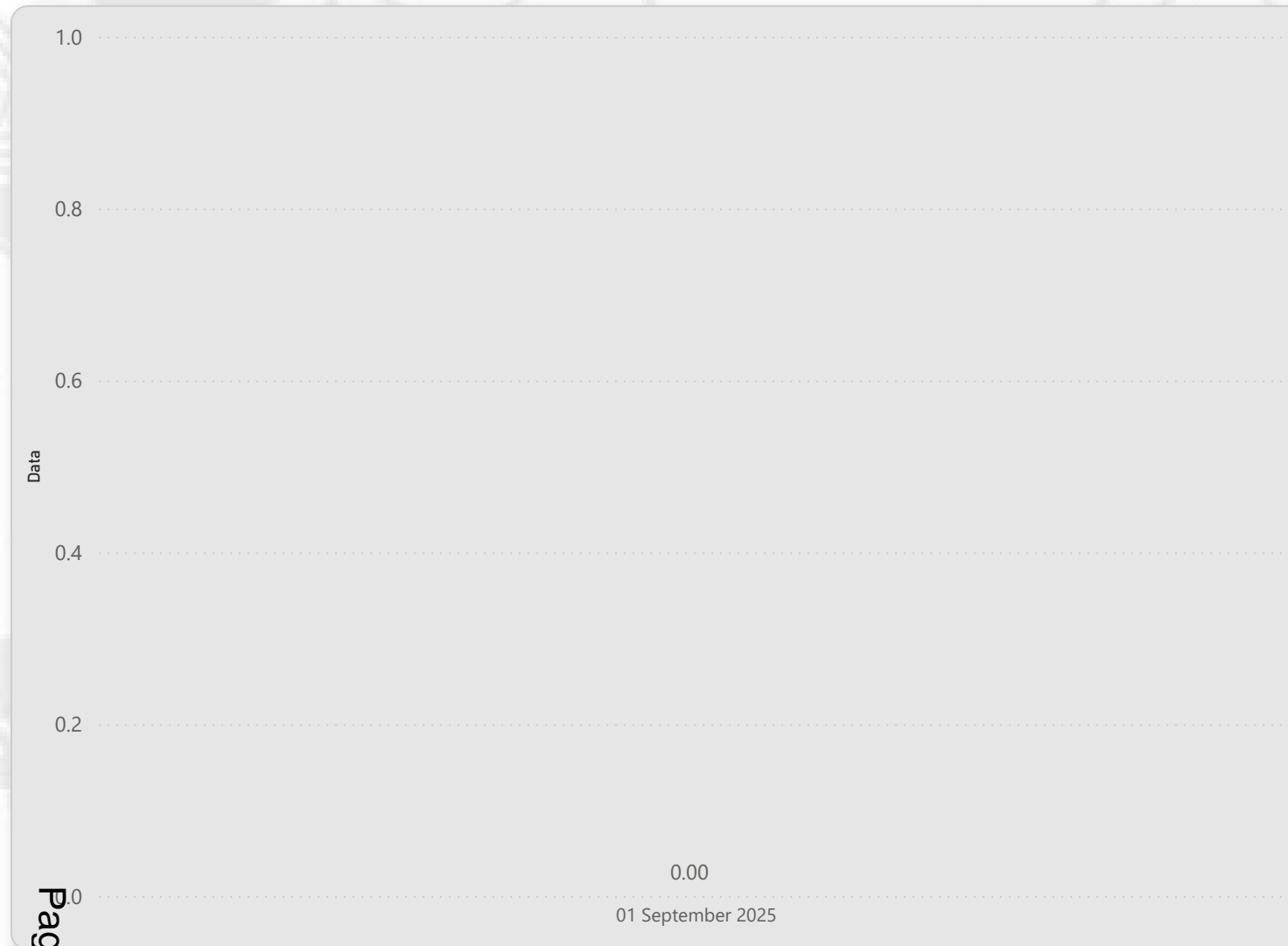
Monthly

Llion Williams (ADDYSG)

Safeguarding

Purpose: Safeguarding the welfare of Gwynedd's children and young people

Indicator: Number of days LAC have been out of education in an academic year



At present all pupils (statutory School age) of LAC in Gwynedd receive education whether that is in a mainstream school, in a referral unit, individual package or a combination of different provisions. The Inclusion Team and the Looked after Children Co-ordinator works closely with schools and providers to ensure that any transfer or change of location/school is done effectively with as little impact as possible on pupils' education.

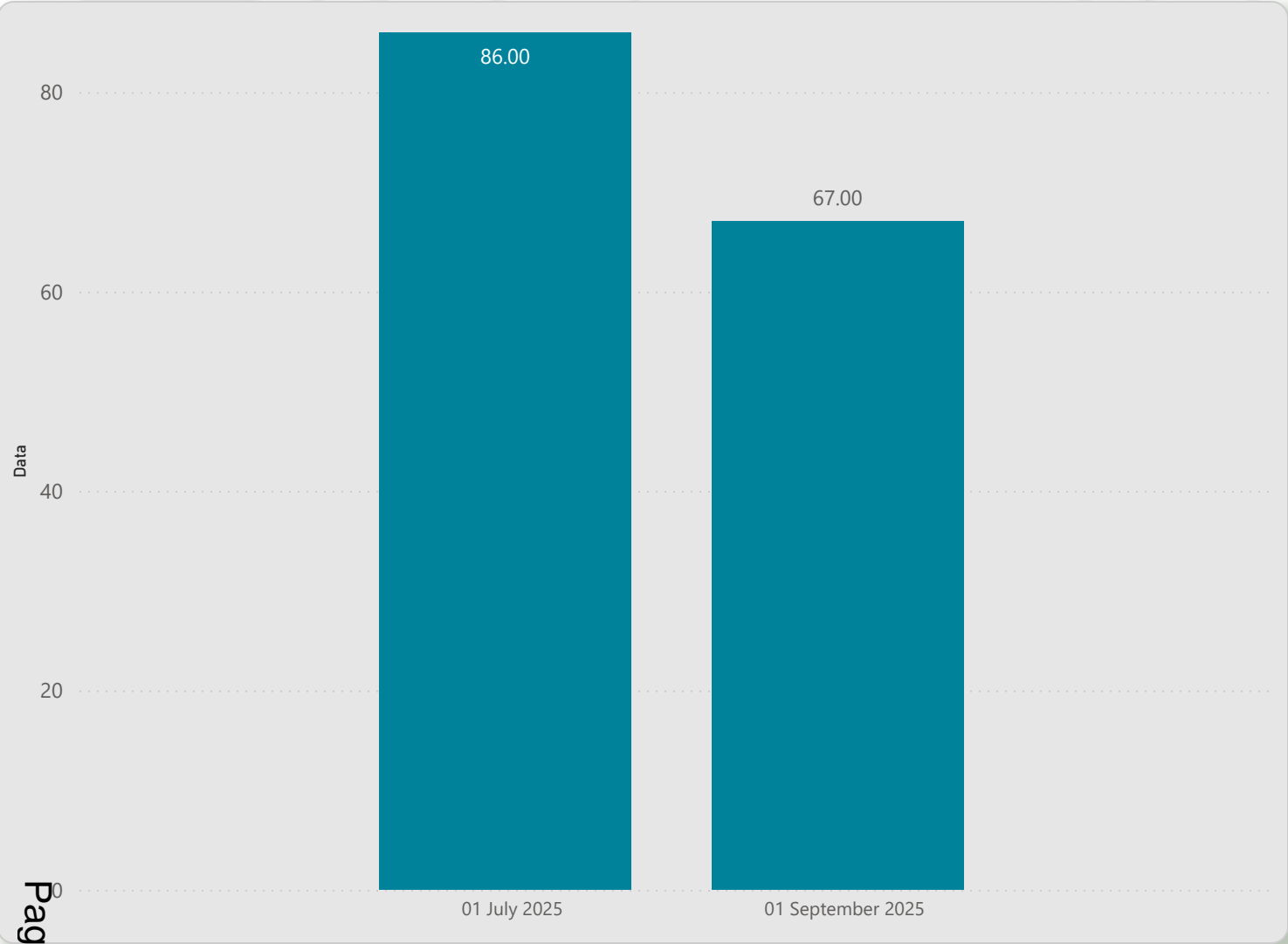
Monthly

Llion Williams (ADDYSG)

Govenors

Purpose: Supporting the Governing Bodies of Gwynedd Schools to be effective in their work

Indicator: % of governors (who have responded to the training evaluation process) who feel more confident after training



The percentage here is based on 9 responses to an evaluation questionnaire (following the delivery of induction training sessions for governors to staff; training for chairs + child protection training, with a total of 35 attendees across the 4 sessions). Therefore, 6 of the 9 stated that their confidence had increased in the area in question following the training. Although the percentage is lower than previously, the 3 who did not report an increase in their confidence were experienced governors and stated that they were already 'Confident' before the training and continued to be so after the training. Therefore, although their confidence did not increase, they reported that they were confident in their role.

Reporting period 21/7/2025 - 20/11/2025

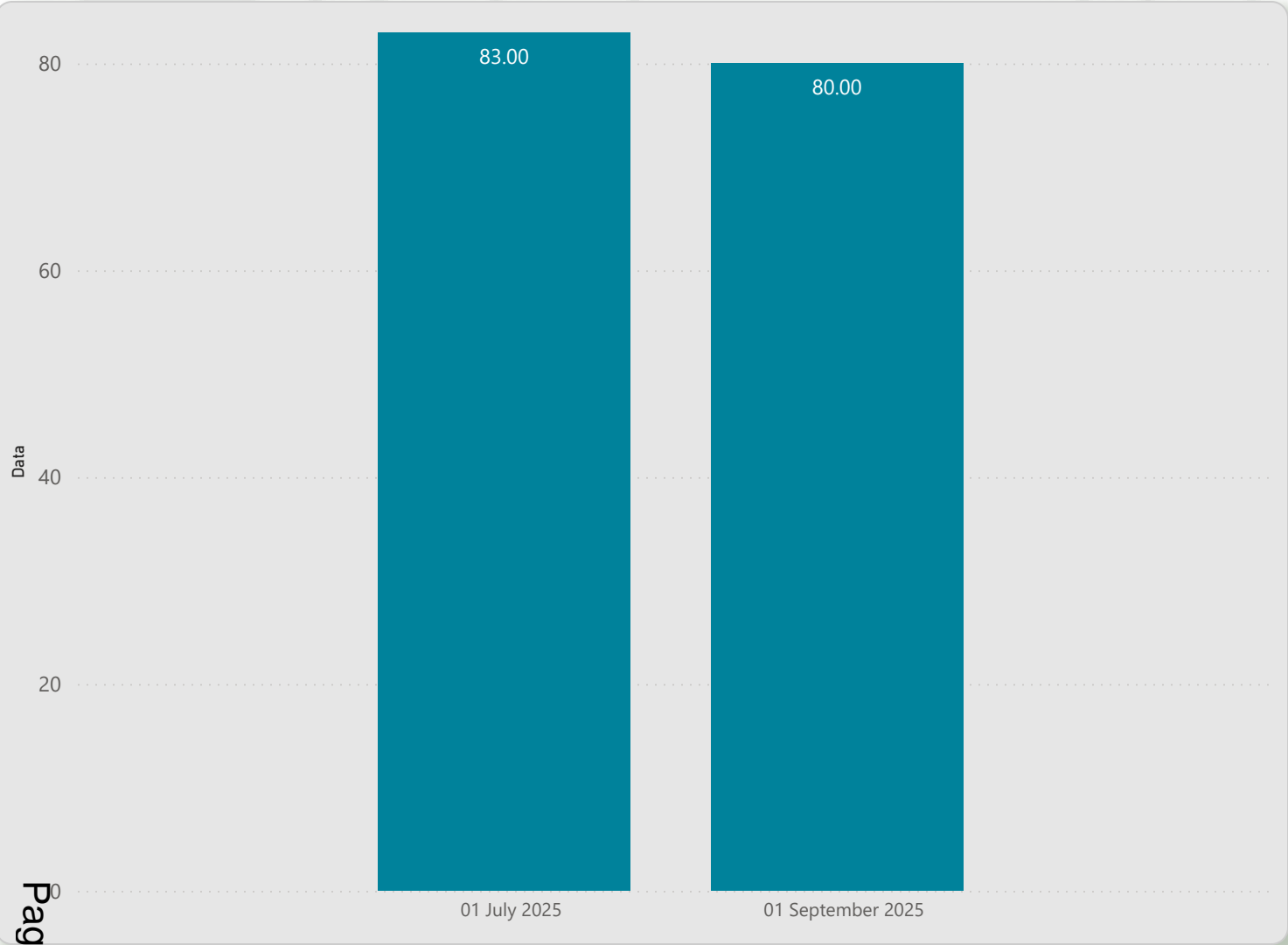
Quarterly

Buddug Mair Huws (ADDYSG)

Govenors

Purpose: Supporting the Governing Bodies of Gwynedd Schools to be effective in their work

Indicator: % of new Chairs of Governing Bodies attending training for Chairs (Chairs new to the role during the current academic year)



80% of Chairs of Governing Bodies have already received the Chairs’ training.
6% are newly appointed Chairs who have been elected within the last two months (5 new Chairs).
2% are very experienced Chairs who have been Chairs of Governing Bodies for over 10 years (2 Chairs).
12% are Chairs who began in the role between 2021 and 2024 but have not attended the Chairs’ training (10 Chairs).

We will be targeting the Chairs who have not yet attended the training, as well as encouraging vice-chairs to attend so that they understand the role before being elected as Chair. For this year, they will be expected to either attend a Chairs’ training session or complete the regional online Chairs’ training by the end of the Easter term. From September 2026, Chairs of Governing Bodies in Gwynedd schools will be expected to complete the specific Chairs’ training by the end of the term in which they are elected.

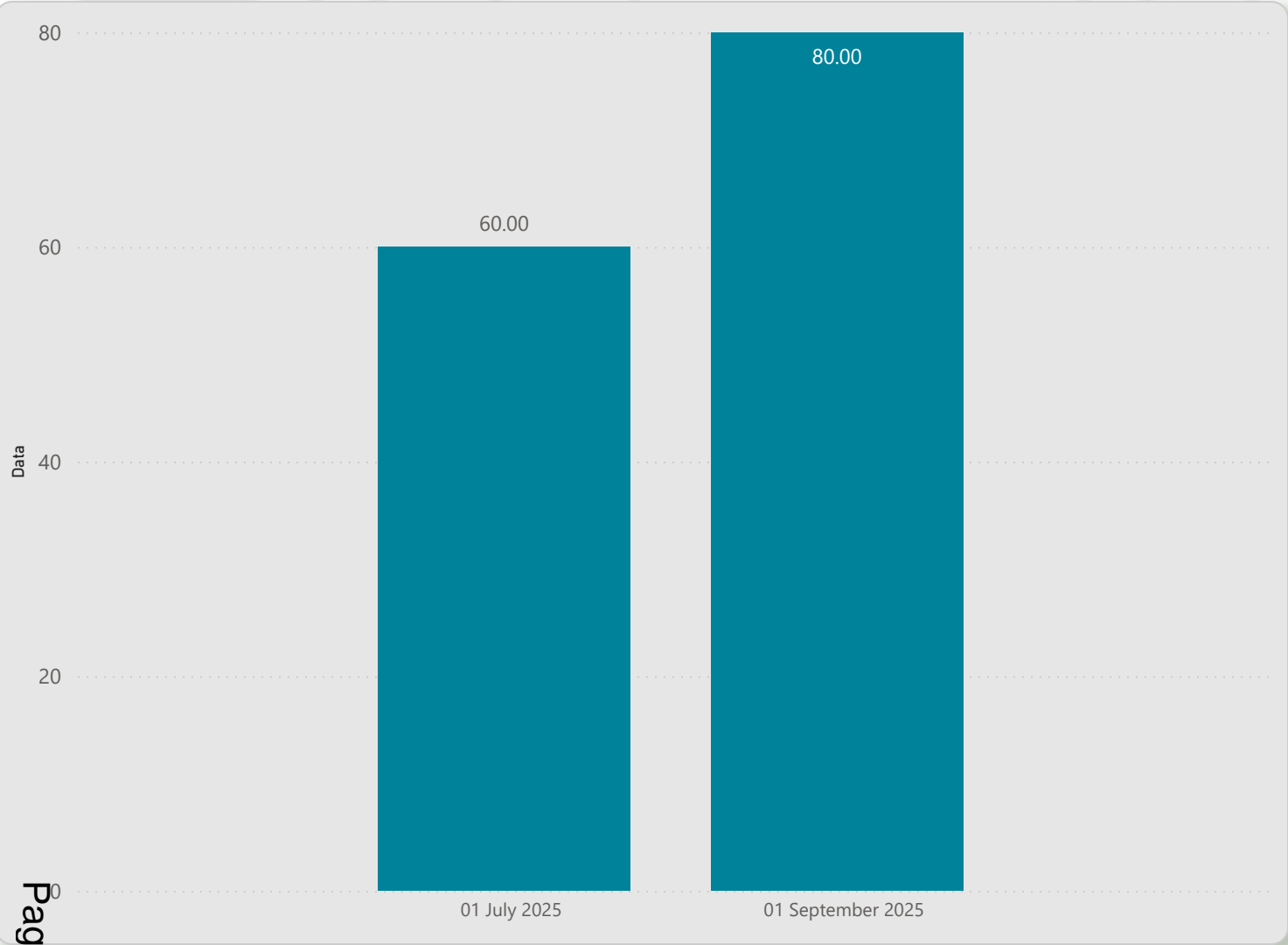
Reporting period 21/7/2025 - 20/11/2025

Quarterly Buddug Mair Huws (ADDYSG)

Govenors

Purpose: Supporting the Governing Bodies of Gwynedd Schools to be effective in their work

Indicator: % of governors attending induction training



Estimated 80%
Because of the system currently used to collect and store details of Gwynedd school governors, it remains challenging to report fully accurately on this measure. However, after carrying out an analysis school-by-school over the summer, it can be estimated that the percentage is approximately 80% (excluding any governors who have been newly elected/nominated).

In order to report more accurately for the next reporting period, work will be undertaken to gather the information directly from the Clerks of the Governing Bodies. This will provide a more robust figure as a starting point.

Further targeting work will take place based on the information received.
The process of gathering the above information has highlighted significant weaknesses in the current method and system used to collect and store information about Governing Bodies and individual governors in Gwynedd schools. The department is aware of the weaknesses in our systems and is taking action to make improvements to strengthen governance across the county.

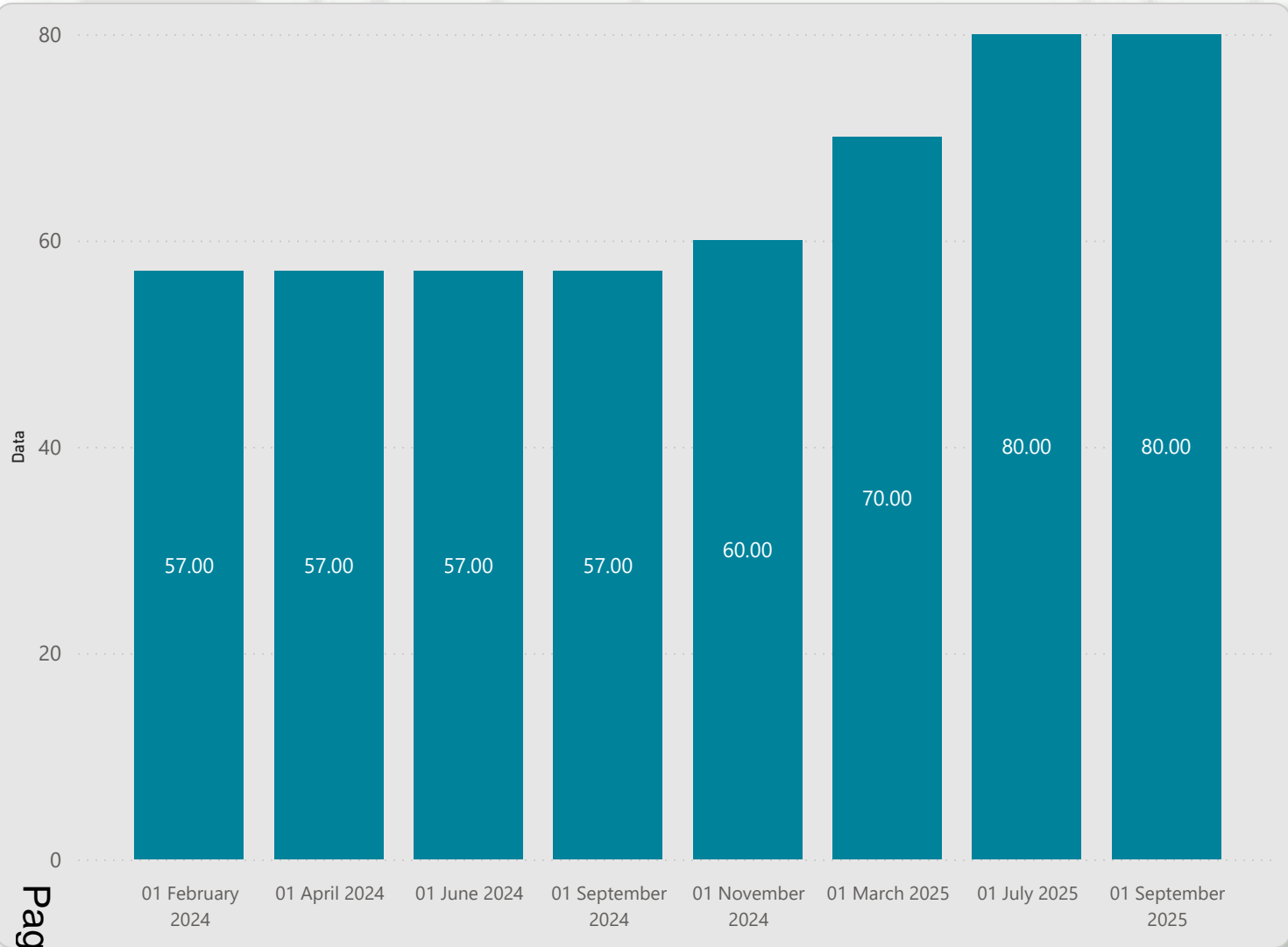
Reporting period 21/7/2025 - 20/11/2025

Quarterly Buddug Mair Huws (ADDYSG)

Modernisation

Purpose: Realise a series of projects to reach the aspirations of the Education Strategy

Indicator: % of capital projects progressing as expected



A significant number of the capital projects have seen good progress over the period and on track to be delivered in a timely manner. However, issues remain which need to be completed at Ysgol Cymerau (Band B 1 and 2 Condition and Suitability Project), the car park is yet to be created for Ysgol Y Faenol and Canolfan Penrhosgarnedd in co-operation with Pentir Community Council, but the project is progressing (Band A Project), and complications have arisen at the Ysgol Llanllechid site which has resulted in the delay in completion of the work until later in the Autumn Term (Condition Project and Suitability/Capacity Increase). Due to the challenging demands of the non-capital projects on the team over the next period, there is concern that the capital work programme will slip due to insufficient capacity in the team to be able to meet all the requirements.

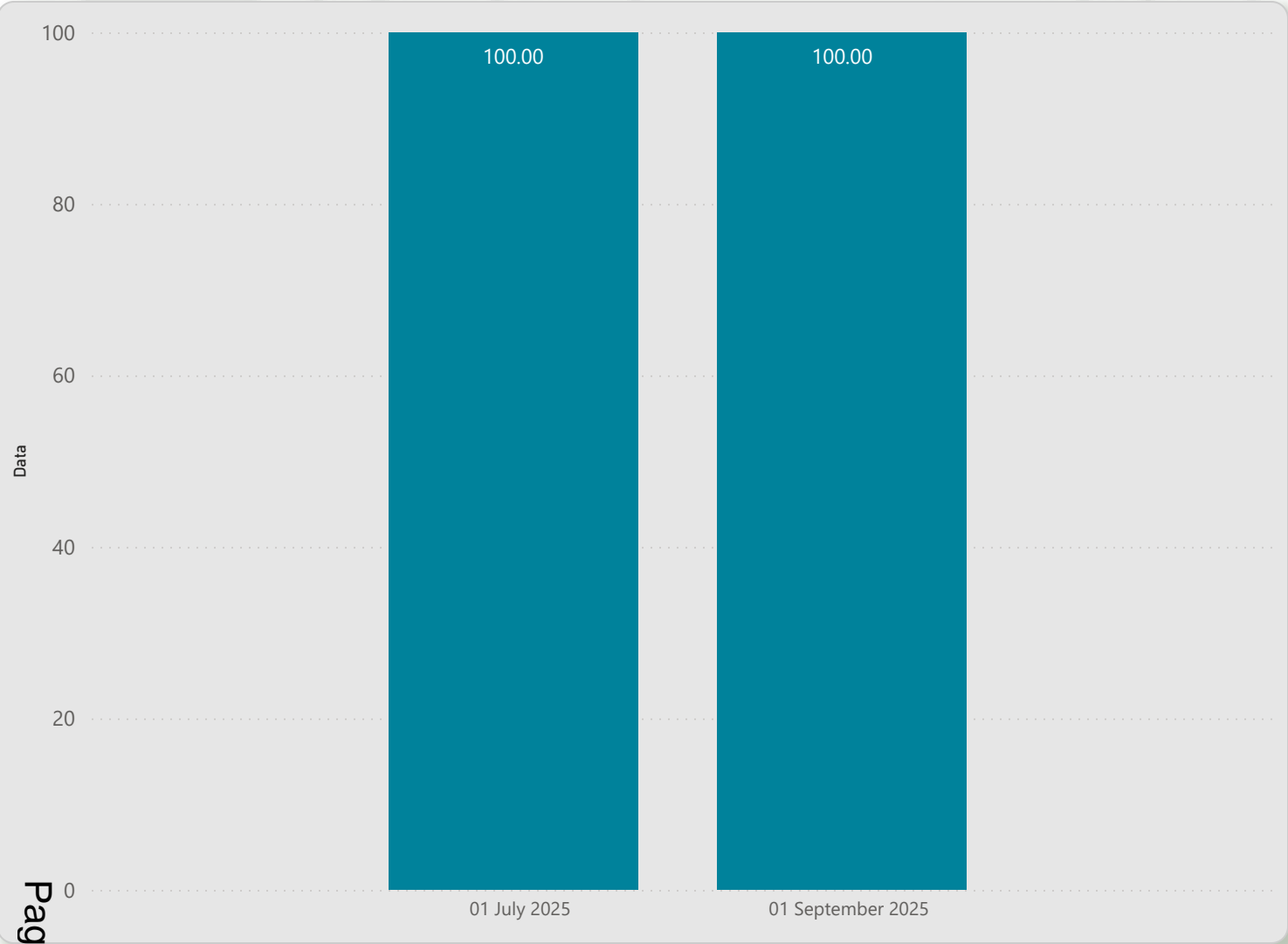
Monthly

Debbie Anne Jones (ADDYSG)

Modernisation

Purpose: Realise a series of projects to reach the aspirations of the Education Strategy

Indicator: % of non-capital projects progressing as expected



2 reports have been submitted to the Cabinet on 14 October 2025, requesting permission to consult on the preferred option namely seeking Cabinet permission to undertake statutory consultations, in accordance with the requirements of section 48 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, on the proposed closure of Ysgol Nebo and Ysgol Baladeulyn on 31 December 2026 and the provision of a place for learners at Ysgol Llanllyfni and Ysgol Talysarn from 1 January 2027 onwards.

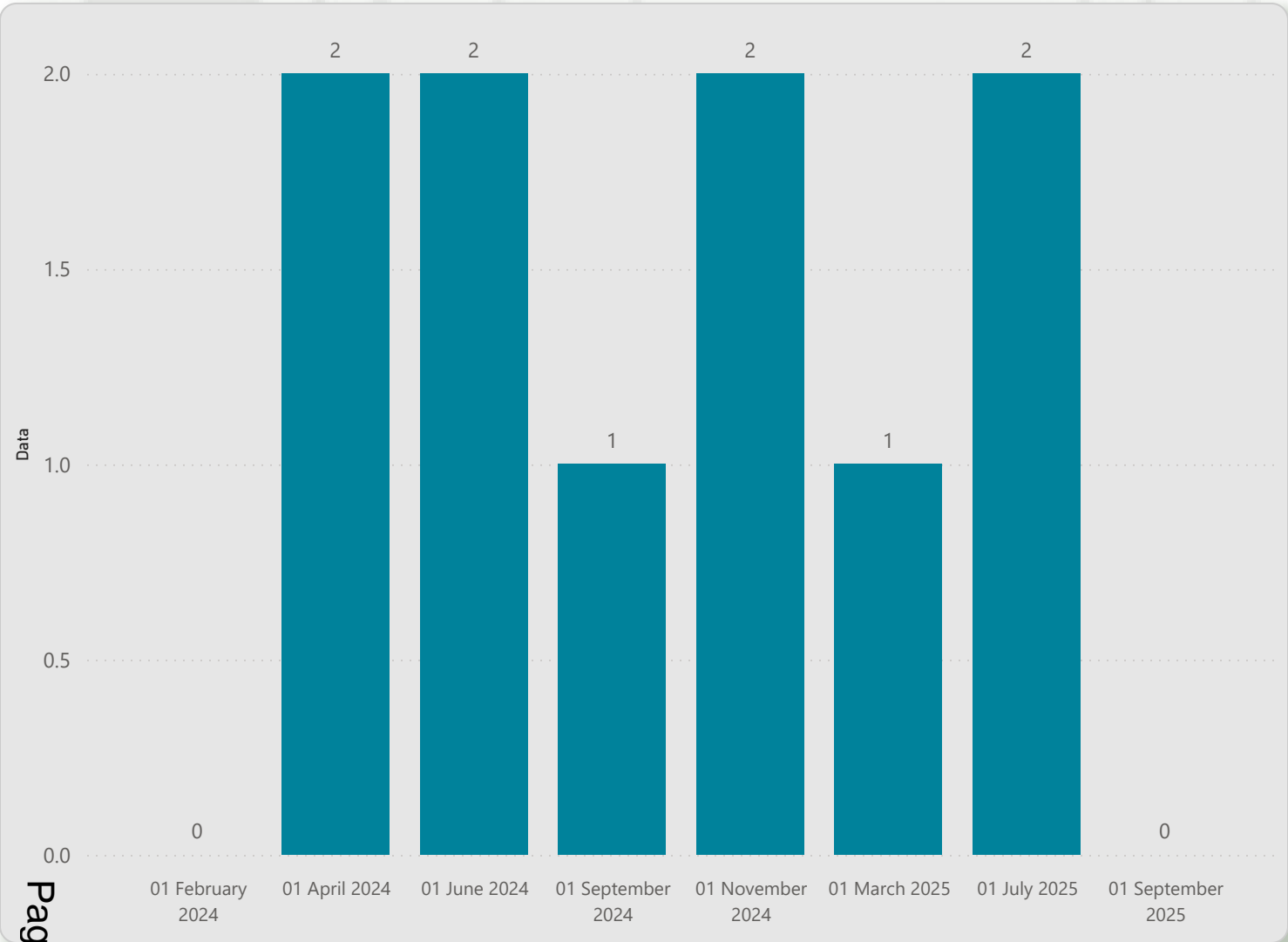
Monthly

Debbie Anne Jones (ADDYSG)

School Admissions

Purpose: Ensure that the data and admissions processes to Schools are up-to-date and fair

Indicator: Number of school admission appeals received during the period



No Appeal has taken place during the reporting period.

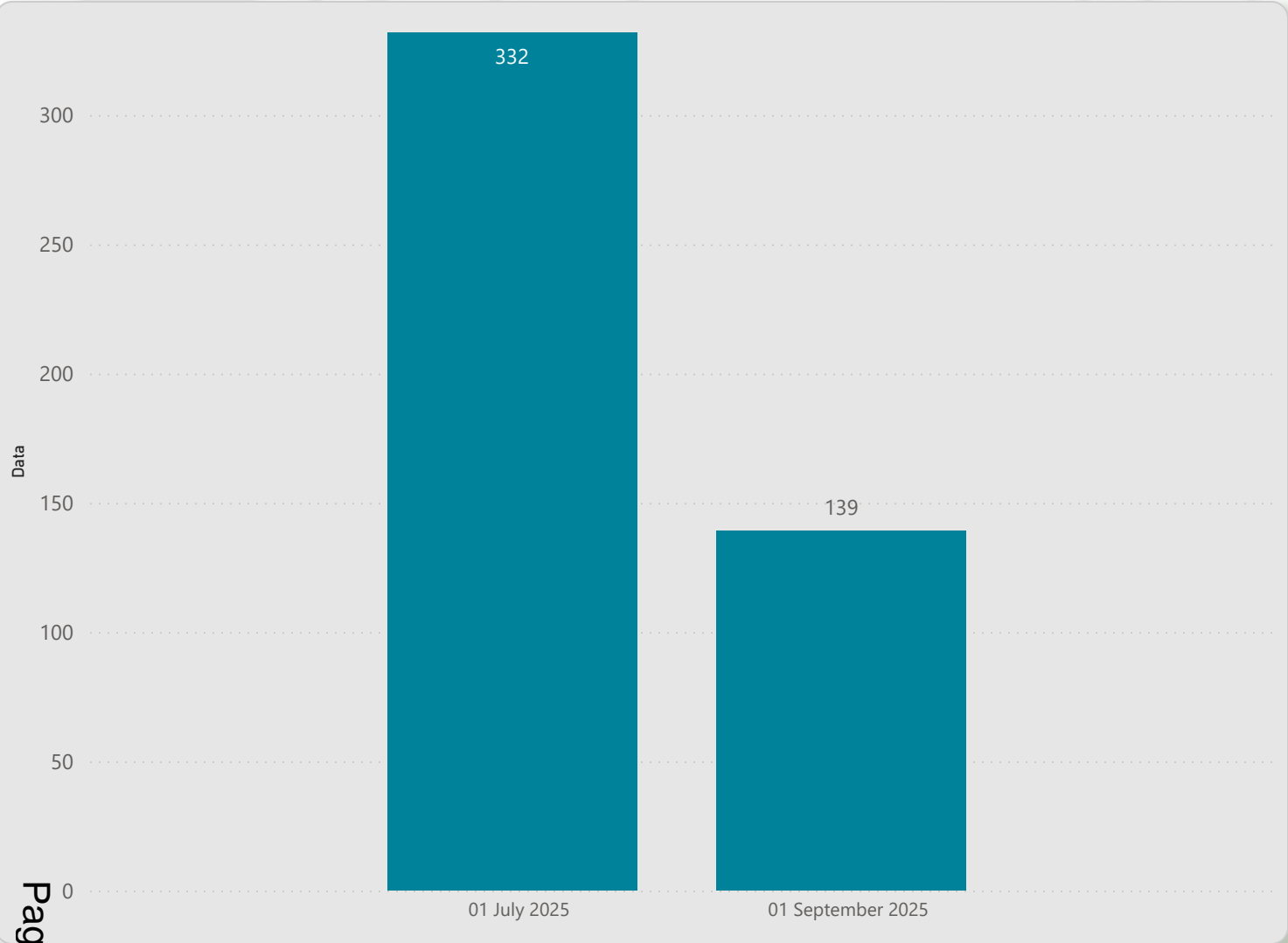
Monthly

Kenny Norgain (ADDYSG)

School Admissions

Purpose: Ensure that the data and admissions processes to Schools are up-to-date and fair

Indicator: Number of School transfer applications received during the period



During the reporting period, 139 School transfer applications were received, with 46 being Secondary and 93 being Primary. There is currently no specific pattern standing out in terms of transfers from specific Schools, or a specific School year. It is also noted that 5 of the applications received indicate that they want to transfer from Elective Home Education back to School.

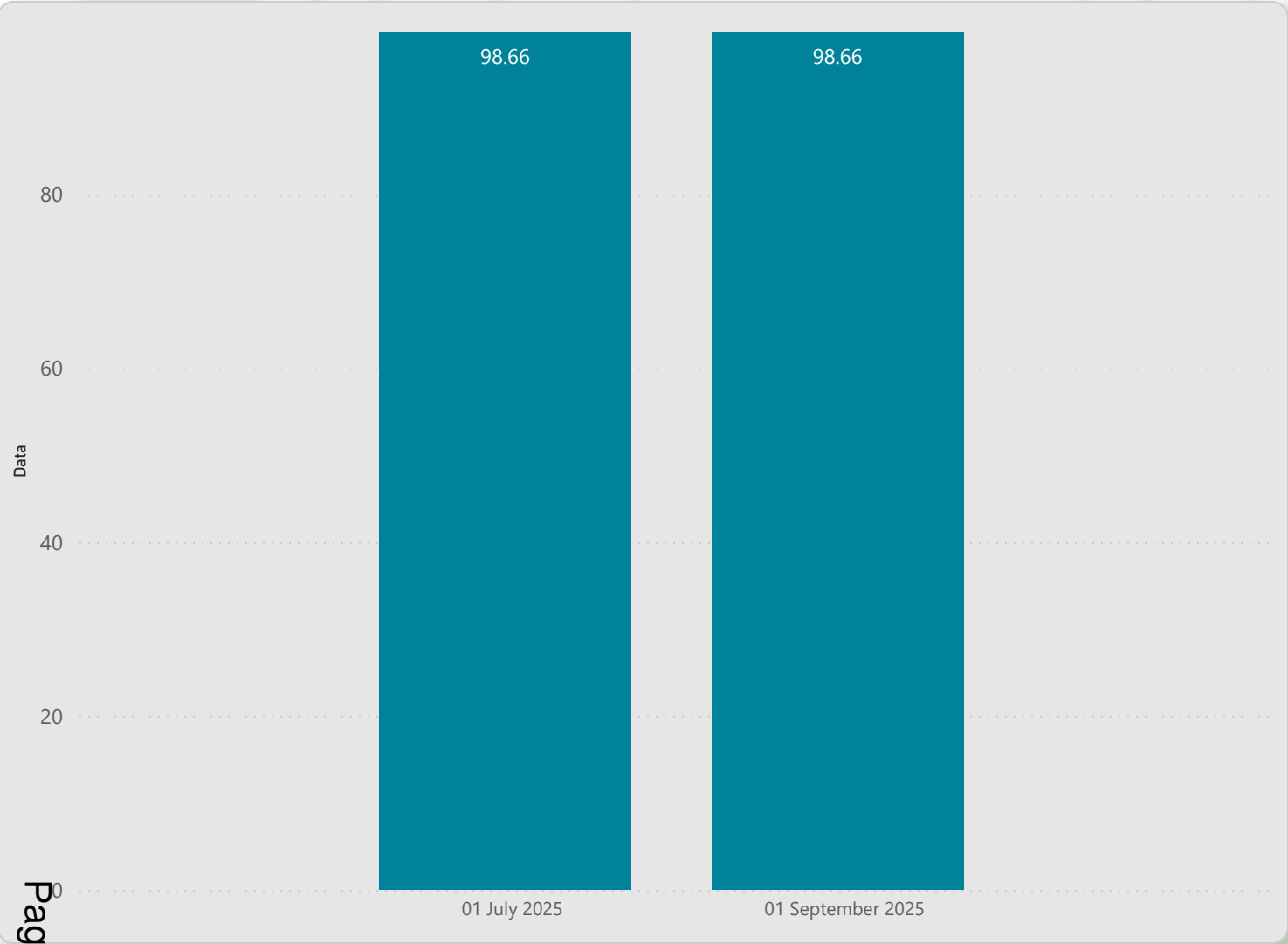
Monthly

Kenny Norgain (ADDYSG)

School Admissions

Purpose: Ensure that the data and admissions processes to Schools are up-to-date and fair

Indicator: % of entry applications to an admission year where a place is offered on a first-choice basis



Annual Data is collected following a normal entry round. Data is available to report on from May onwards.

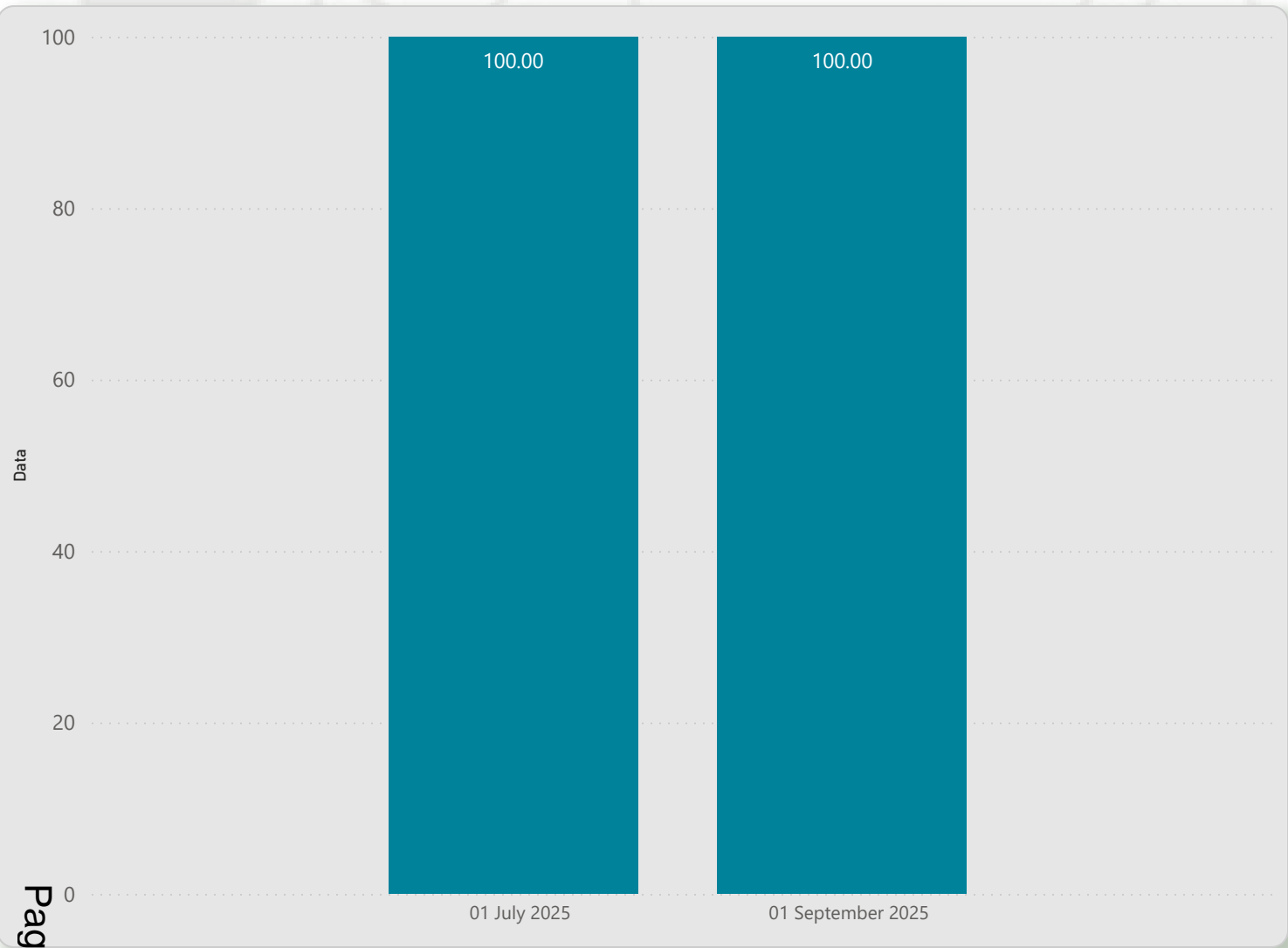
Quarterly

Kenny Norgain (ADDYSG)

School Admissions

Purpose: Ensure that the data and admissions processes to Schools are up-to-date and fair

Indicator: % of entry applications to year 7 where a place is offered on a first preference basis



Annual Data is collected following a normal entry round. Data is available to report on from May onwards.

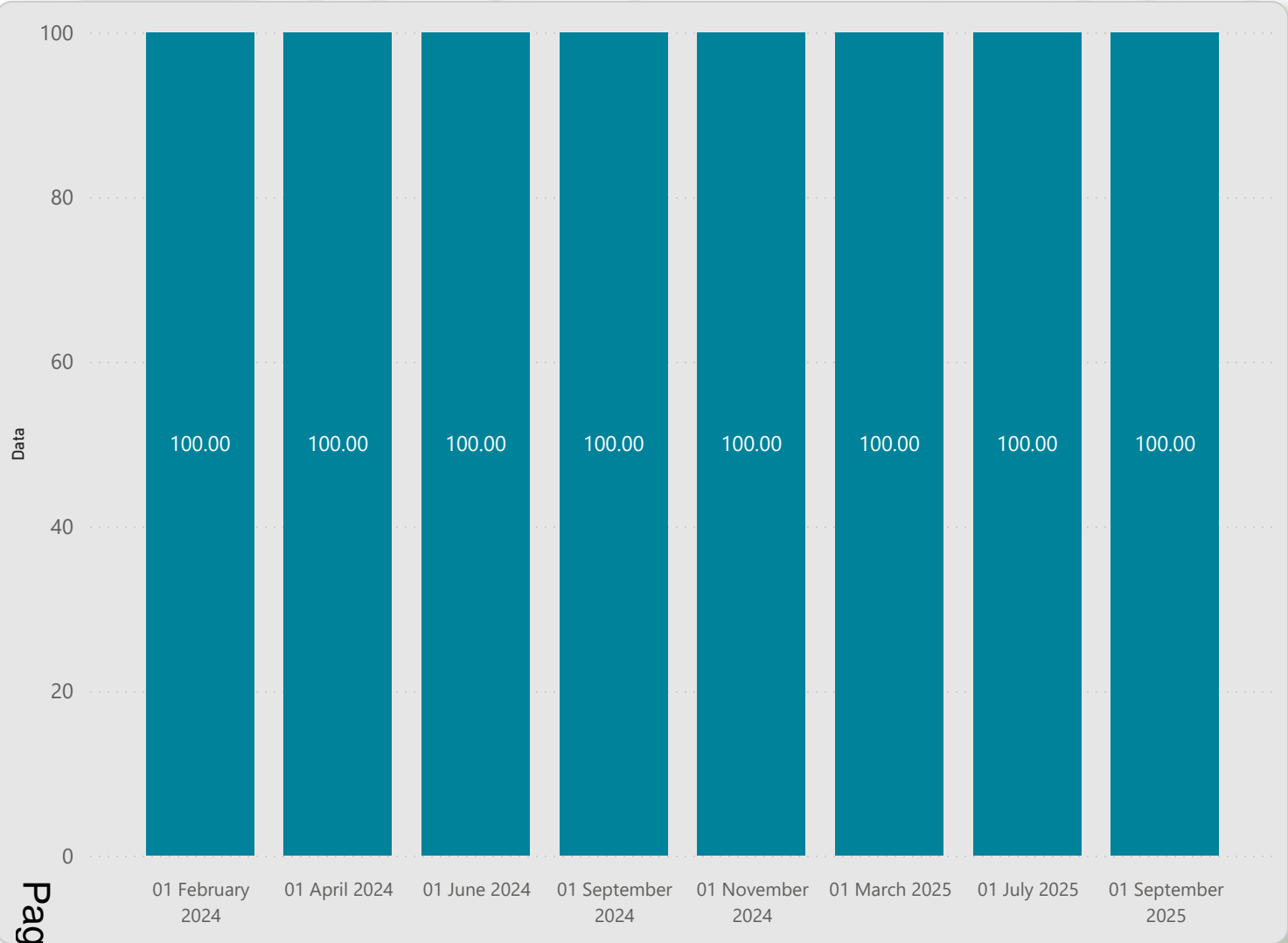
Quarterly

Kenny Norgain (ADDYSG)

School Standards

Purpose: Support the effective management, leadership and governance of Gwynedd schools

Indicator: % of users who are satisfied with the support of the service



Once again, the satisfaction is 100% with no one stating that the support is not sufficient. The School Support Service will report on new measures from the next meeting onwards.

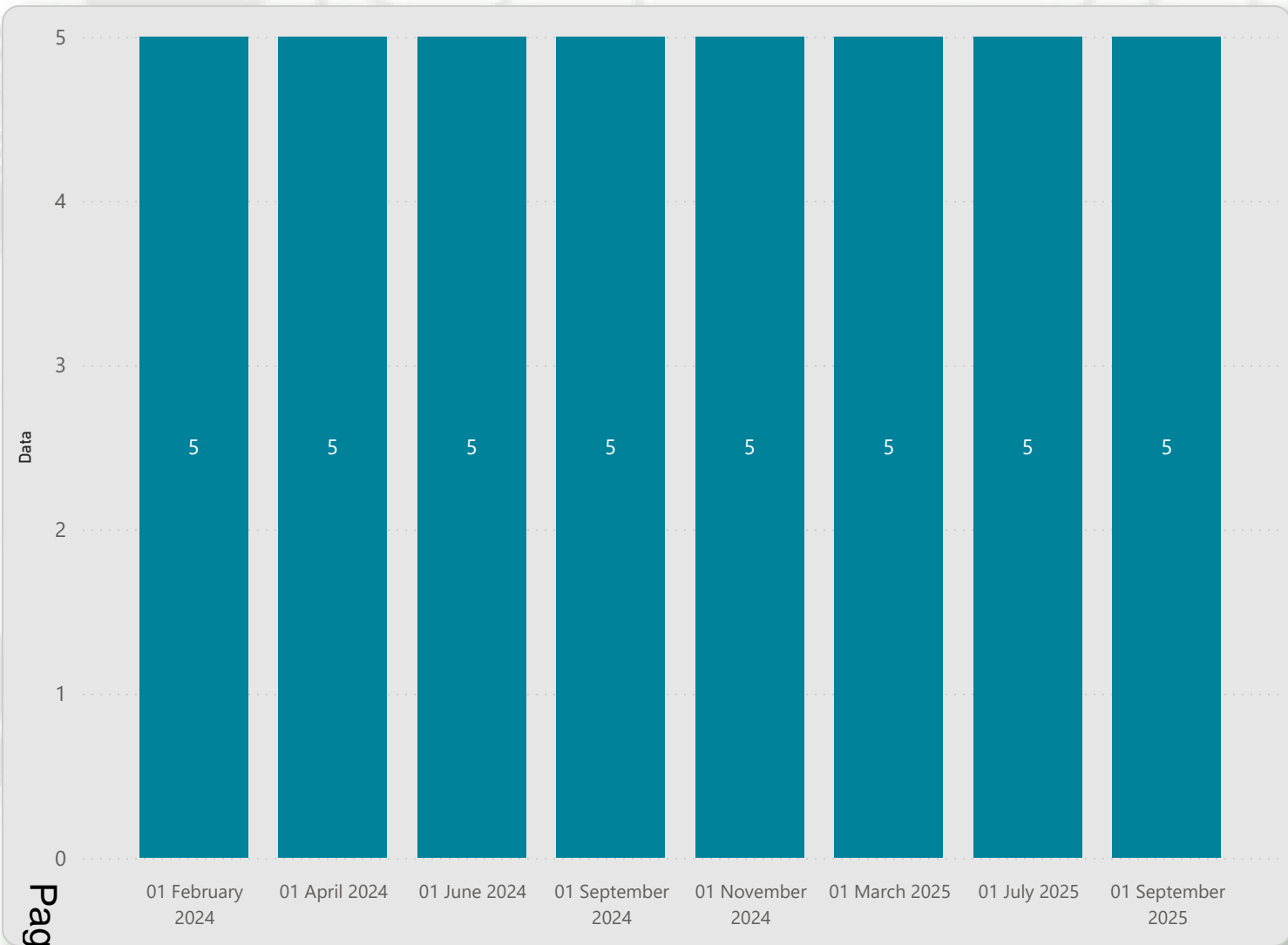
Monthly

Alison Halliday (ADDYSG)

School Standards

Purpose: Support the effective management, leadership and governance of Gwynedd schools

Indicator: Average number of days taken to respond to barriers reported by Schools or by others about issues with Schools



The performance continues to be very strong and reflects the work of a relatively very small team of officers and a service that has been going through considerable change.

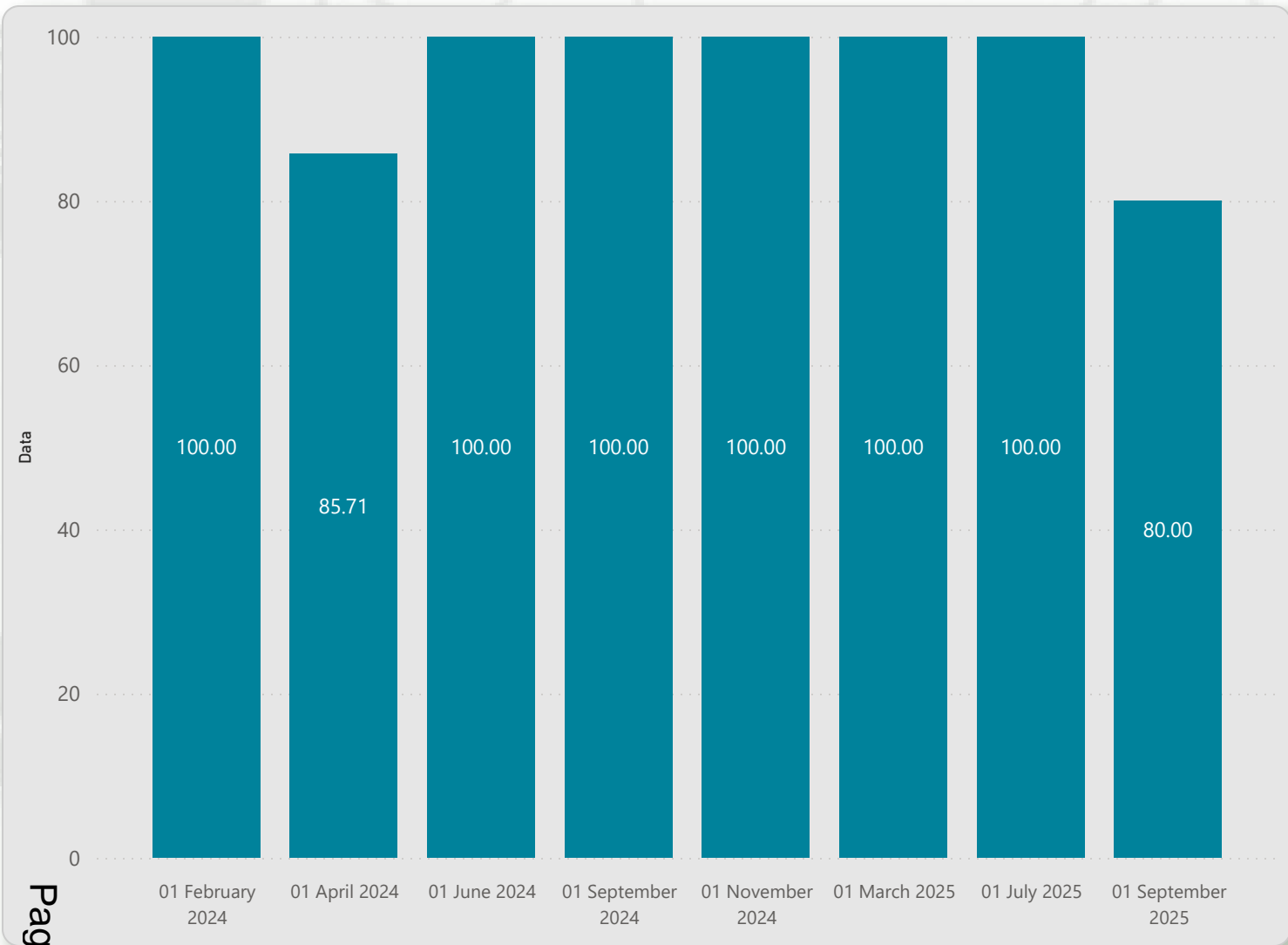
Monthly

Alison Halliday (ADDYSG)

Data Unit

Purpose: Ensure support for the Department by providing a high quality of data and information infrastructure that drives decision and performance

Indicator: % of 'customers' reporting that the data received was of a high quality and that the information/data received led to decisions



We received 5 responses from customers, of which 4 were very satisfied, and 1 satisfied - the comments that have come back as part of the survey are also very positive e.g. 'Great Service - very quick and friendly. Thank you very much.' Although performance has slipped compared to the previous reporting period (100% performance following 2 responses), the comments and everyone scoring a 4 or 5 gives assurance that the work being delivered is of a high standard - so at this time no further action is needed.

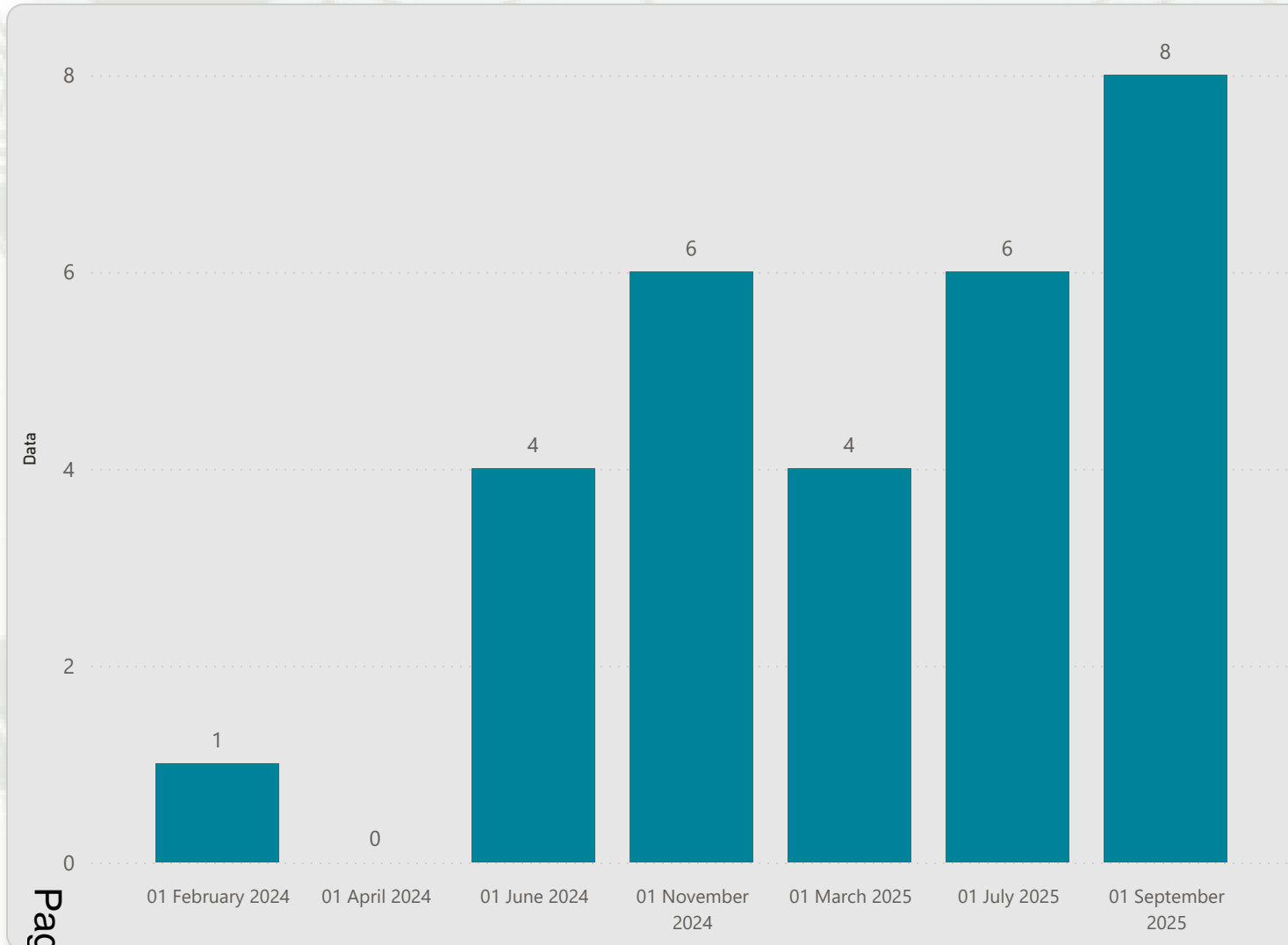
Monthly

Kenny Norgain (ADDYSG)

Quality and Administrative ALN

Purpose: Supporting schools to develop into inclusive institutions so that all learners reach their potential

Indicator: Number of cases that progressed to tribunal level



2 appeals have been received during the summer and the other 6 have not yet been closed as the Education Tribunal for Wales hold hearings in the school term. Not surprisingly, an additional 2 have come in as the transitional period can be a very worrying time for parents.

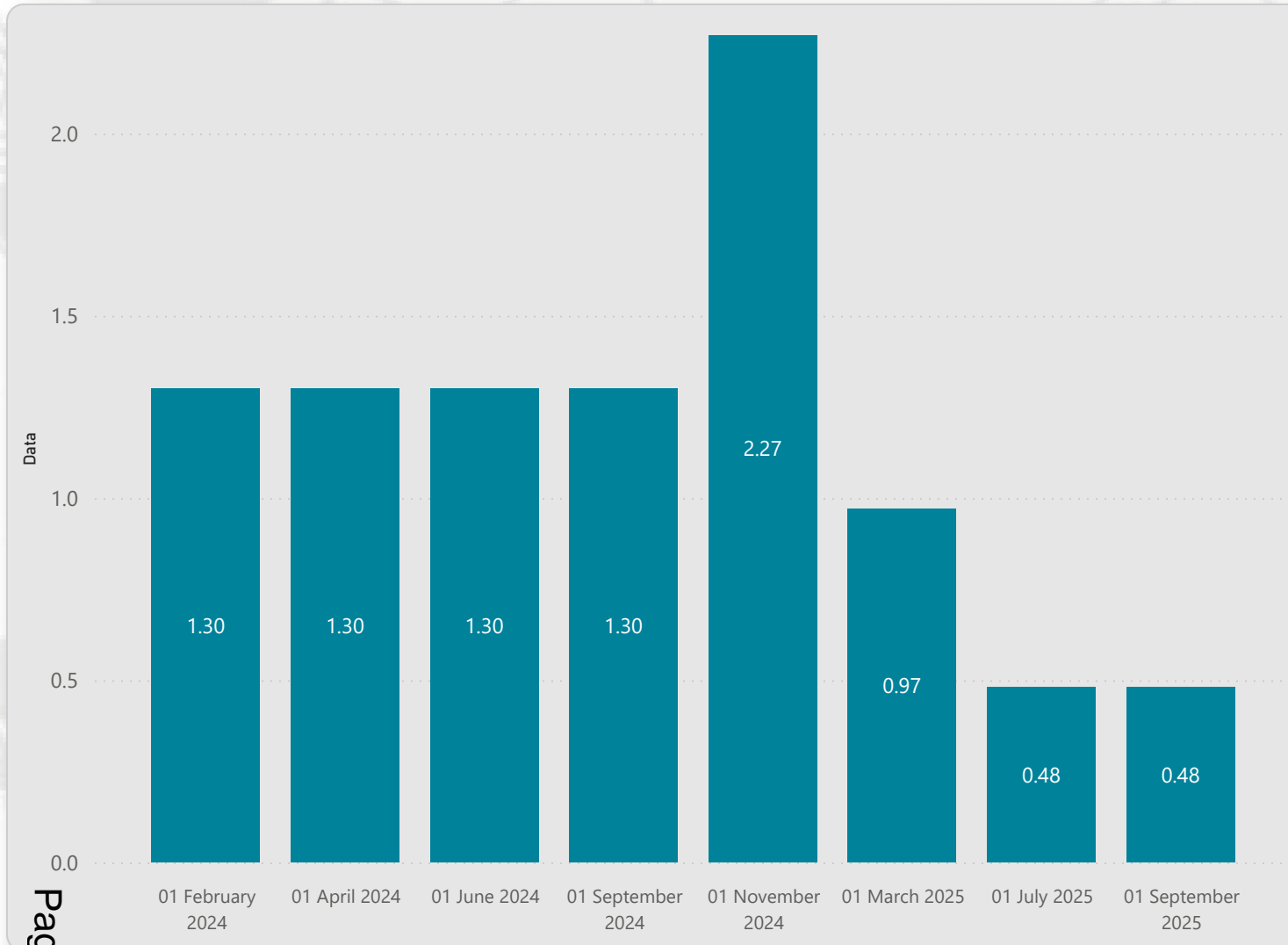
Quarterly

Einir Thomas (ADDYSG)

Quality and Administrative ALN

Purpose: Supporting schools to develop into inclusive institutions so that all learners reach their potential

Indicator: % of schools in need of support beyond the usual – visits at least every half term (or the number of schools being upgraded to the CQB system due to ALN quality)



Following the summer break we continue with the plan for improvement with one school hoping to report downgrading by the end of the term; and we provide remote support to the school that was downgraded.

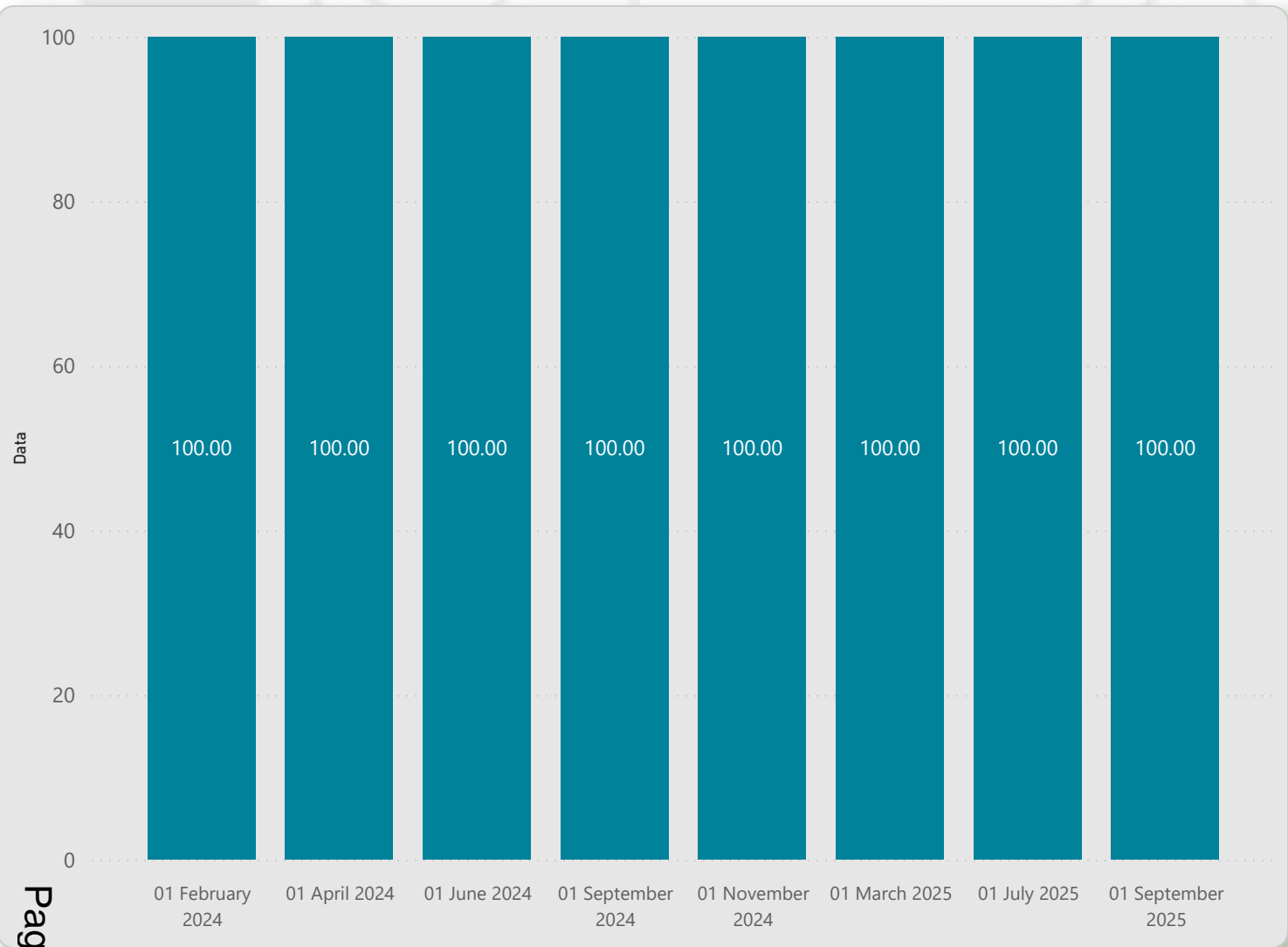
Monthly

Einir Thomas (ADDYSG)

Early Years ALN

Purpose: Ensure that the LA's statutory duties in relation to children under school age are fully implemented in order to identify needs promptly and put in place appropriate interventions to prevent the development or worsening of ALN

Indicator: % of users who are satisfied with the support of the service



In the last period, one response was received to the questionnaire, in which the parent stated that they were very satisfied with the process. They said: "Process to determine ALN was done quickly, very happy with all the support." Although the team does not receive a response to all questionnaires, the coordinators receive very positive comments during IDP development and review meetings. To support this feedback, it can be confirmed that no parent has contacted the ALN Lead Officer in the Early Years to discuss a dispute, and no tribunal proceedings have been recorded in the Early Years to date.

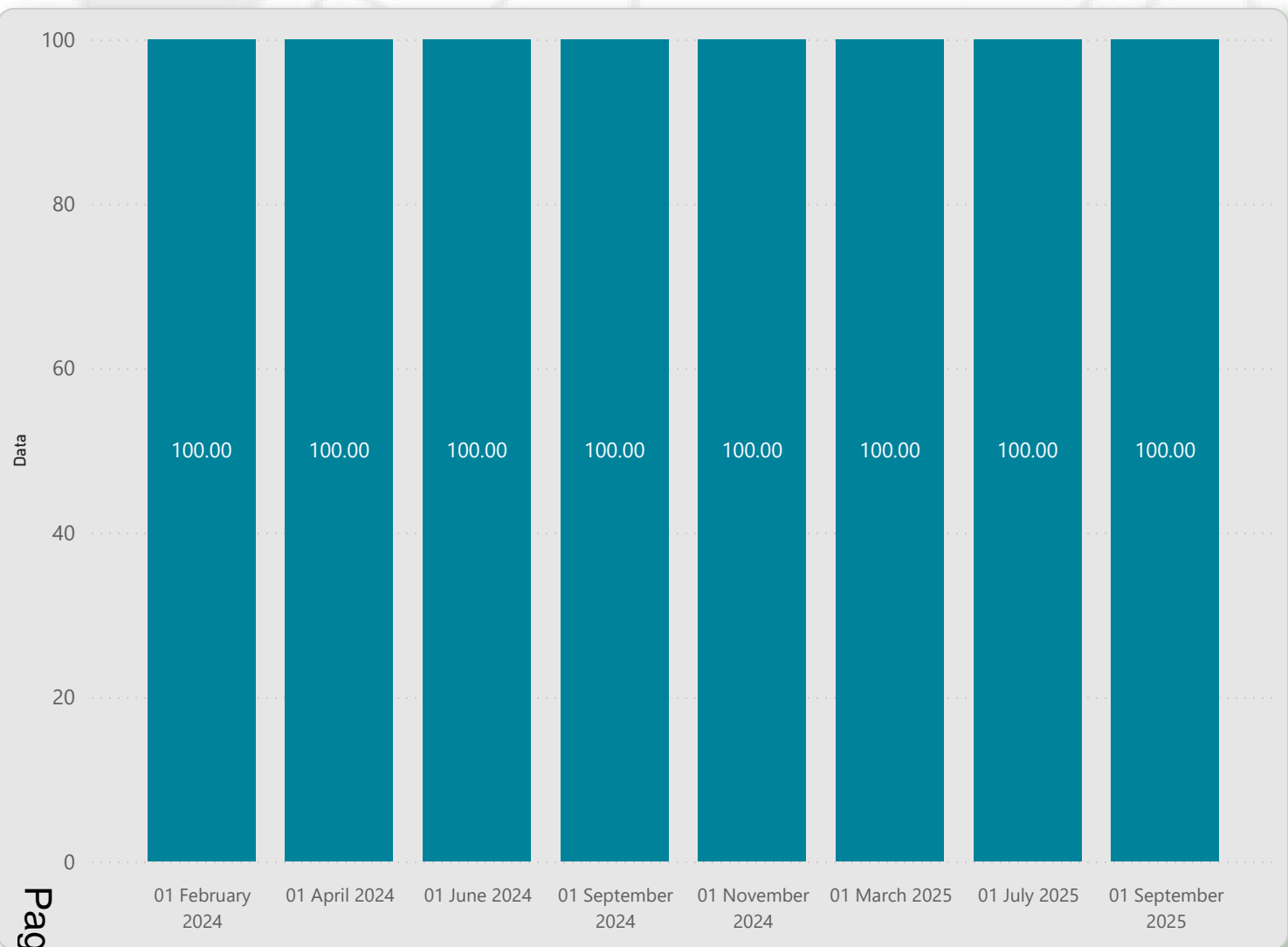
Monthly

Ellen Mai Jones (ADDYSG)

Early Years ALN

Purpose: Ensure that the LA's statutory duties in relation to children under school age are fully implemented in order to identify needs promptly and put in place appropriate interventions to prevent the development or worsening of ALN

Indicator: % of cases matching the statutory timetable



In the last period, 26 referrals were received to start the statutory ALN Enquiry process. This is a significant increase compared to the same period last year (15). Several factors are thought to contribute to the steady increase seen throughout the last school year, including:

- Welsh Government's extension of Flying Start areas, which means that a higher number of children start an Early Years placement from the age of two.
- Embedded ALN processes in the Early Years, enabling health services and settings to identify and direct needs in a timely and effective manner.

During the same period, 27 ALN enquiries were completed, 17 of which resulted in the replacement of IDPs. On average, these enquiries were completed within 9 weeks, although 4 enquiries experienced delays, with an average of 20 weeks for these. The increase in referrals for children from the age of two means that the team is not only responding to a higher number of enquiries, but also providing support to more children, whether in their home or in a setting, for an extended period. As a result, the team's workload has increased.

Action Point:

- Continuously monitor the increase in the number of ALN enquiries in order to identify patterns and forecast future demand.
- Ensure the sustainability of the team structure, so that it can continue to respond effectively to the increase in referrals and the additional demands arising from this.

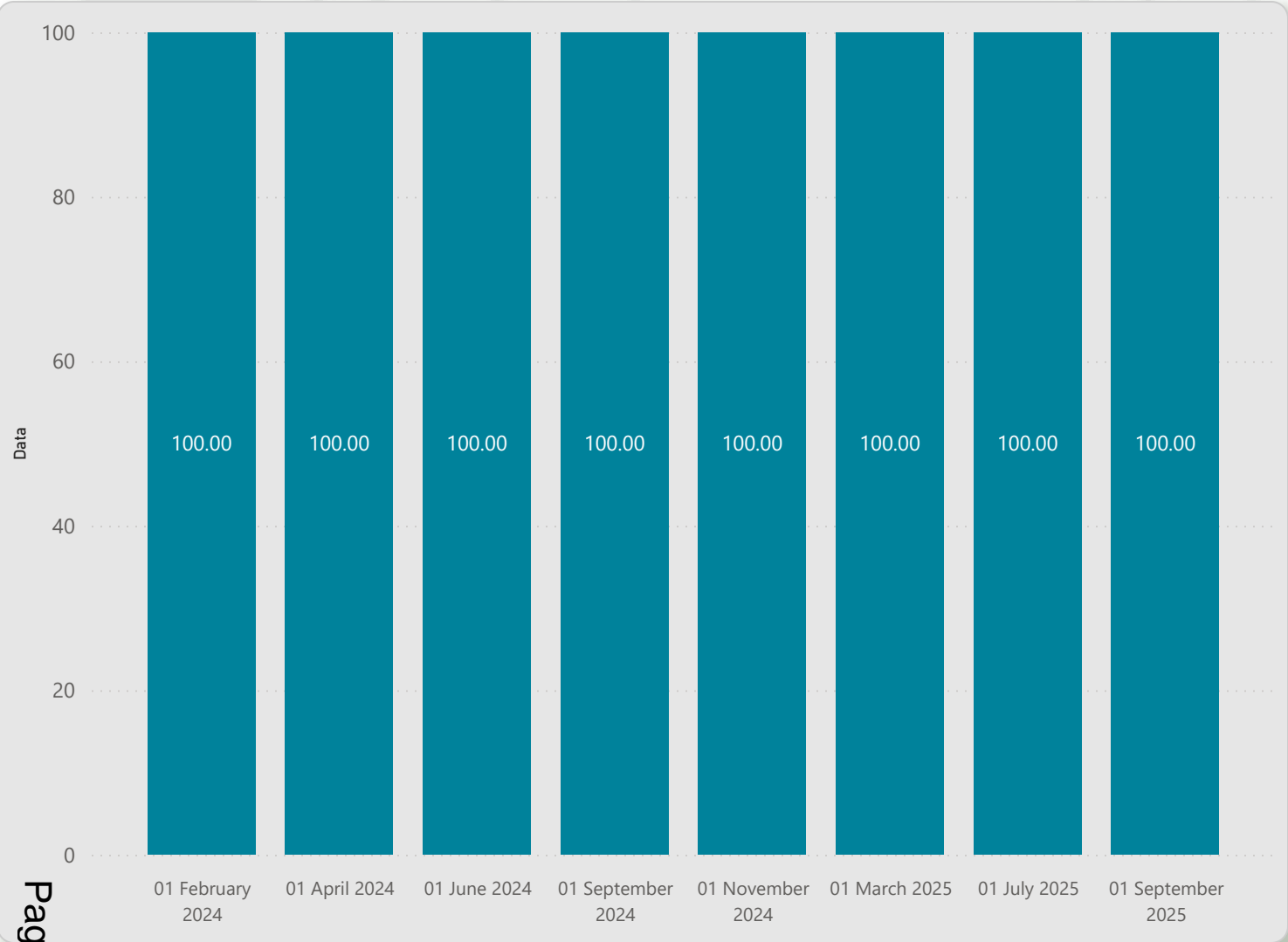
Monthly

Ellen Mai Jones (ADDYSG)

Administrative

Purpose: Support the ALN teams, Schools and the public in providing ALN input

Indicator: % of Panel and Forum decisions recorded in the IDP within 2 weeks



There has not been any panels this term.
Forum Number = 61
Total = 61
All Forum applications have been administered on the IDP within the time.

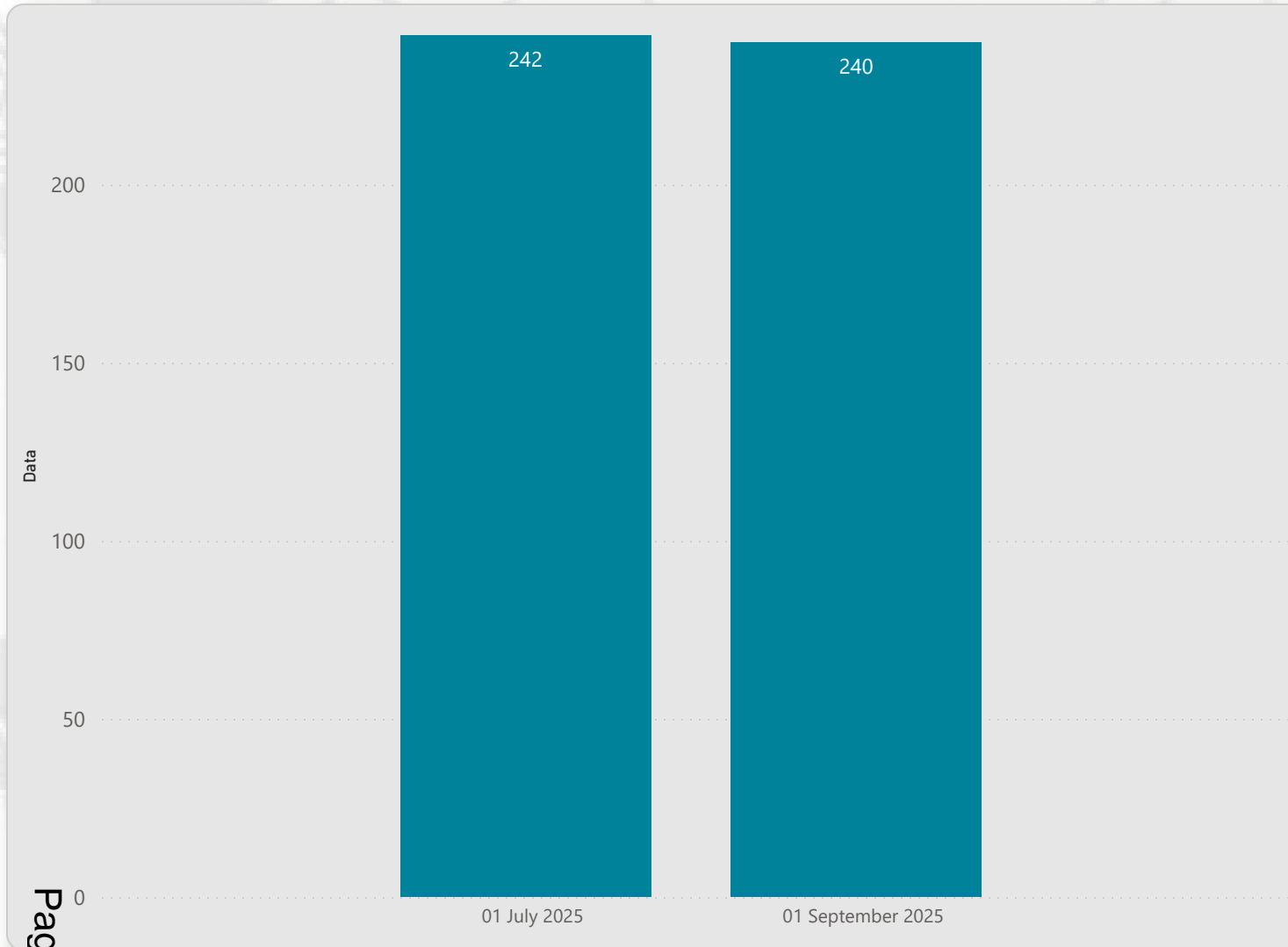
Monthly

Ellen Mai Jones (ADDYSG)

Elective Home Education

Purpose: Support Local Authorities in fulfilling their statutory duty to ensure that all learners receive a suitable and efficient education under section 436A of the Education Act 1996

Indicator: Number of Elective Home Education learners



178 families are registered but with 240 learners. A percentage of these have become known to us over the summer and some have never enrolled in a school. The situation of Gwynedd is not unlike any other County with an increase of years. Gwynedd's rate per 1000 pupils is less than the rate in Wales but the reasons for enrollment are very similar, namely lifestyle, mental health/phobias and attendance pressures. In this reporting period we have seen more applications to re-enroll in a school than there have been in recent years with 18 de-registering in this period.

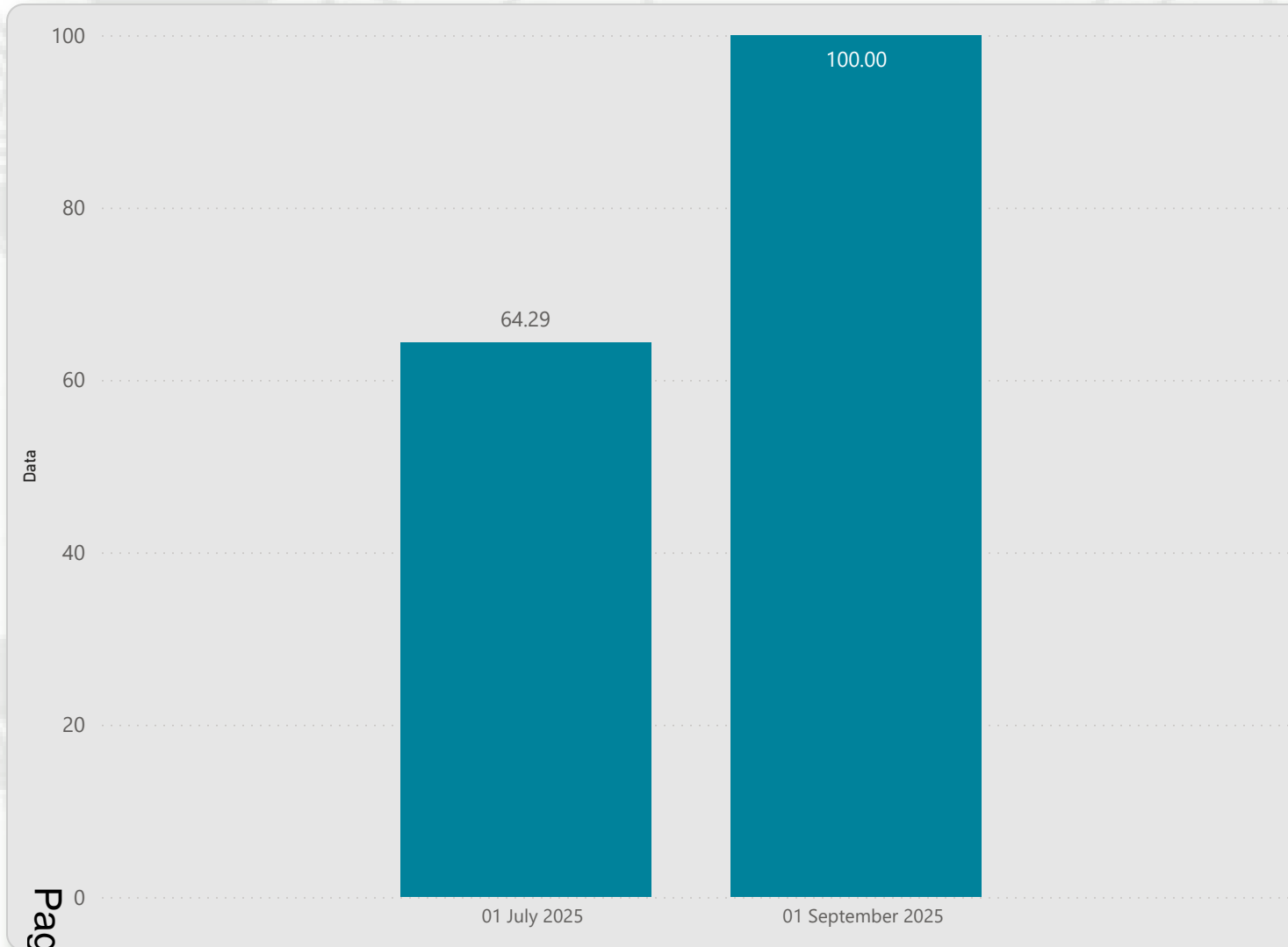
Monthly

Ellen Rowlands (ADDYSG)

Elective Home Education

Purpose: Support Local Authorities in fulfilling their statutory duty to ensure that all learners receive a suitable and efficient education under section 436A of the Education Act 1996

Indicator: % of pupils receiving education suitable for their ability



In line with Welsh Government guidance, local authorities are expected to carry out at least annual visits or equivalent contact with children who receive elective home education. This contact may include direct conversations with the child, reviewing work, or discussions with parents, with the aim of ensuring that every child receives an education suitable to their age, ability, and needs.

During the reporting period between 21 July 2025 and 26 September 2025, a total of 42 visits and contacts were carried out. The team is confident, based on these visits, that every individual is receiving an education appropriate to their ability.

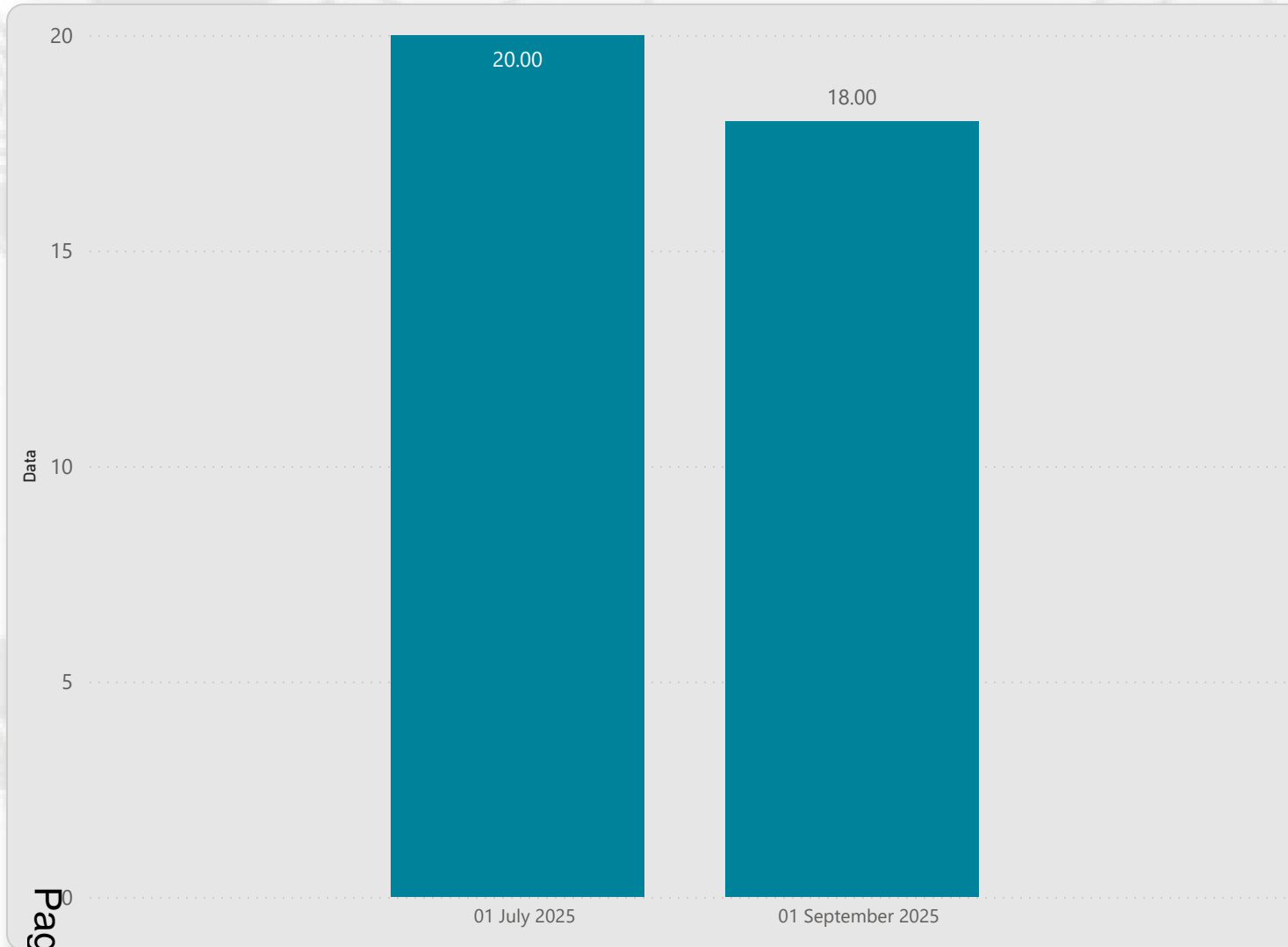
Monthly

Ellen Rowlands (ADDYSG)

Elective Home Education

Purpose: Support Local Authorities in fulfilling their statutory duty to ensure that all learners receive a suitable and efficient education under section 436A of the Education Act 1996

Indicator: % of families receiving home visits



Over the last reporting period, 9 families have received a home visit and 33 contacts have taken place via Teams and phone calls. The aim is to hold home visits with 25% of families every quarter but with summer holidays this was not possible. In the next reporting period it is expected that at least 25% of families will have received visits.

With the increase in numbers the Service has taken further action by appointing an ALN Co-ordinator who will ensure compliance with the statutory requirements, for pupils who have an Individual Development Plan. This will free up the team's time to conduct more direct home visits.

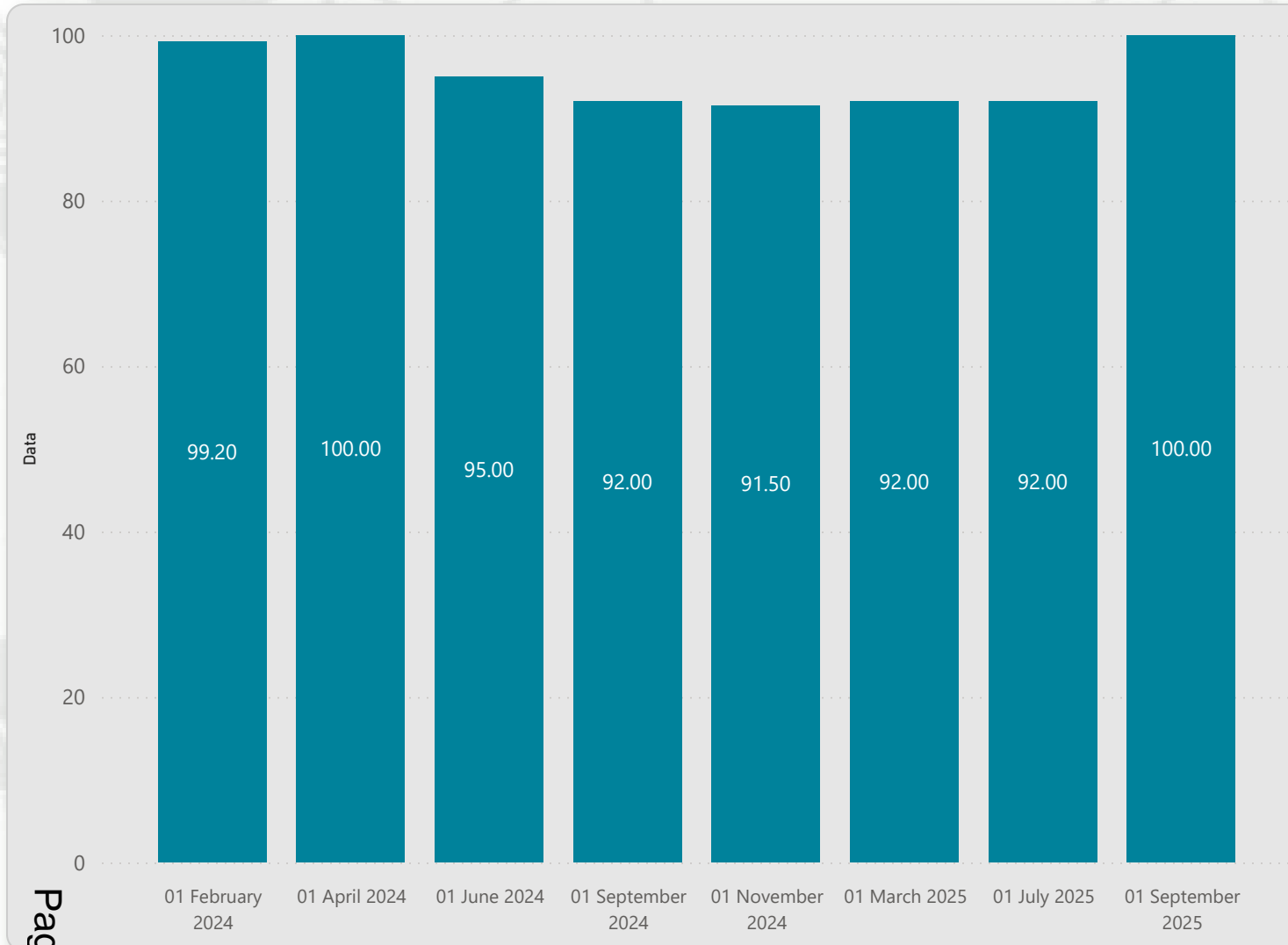
Monthly

Ellen Rowlands (ADDYSG)

Counselling

Purpose: Provide a timely counselling service to pupils

Indicator: % of users who are satisfied with the support of the service



We've only received 4 responses as it is very early in the school year.

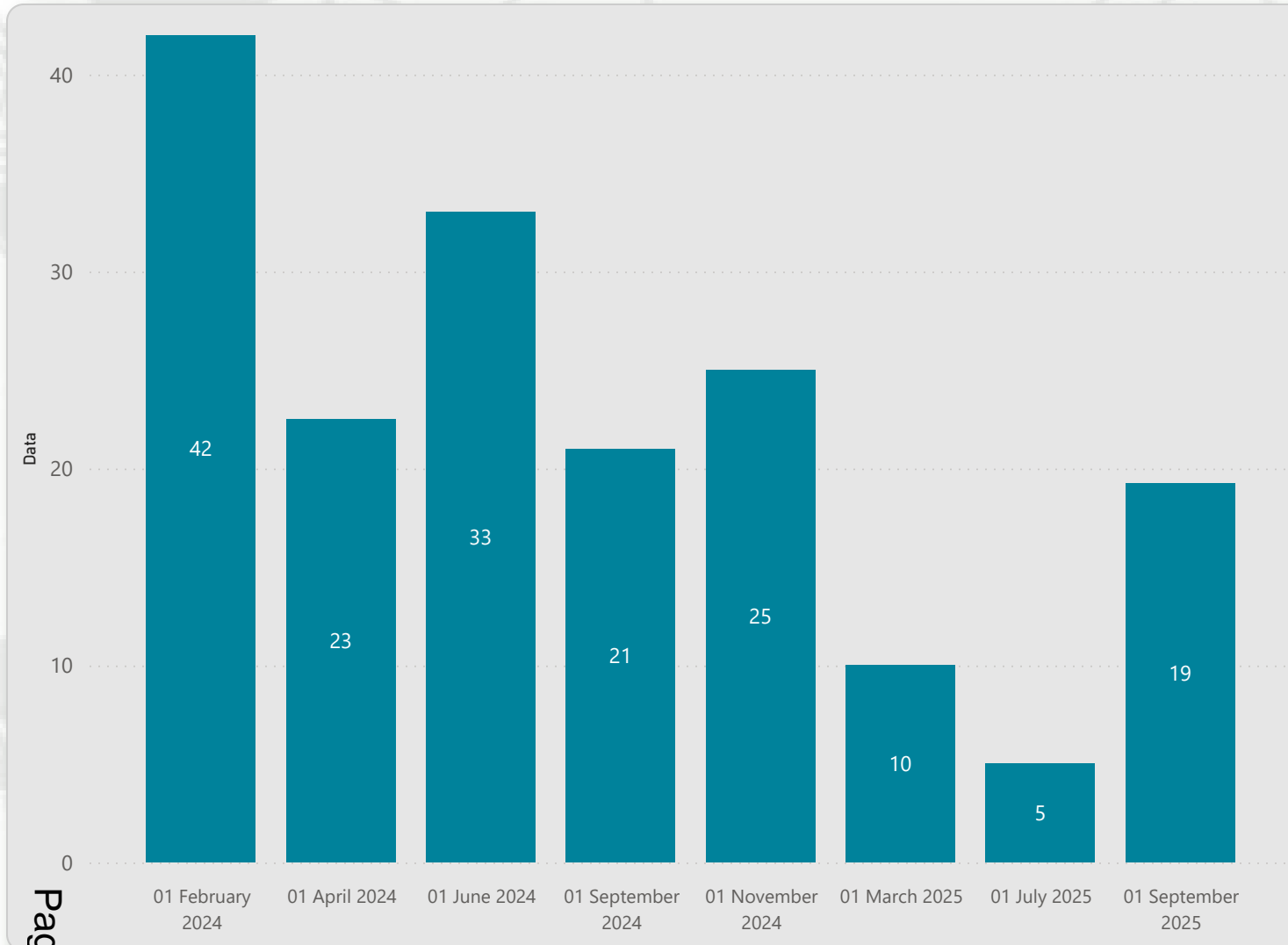
Monthly

Dora Wendi Jones (ADDYSG)

Counselling

Purpose: Provide a timely counselling service to pupils

Indicator: Mean number of days required to wait for service



The waiting time for the service has increased because cases are becoming more complex, and therefore children and young people need more sessions, which means others are waiting longer to be seen. The number of referrals we are receiving is also increasing, especially among primary-aged children, and this again contributes to longer waiting times.

We have appointed an additional counsellor for two days on a temporary basis, and hope that this will help keep the waiting list to a reasonable timeframe.

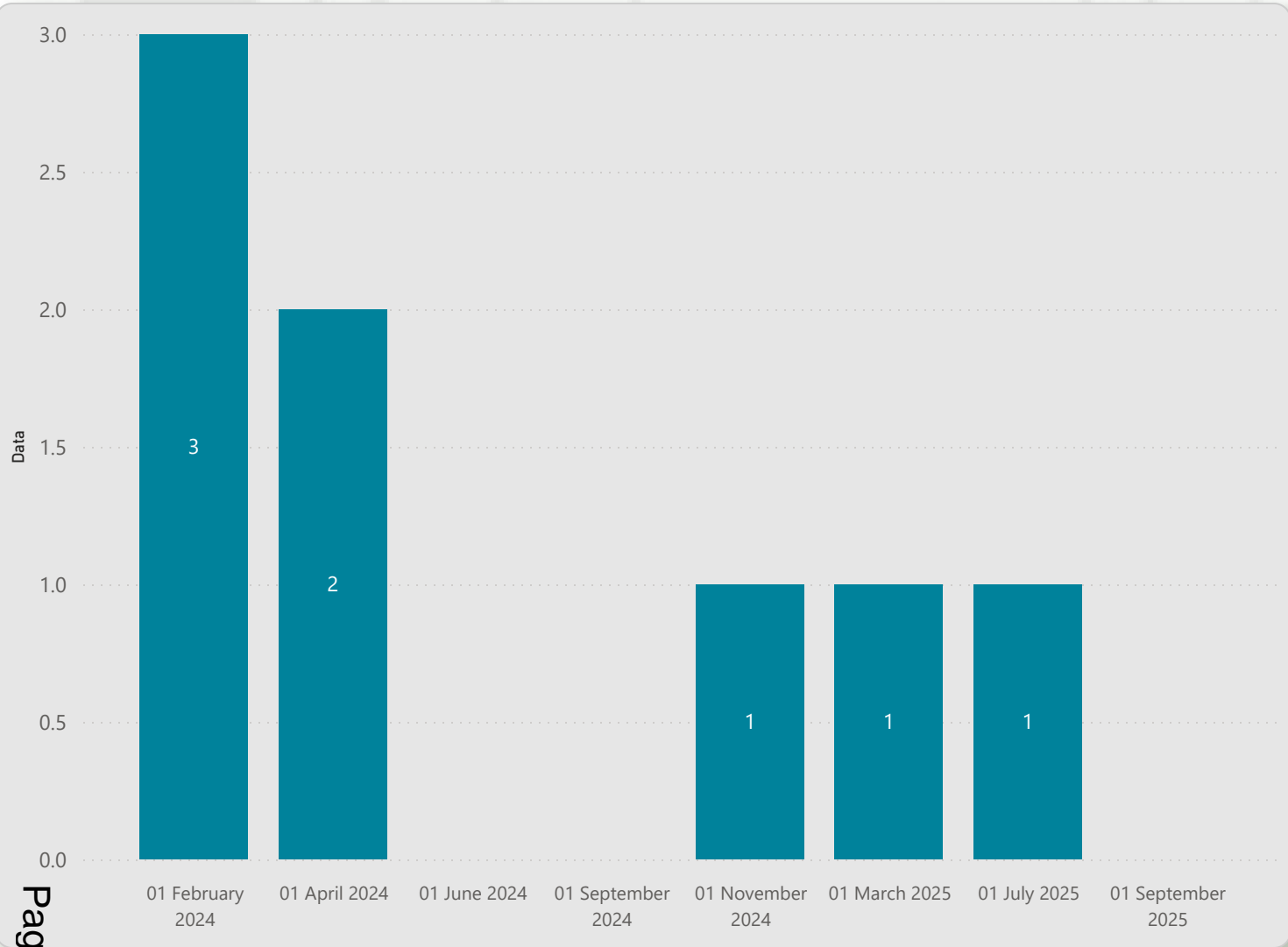
Monthly

Dora Wendi Jones (ADDYSG)

Inclusion

Purpose: Support schools to provide a learning environment to help children and young people receive a suitable education

Indicator: Number of permanent Primary exclusions



There was one situation where the Service worked closely with a school to avoid the need for a permanent exclusion. The incident was reported as one in which a permanent exclusion was considered.

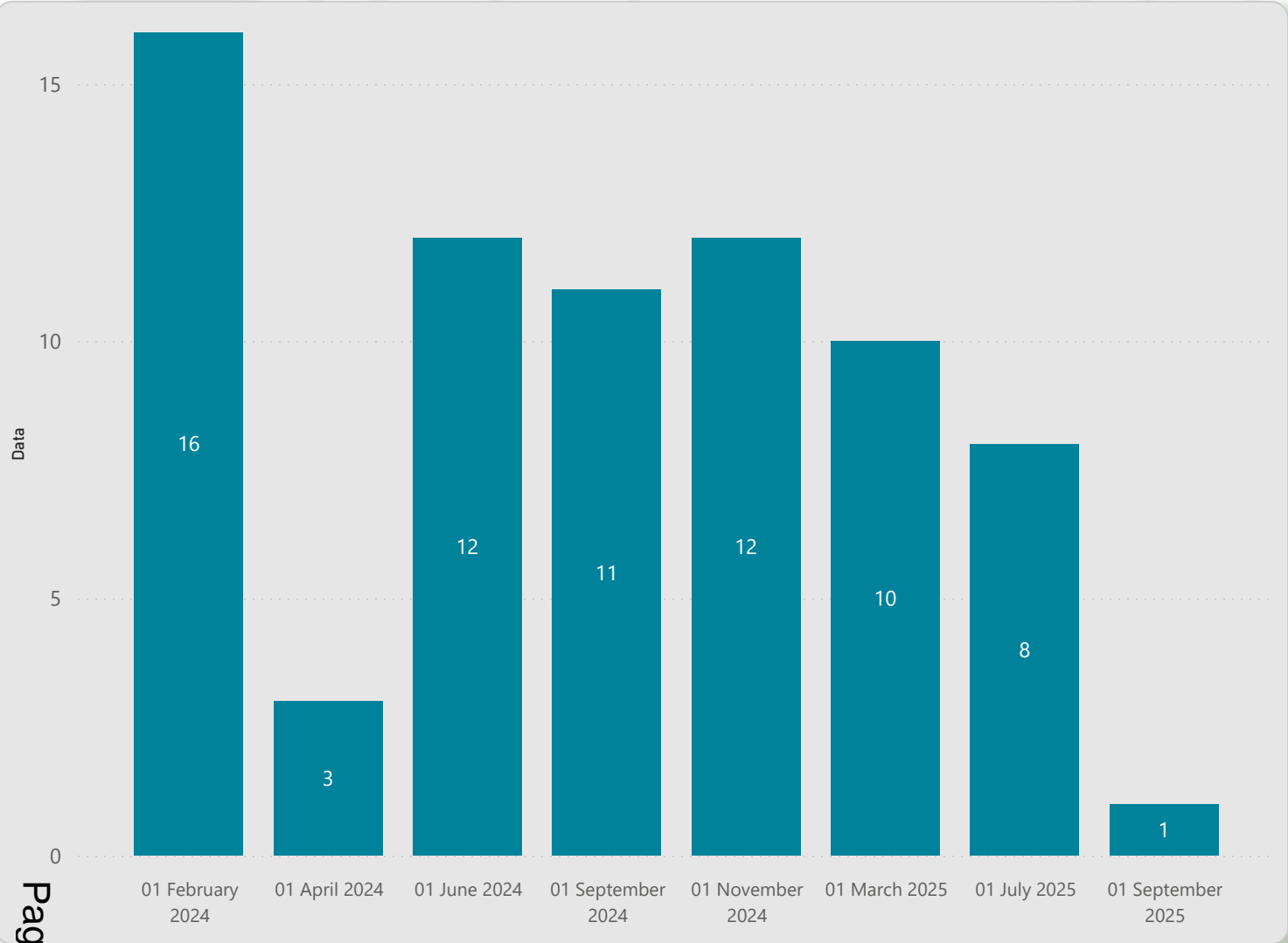
Monthly

Ellen Rowlands (ADDYSG)

Inclusion

Purpose: Support schools to provide a learning environment to help children and young people receive a suitable education

Indicator: Number of permanent Secondary exclusions



One case of permanent exclusion has been implemented since the beginning of September as a result of an assault on a member of staff. The disciplinary panel has not yet met to confirm or reverse the decision. In comparison with the previous year - 11 permanent exclusions were implemented in the same period last year. This reduction reflects the proactive work with schools last year, which is starting to bear fruit but while progress has been made, there is further work to be done to ensure continued safety and inclusion.

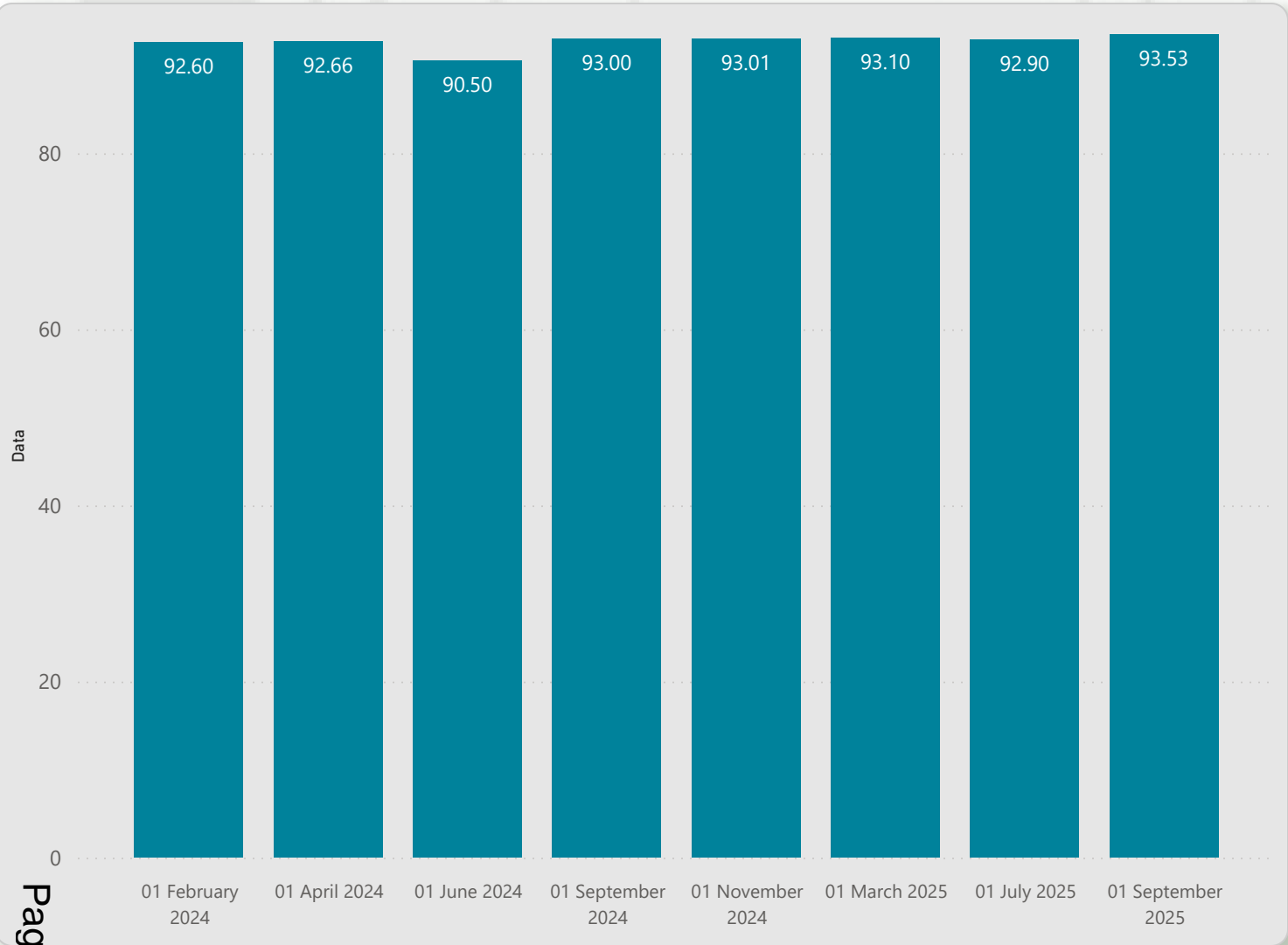
Monthly

Ellen Rowlands (ADDYSG)

Welfare

Purpose: Support pupils to ensure successful attendance at education

Indicator: % attendance of Primary pupils



The Primary attendance percentage is above the Welsh average. 10 Schools in Gwynedd with % less than 90%.

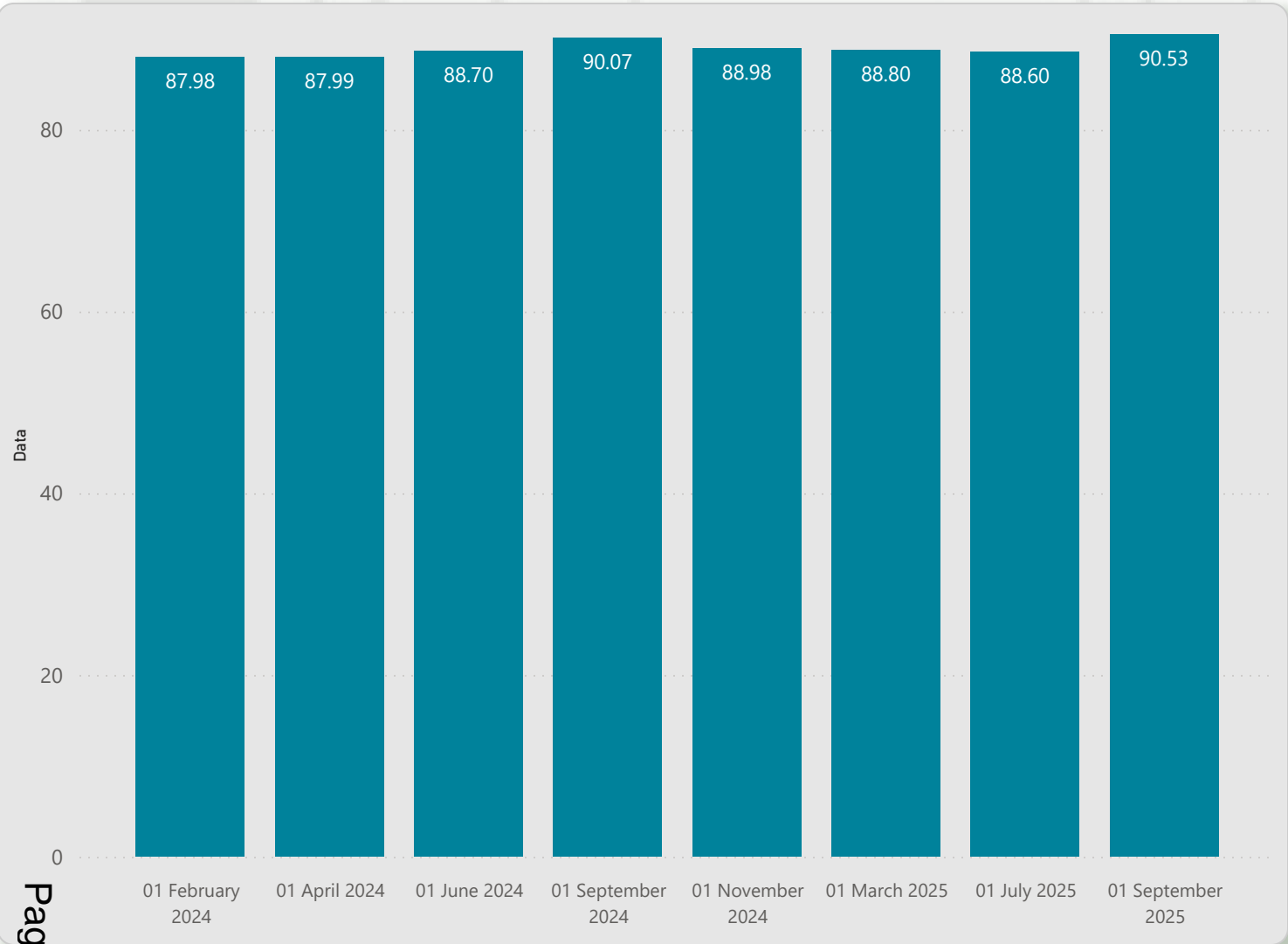
Monthly

Ellen Rowlands (ADDYSG)

Welfare

Purpose: Support pupils to ensure successful attendance at education

Indicator: % attendance of Secondary pupils



The Authority's average was 92%, last year for the same period was 91.9%. Sickness and holidays are the main reasons for absences. A number of schools now report holidays as unauthorised with of 8.5% contributing to unauthorised absences.

Wales average of 92.3% with no change compared to the same period in the 2024/25 academic year.

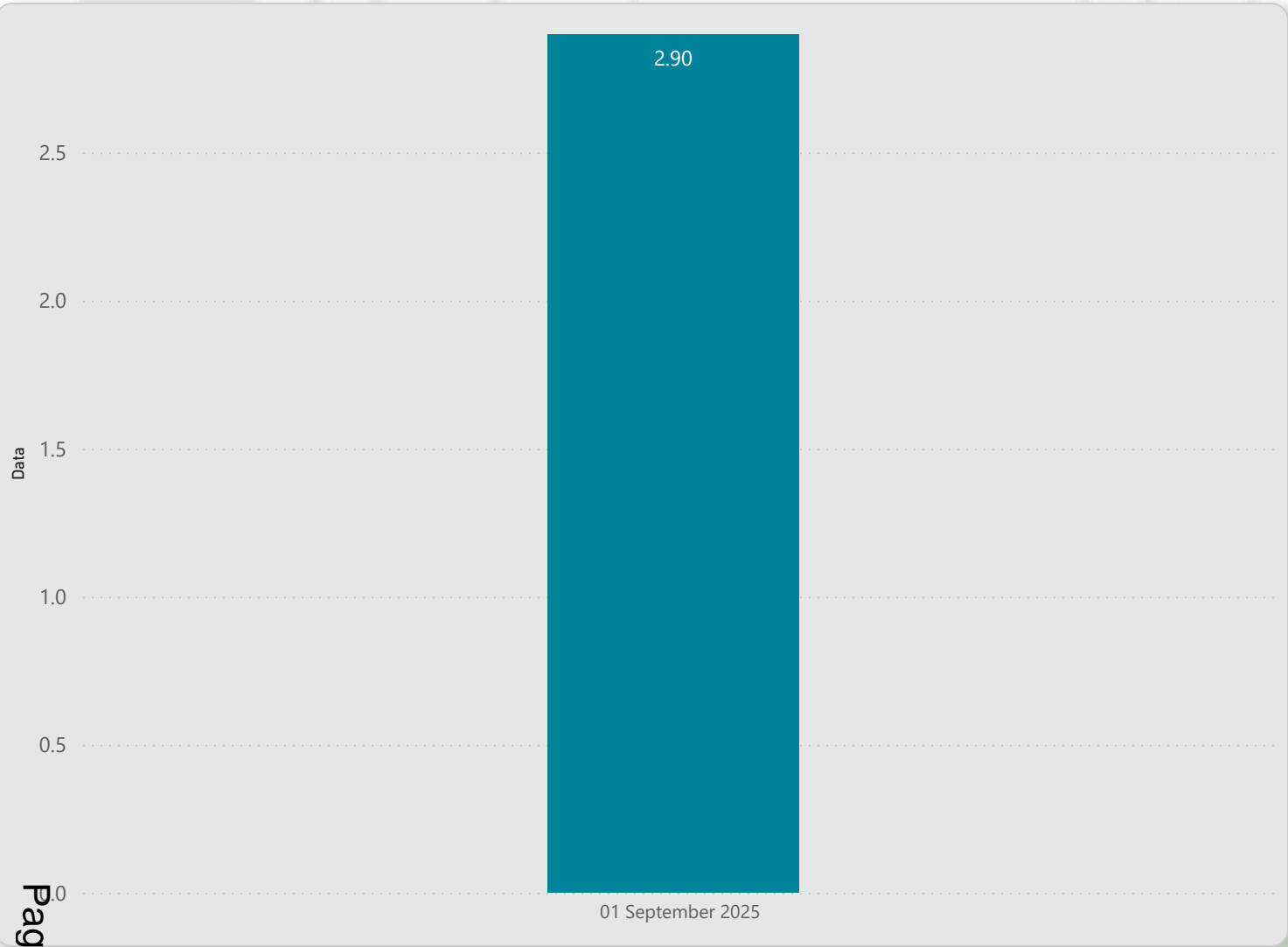
Monthly

Ellen Rowlands (ADDYSG)

Welfare

Purpose: Support pupils to ensure successful attendance at education

Indicator: % of pupils (that are open to the Welfare Service) whose parents have received prosecutions under 444 (1)



Parents have a statutory duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly. When there is ongoing absence without an acceptable explanation, the local authority has the power to prosecute parents under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Prosecutions are considered a last resort after preventative measures and supportive interventions have failed to ensure improvement.

The Education Welfare Service operates on principles of support and collaboration, giving families every opportunity to improve pupil attendance before considering legal action. Prosecuting parents is the final step after a thorough process of intervention, meetings, action plans and statutory warnings.

During the period in question, 104 cases were recorded where intervention by the Education Welfare Service was required. Of these, only 3 cases resulted in parents being prosecuted under Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996.

- This equates to around 2.9% of all cases.
- This low percentage clearly shows that prosecution is a last resort, used only after all support and assistance measures have been implemented.
- In the 3 cases where prosecution occurred, there was a noticeable improvement in the attendance of the pupils involved. As a result, the pupils have shown improved attendance. This demonstrates that legal action, following prior intervention by the Education Welfare Service, can lead to positive behaviour change.

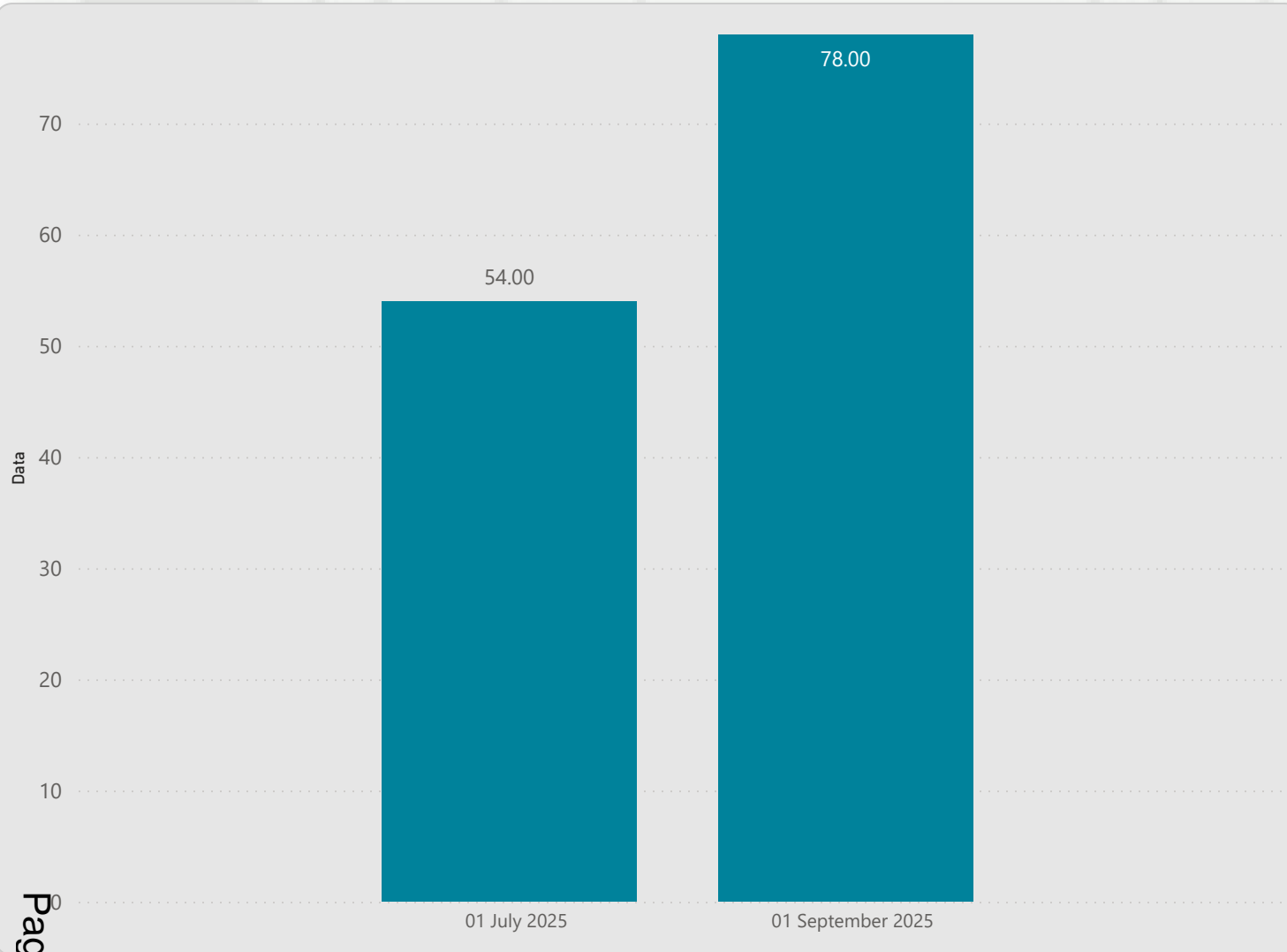
Monthly

Ellen Rowlands (ADDYSG)

Welfare

Purpose: Support pupils to ensure successful attendance at education

Indicator: % of pupils open to the Wellbeing Service reporting improvement in attendance



During the reporting period there were 104 cases open to the Education Welfare Service. By 26 September 2025, an improvement had been identified in the attendance of 81 of those pupils. This equates to an improvement rate of around 78%, which shows the positive impact of early and collaborative interventions. The Wellbeing Officers have acted proactively by targeting pupils with poor attendance at the start of term, focusing specifically on Years 7 and 11, identifying high risk groups and offering bespoke and early support to reduce absenteeism and increase engagement.

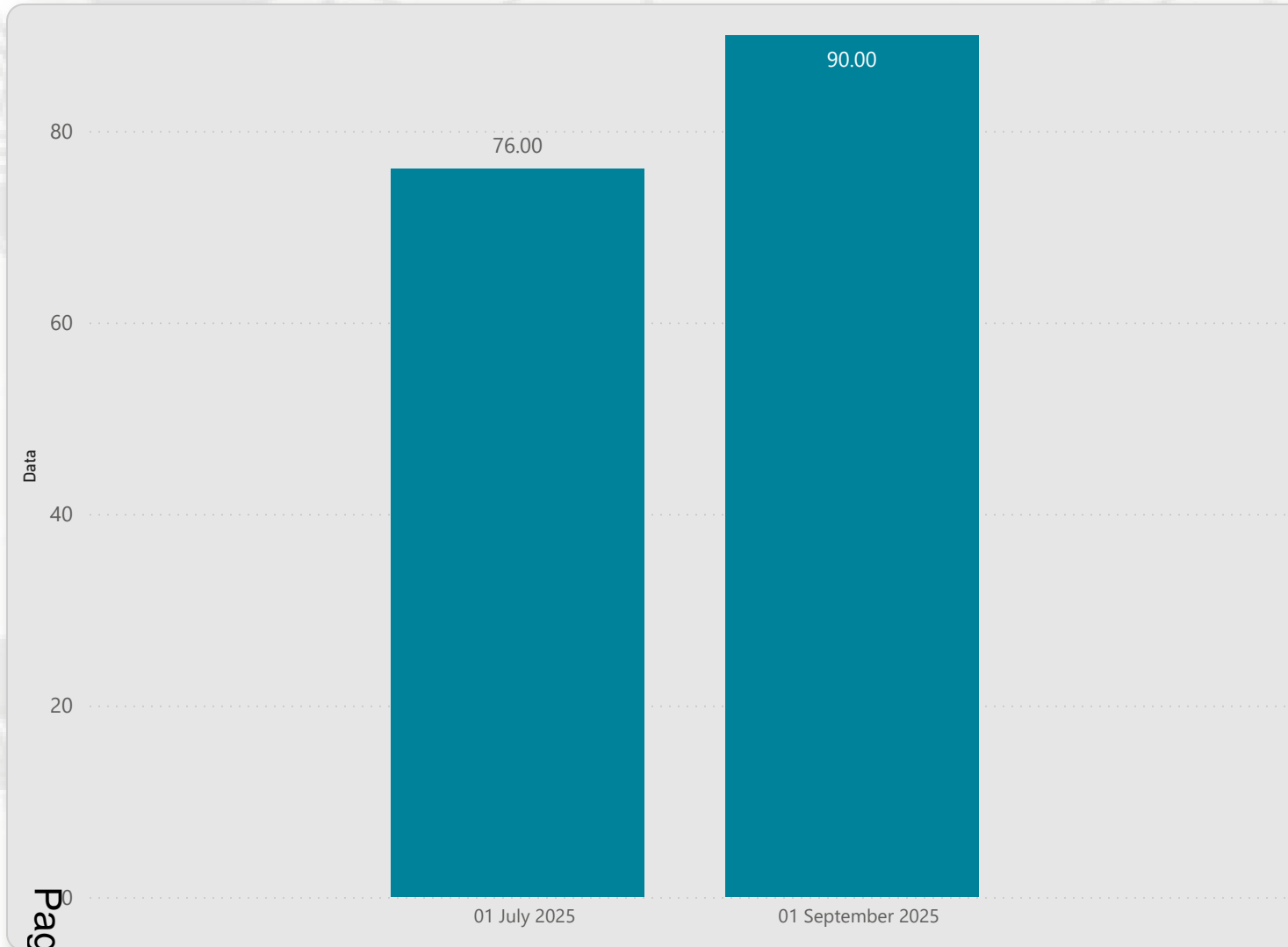
Monthly

Ellen Rowlands (ADDYSG)

English as an Additional Language

Purpose: Ensure support for the Department by providing a high quality of data and information infrastructure that drives decision and performance

Indicator: % attendance of pupils receiving support



The data presented is based on attendance over one week during this period when the team started supporting pupils after our forum. One pupil missed 2 sessions because they were visiting their home country.

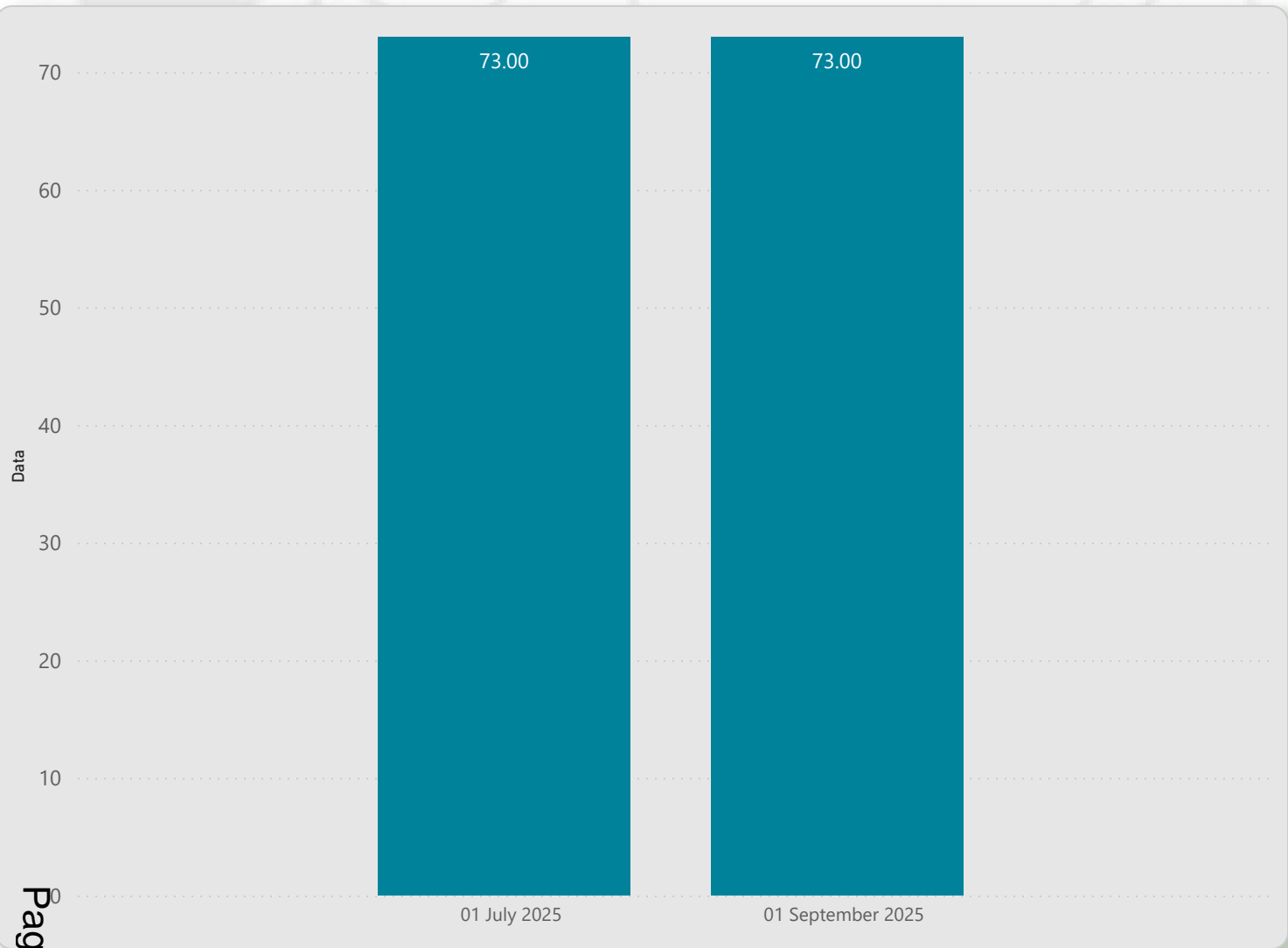
Quarterly

Helen Elisabeth Speddy (ADDYSG)

Family Engagement Officers

Purpose: Support better educational outcomes for children from disadvantaged or other vulnerable backgrounds by addressing issues in the learning environment at home

Indicator: % of Year 6 pupils receiving support successfully transition to Secondary



Family liaison officers have been providing extended transitional support to the most vulnerable Year 6 pupils, to ensure a successful move from primary to secondary school. During the current reporting period, it was recorded that 73% of the pupils who received the additional support had settled positively into secondary school. This is evidence of the strong partnership work between officers and schools, demonstrating the positive impact of the support on the majority of pupils.

However, it is important to note that 27% of these pupils are still facing challenges during the transition. These barriers include wellbeing concerns and difficulties adjusting to a new environment. This figure highlights the need to strengthen support for the most vulnerable, to ensure that every child has an equal opportunity to succeed when moving on to secondary school.

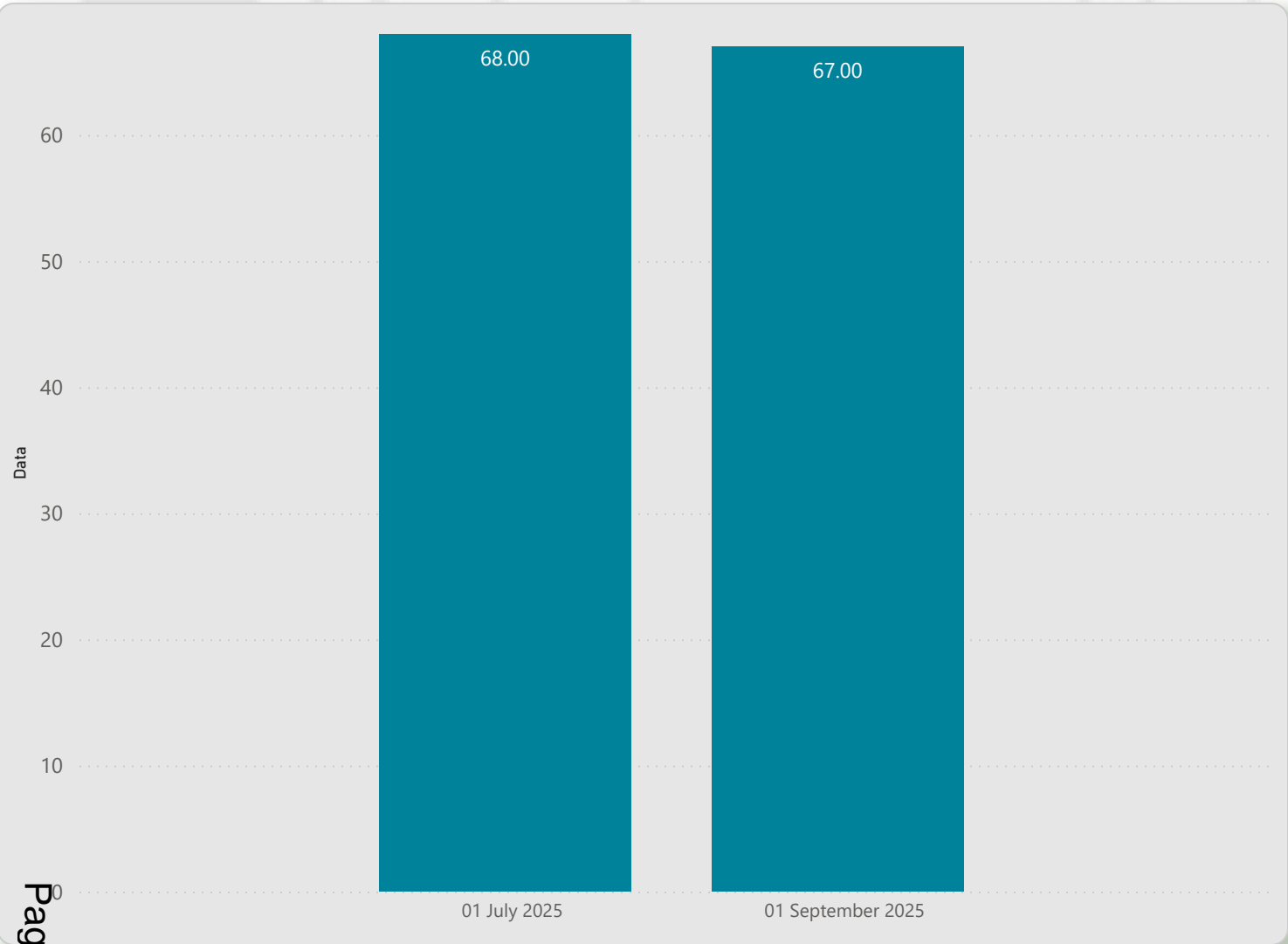
Monthly

Ellen Rowlands (ADDYSG)

Family Engagement Officers

Purpose: Support better educational outcomes for children from disadvantaged or other vulnerable backgrounds by addressing issues in the learning environment at home

Indicator: % of pupils who have received support report well-being progress



During the current reporting period, it was recorded that 67% of the pupils who received the support reported positive progress in their confidence. This is evidence of the direct impact of the support on developing confidence, resilience and a sense of belonging among our young people.

However, it is important to acknowledge that 33% of the pupils receiving support are still facing challenges related to self-confidence. This figure highlights the need to strengthen targeted support for the most vulnerable, to ensure that every child has an equal opportunity to thrive and make the most of the educational opportunities available to them.

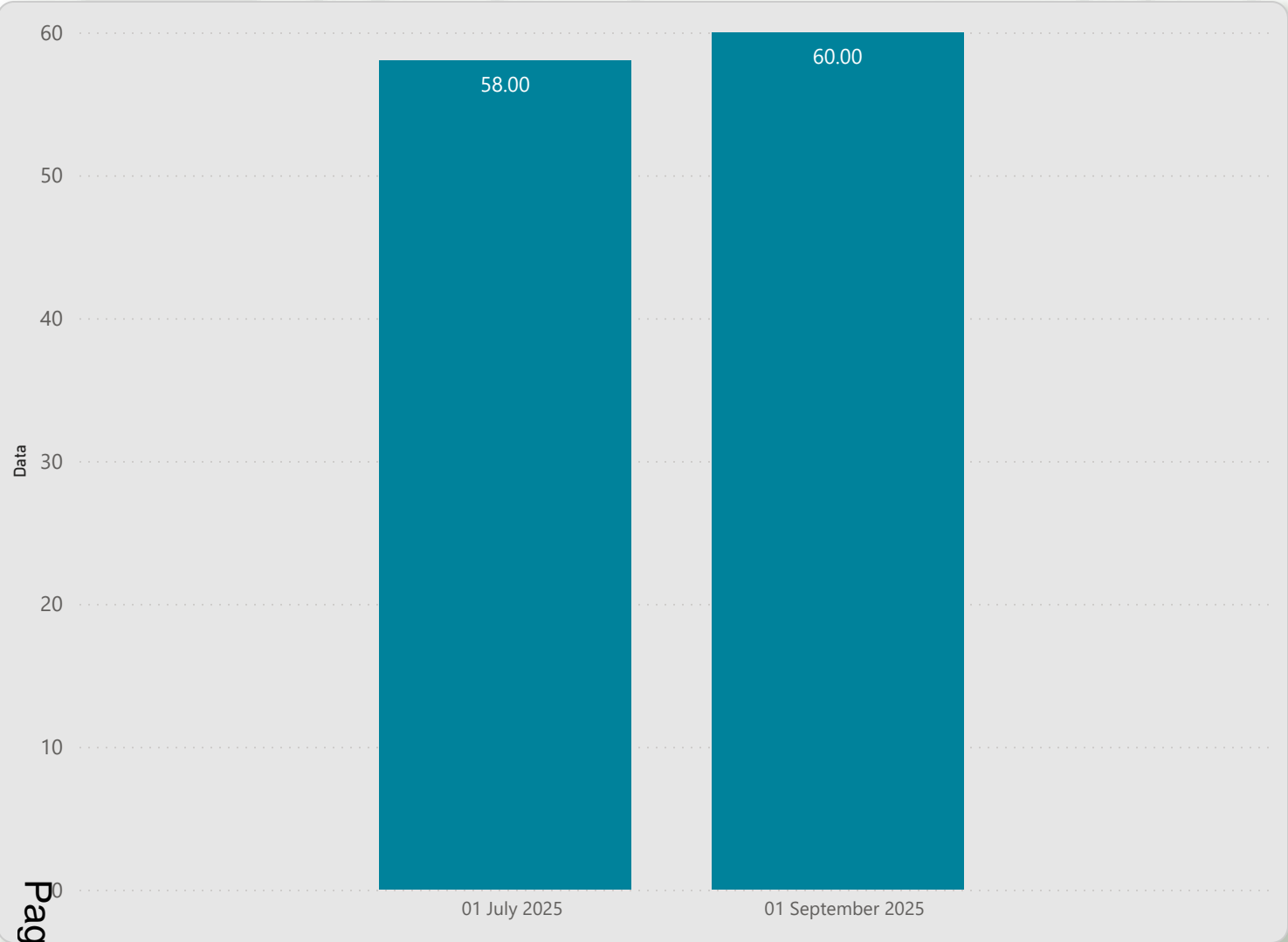
Monthly

Ellen Rowlands (ADDYSG)

Family Engagement Officers

Purpose: Support better educational outcomes for children from disadvantaged or other vulnerable backgrounds by addressing issues in the learning environment at home

Indicator: % of pupils attending our community activities



During the current reporting period, it was recorded that 60% of the pupils receiving support had taken part in community activities.

These activities have included:

- Supporting at a community afternoon tea event
- Visiting care homes to run friendship sessions with older residents
- Taking part in fun activities organised over the summer holidays

However, it is important to acknowledge that 40% of the pupils did not take part in community activities over the summer. Nevertheless, this group continues to engage well with the opportunities available during term time, suggesting that there is a need to continue developing accessible and inclusive opportunities to ensure that every child can benefit from community experiences that support their wellbeing and personal development.

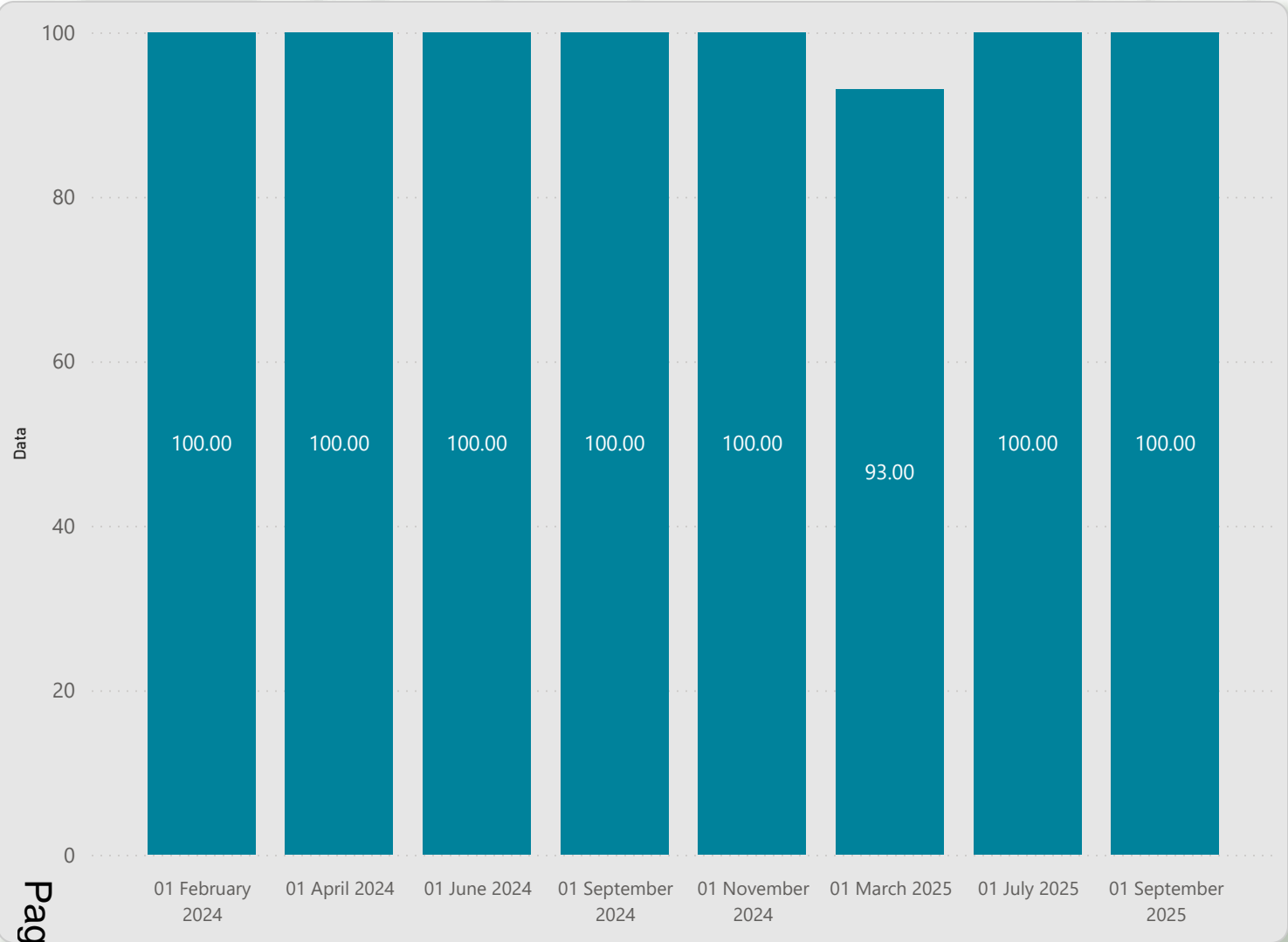
Monthly

Ellen Rowlands (ADDYSG)

Language Centres

Purpose: Promote the achievement and well-being of Gwynedd's children and young people to acquire the Welsh language

Indicator: % of children and young people achieving Level 1 or above at the end of their period in a Language Centre (Primary)



The results remain outstanding.

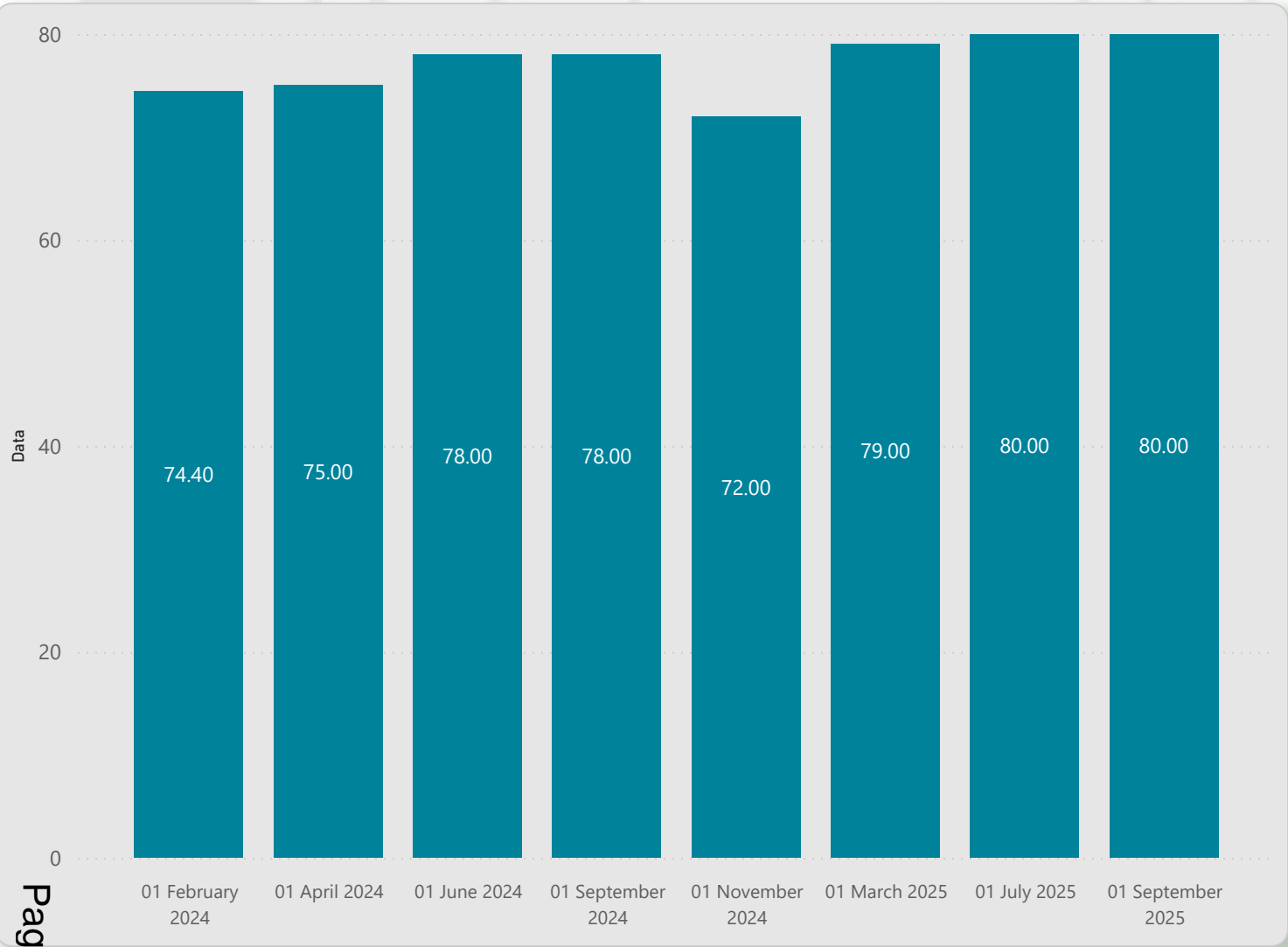
Quarterly

Siwan Llwyd Roberts (ADDYSG)

Language Centres

Purpose: Promote the achievement and well-being of Gwynedd's children and young people to acquire the Welsh language

Indicator: % of children and young people reaching Level 2 at the end of their period in a Language Centre (Primary)



Primary Immersion Centres level 2 results are consistent over time and show an increase of 2% between September 2024 and September 2025.

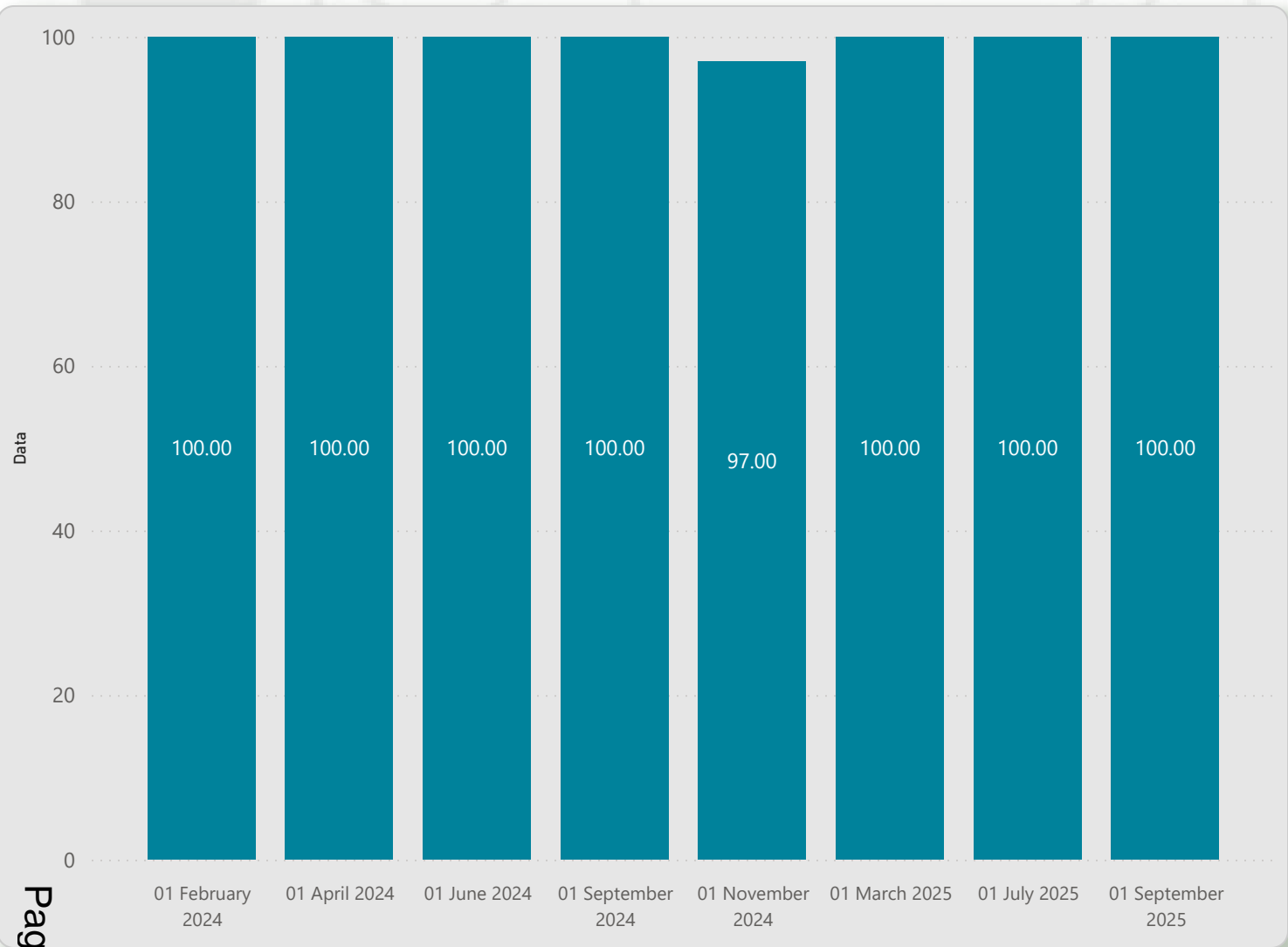
Quarterly

Siwan Llwyd Roberts (ADDYSG)

Language Centres

Purpose: Promote the achievement and well-being of Gwynedd's children and young people to acquire the Welsh language

Indicator: % of children and young people achieving Level 1 or above at the end of their period in a Language Centre (Secondary)



The results remain consistent over time.

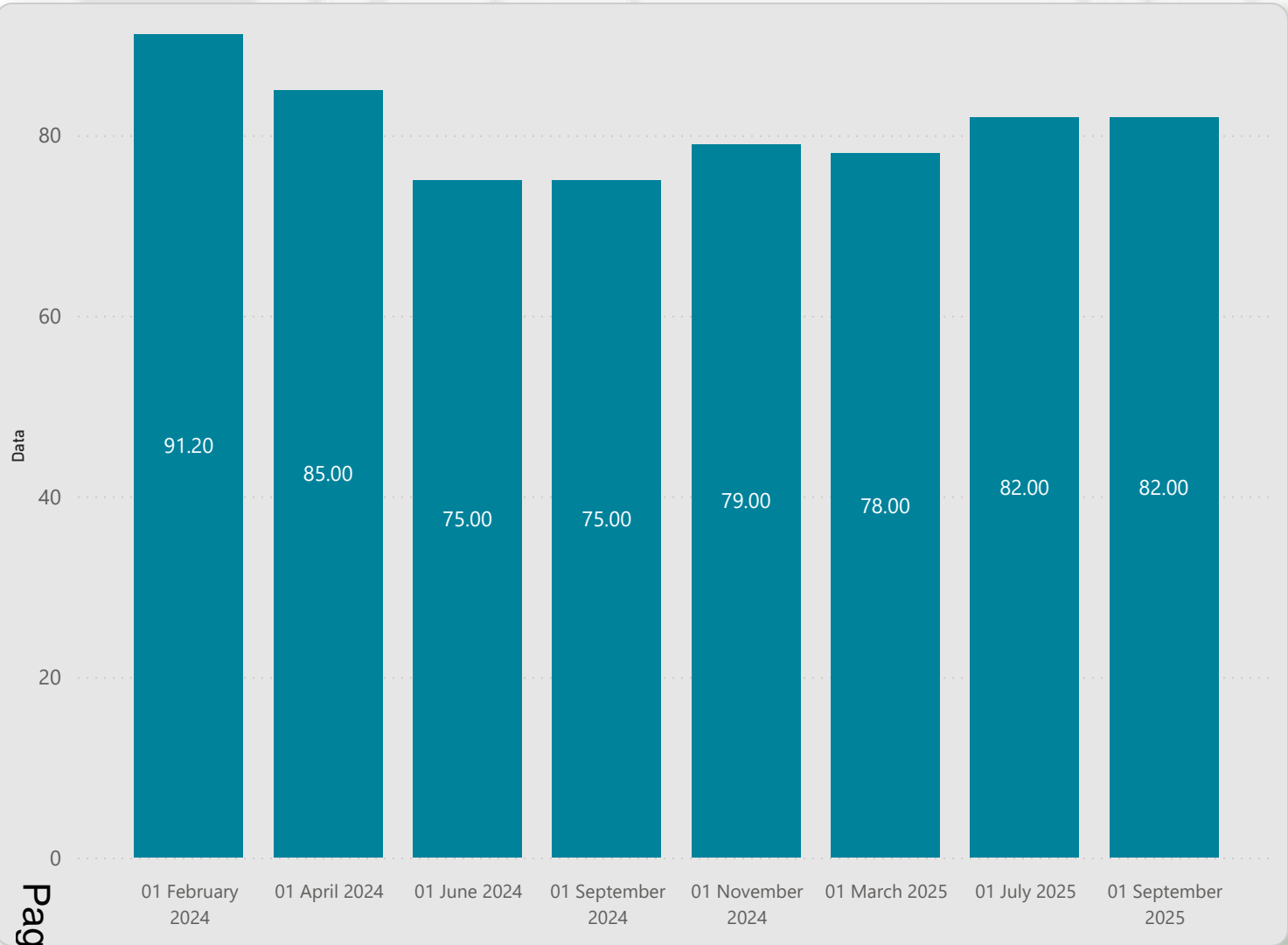
Quarterly

Siwan Llwyd Roberts (ADDYSG)

Language Centres

Purpose: Promote the achievement and well-being of Gwynedd's children and young people to acquire the Welsh language

Indicator: % of children and young people who reach Level 2 at the end of their period at a Language Centre (Secondary)



Level 2 (Secondary) learner outcomes in our immersion centres are consistent over time and show an increase of 7% between September 2024 and September 2025.

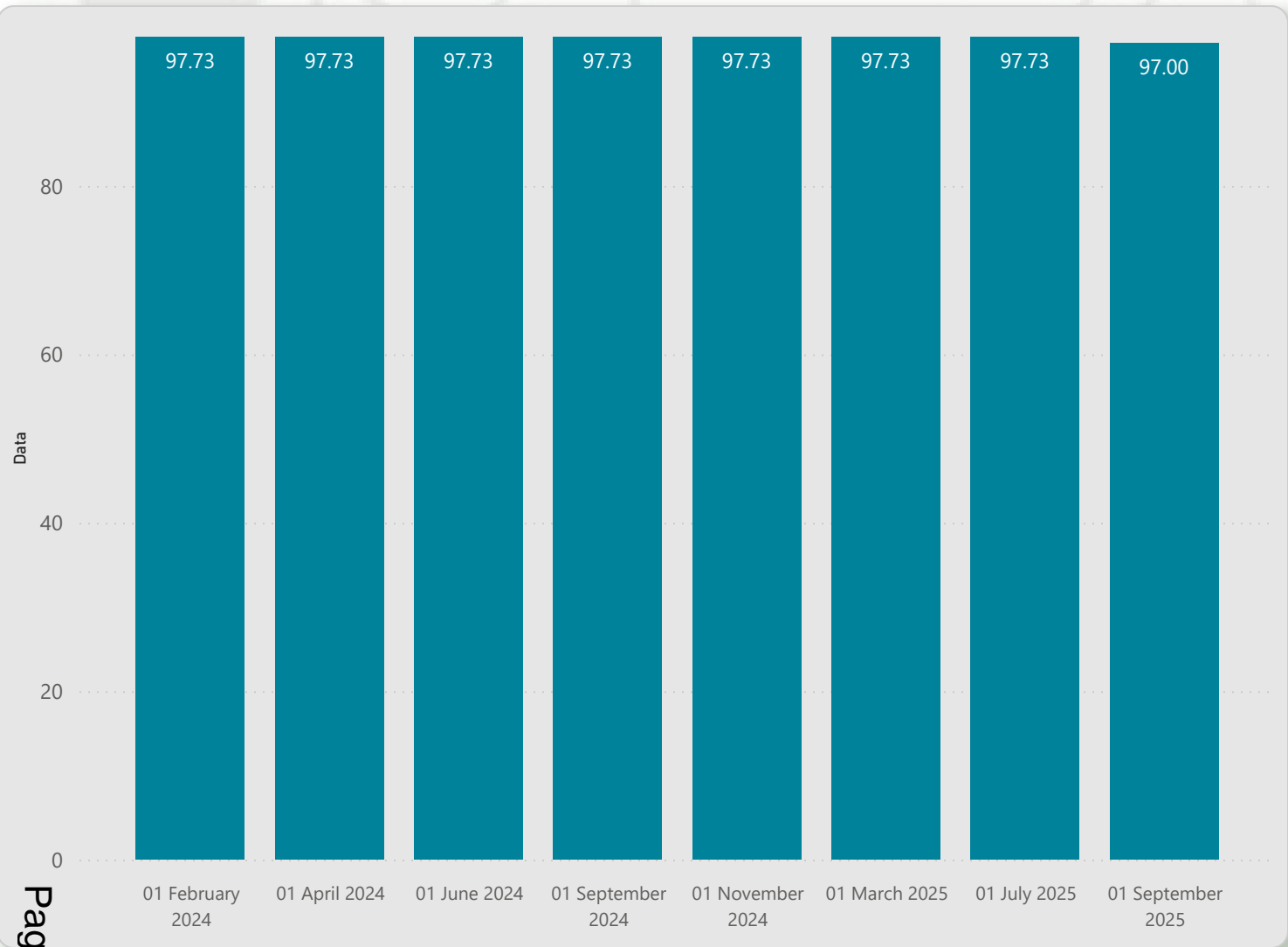
Quarterly

Siwan Llwyd Roberts (ADDYSG)

The Welsh Language

Purpose: Ensure that the children of Gwynedd are educated through the medium of Welsh and confident to use the Welsh language in their daily lives

Indicator: % of whole school primary learners undertaking at least 70% of their school activities (curricular and extra-curricular) in Welsh - Gwynedd



The decrease in the data, from 97.73% to 97%, reflects the situation regarding the current cohort of pupils in every primary school, including the transitional school. The Education Authority is responding by ensuring that an experienced teacher is working in that school, and in two other schools in Bangor, modelling good practice and collaborating with school staff to improve and strengthen Welsh-medium provision in the Foundation Phase. In addition, a Welsh for Education Workforce Tutor is providing Welsh lessons to staff at the transitional school, teaching Welsh at a basic level to some and helping others to refine their skills and increase their confidence. One teacher from the transitional school is currently on a sabbatical course.

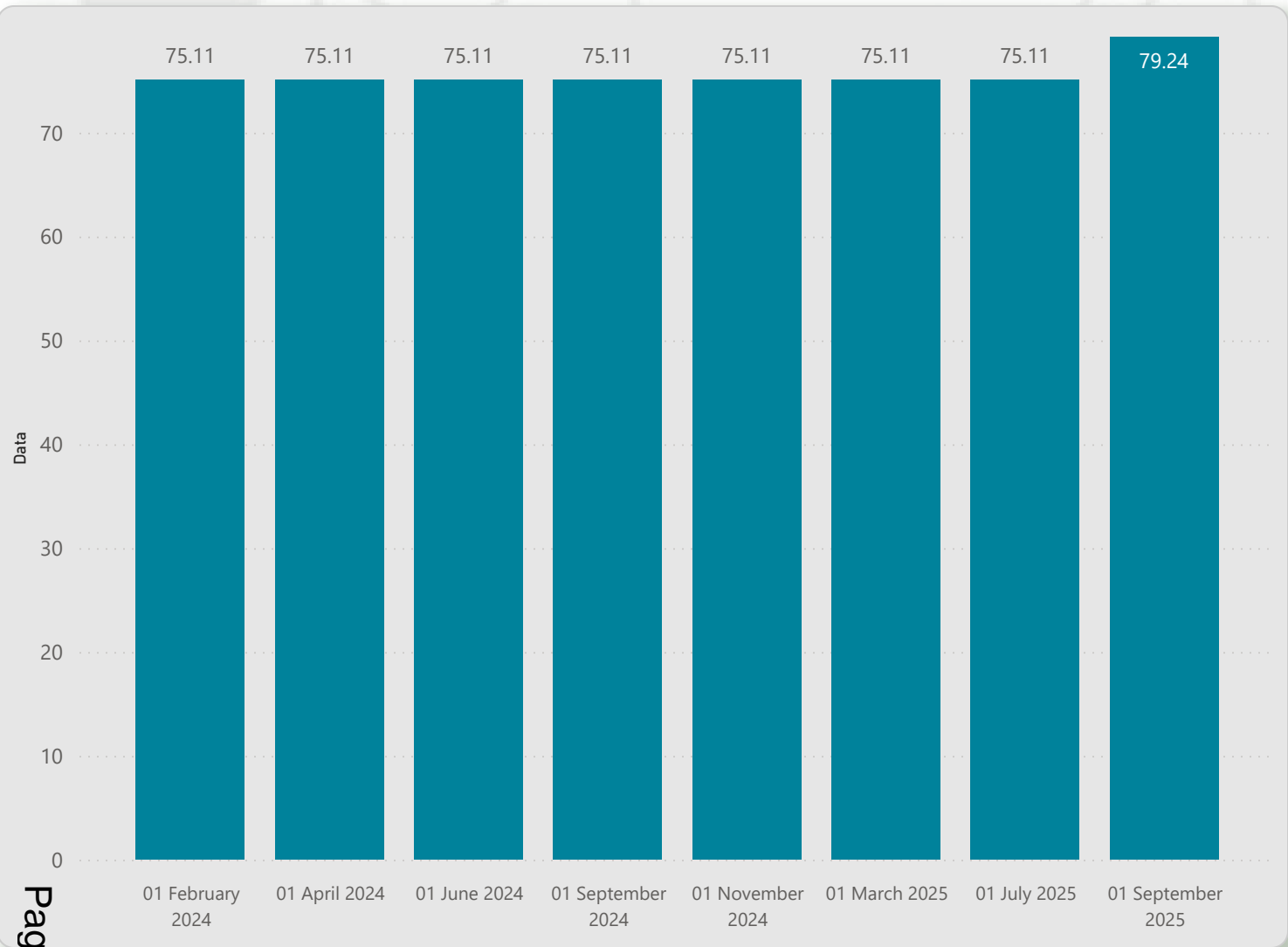
Quarterly

Siwan Llwyd Roberts (ADDYSG)

The Welsh Language

Purpose: Ensure that the children of Gwynedd are educated through the medium of Welsh and confident to use the Welsh language in their daily lives

Indicator: % of whole school secondary learners undertaking at least 70% of their school activities (curricular and extra-curricular) in Welsh - Gwynedd



The data collected for the WESP this year shows that 79.24% of learners in Gwynedd’s secondary schools undertake at least 70% of their curricular and extracurricular activities through the medium of Welsh. Although this percentage suggests a positive trend, the current data includes learners who are taught in bilingual classes, and therefore the data-collection arrangements need to continue being refined to ensure clarity.

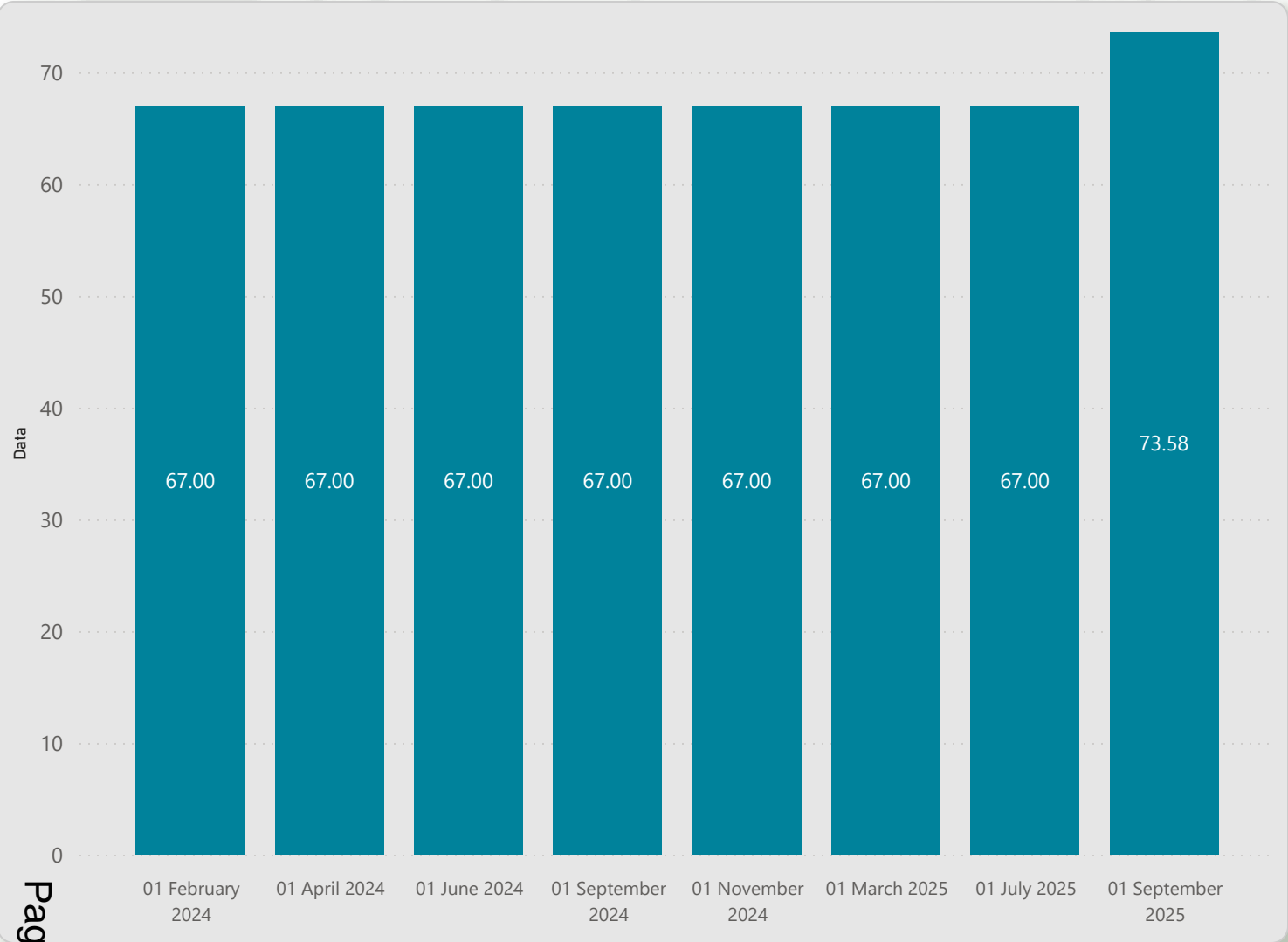
Quarterly

Siwan Llwyd Roberts (ADDYSG)

The Welsh Language

Purpose: Ensure that the children of Gwynedd are educated through the medium of Welsh and confident to use the Welsh language in their daily lives

Indicator: % of Year 10 and 11 subjects taught through the medium of Welsh



The data collected for the WESP this year shows that 73.58% of Year 10 and 11 pupils are being educated and are registered to sit examinations through the medium of Welsh. The percentage is very encouraging, but the method of data collection needs to continue being refined in order to report with full confidence against the measure.

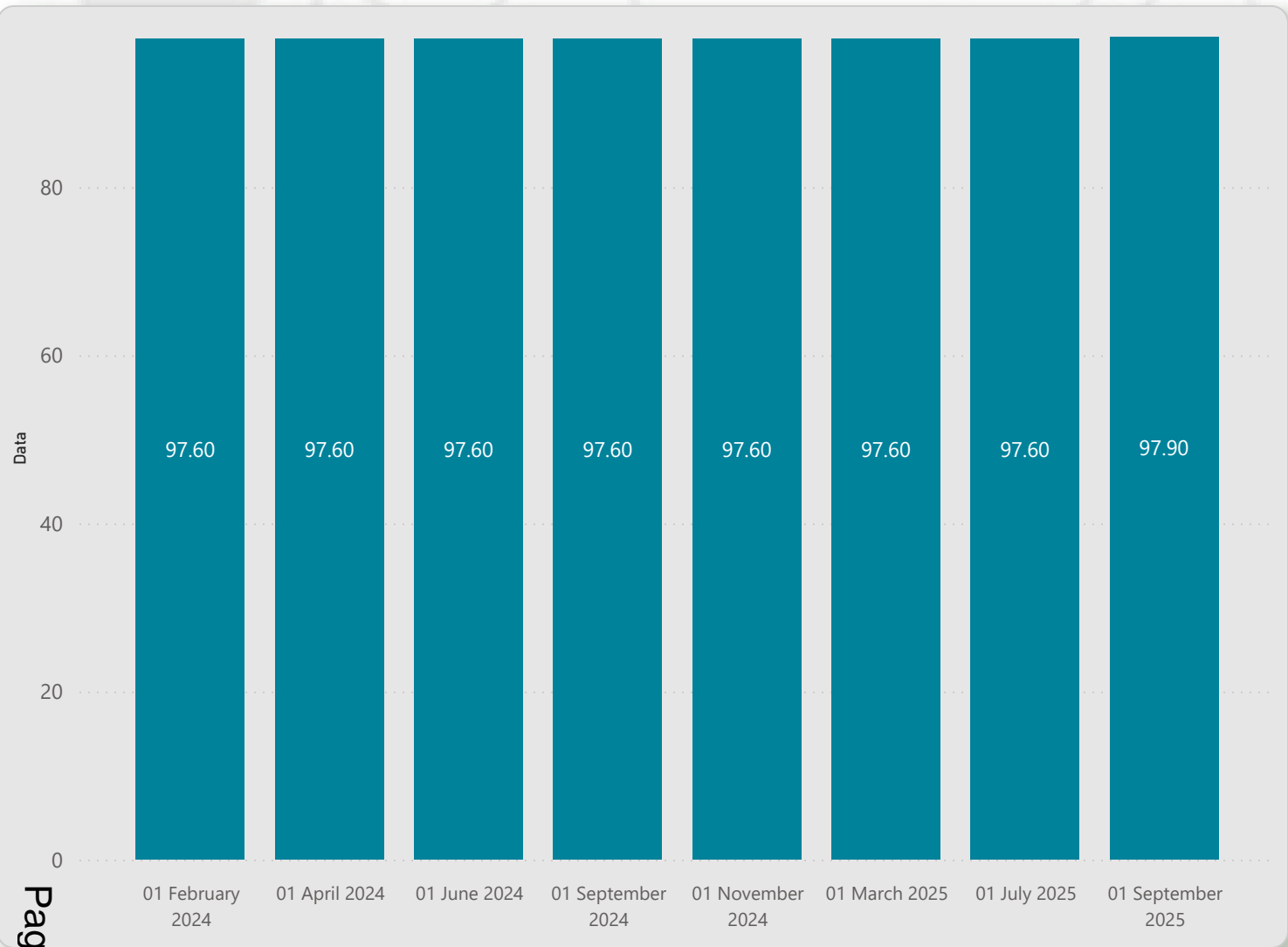
Quarterly

Siwan Llwyd Roberts (ADDYSG)

The Welsh Language

Purpose: Ensure that the children of Gwynedd are educated through the medium of Welsh and confident to use the Welsh language in their daily lives

Indicator: % of primary teachers who are confident to teach through the medium of Welsh



This data is collected through the Annual School Workforce Survey, and its collection is a statutory requirement under Welsh Government regulations. The percentage of teachers who are able to teach through the medium of Welsh remains very positive. To support those who lack confidence, the Education Authority is collaborating with Bangor University and the National Centre for Learning Welsh to provide foundation lessons, language-refresher lessons, and confidence-building sessions. Staff at the transitional school have taken advantage of the programme in the past and continue to receive regular training from a tutor. At present, one member of the school's staff is on a sabbatical course.

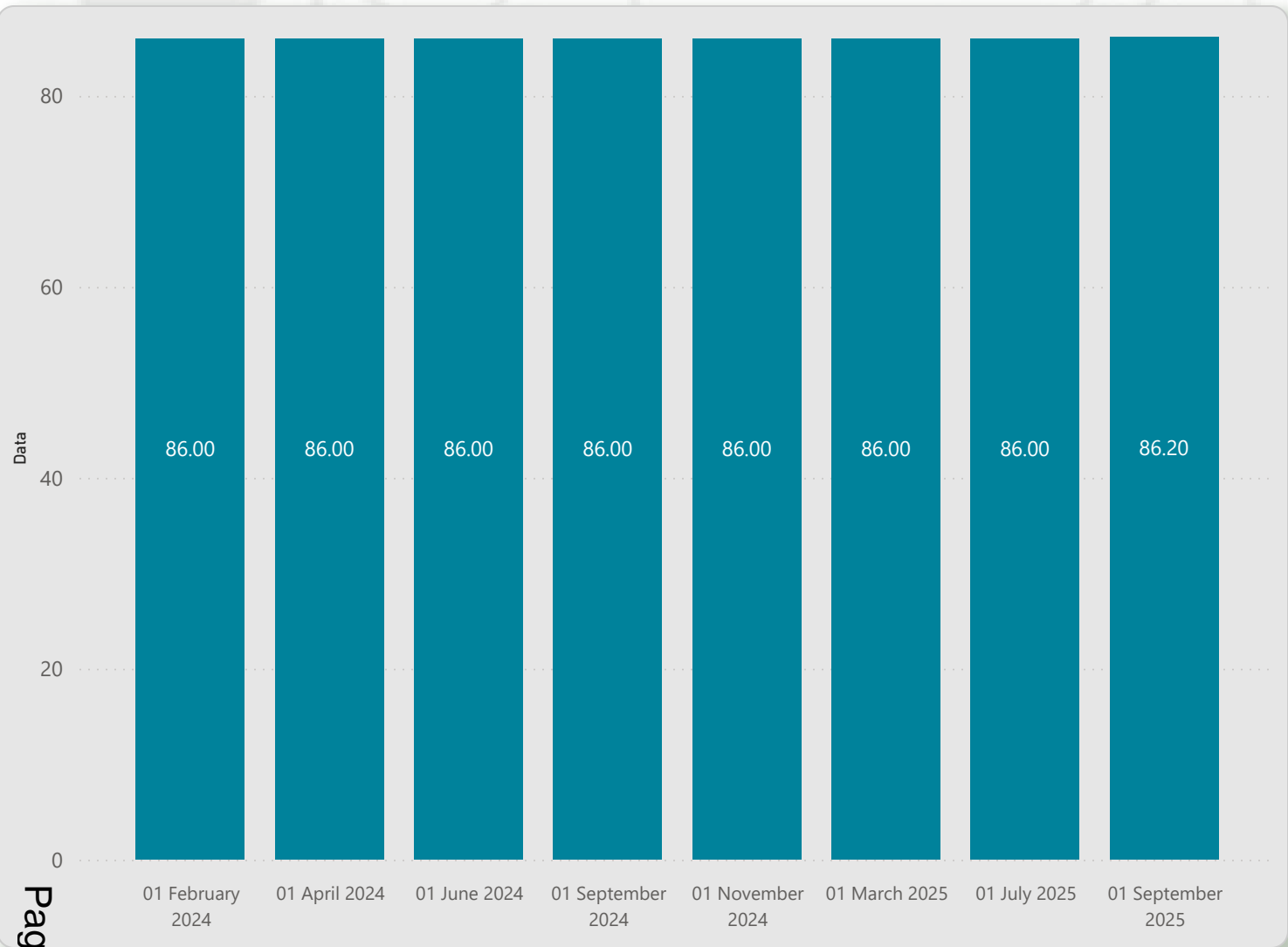
Quarterly

Siwan Llwyd Roberts (ADDYSG)

The Welsh Language

Purpose: Ensure that the children of Gwynedd are educated through the medium of Welsh and confident to use the Welsh language in their daily lives

Indicator: % of secondary teachers who are confident to teach through the medium of Welsh



This data is collected through the Annual School Workforce Survey, and its collection is a statutory requirement under Welsh Government regulations. The percentage of teachers who feel confident teaching through the medium of Welsh remains consistently positive. To support those who are less confident, the Education Authority is collaborating with Bangor University and the National Centre for Learning Welsh to provide foundation lessons, language-refresher lessons, and confidence-building sessions. At present, staff in both transitional secondary schools are taking advantage of the programme. By December 2025, 17 members of staff from those schools will have begun courses specifically designed to meet their individual needs.

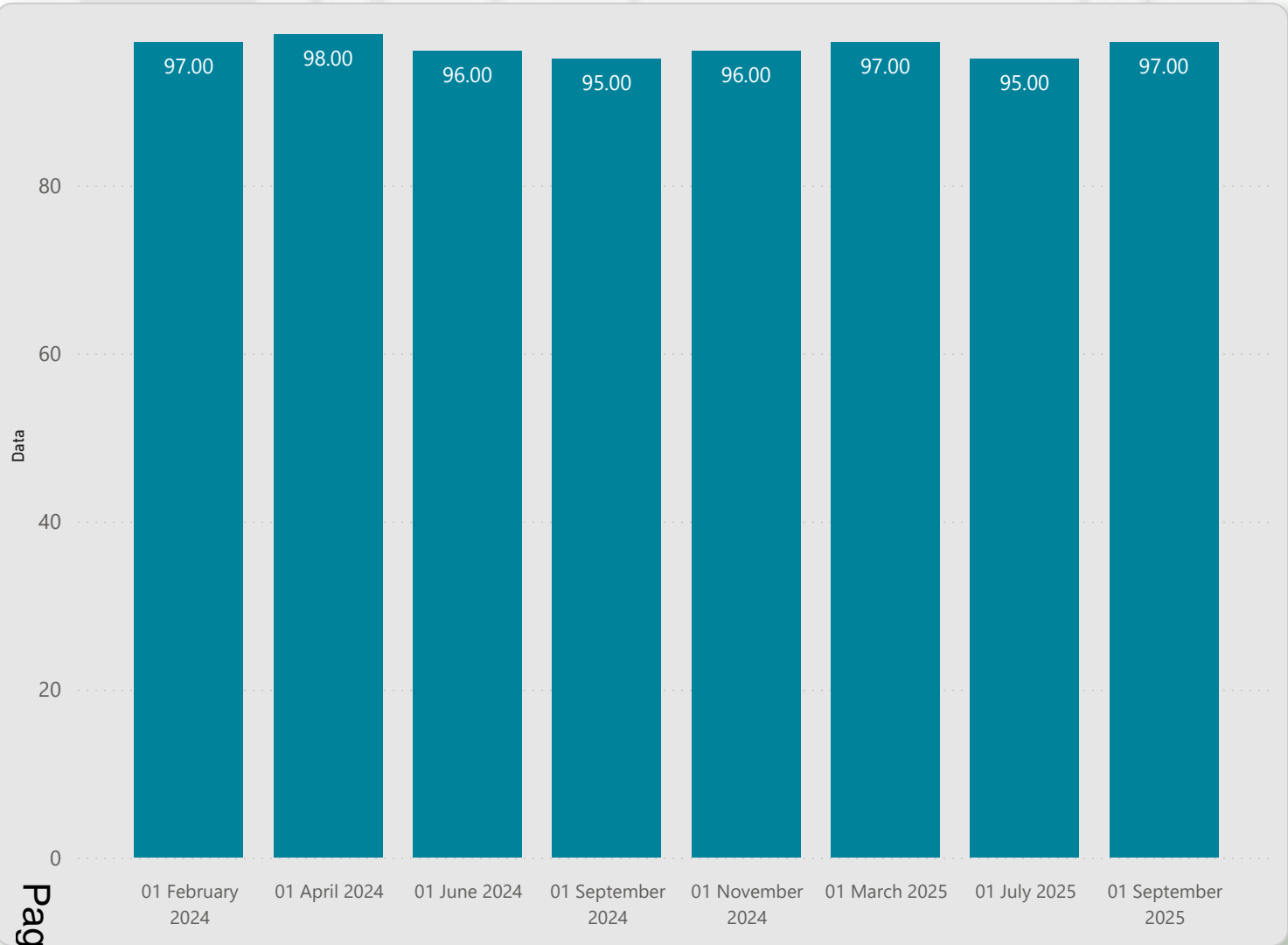
Quarterly

Siwan Llwyd Roberts (ADDYSG)

Youth Service

Purpose: I want you to listen to me, and include me; so that I can be a young, healthy, happy and safe person to improve my wellbeing to help me reach my full potential

Indicator: % of young people who would like to continue attending wellbeing sessions in the future.



This figure has remained consistently high over the last two years, and it is a priority for the Service, that we continue to engage with young people to participate in our broad provisions. The feedback is collected from the young people at the end of each session in the schools and within the community. The process of evaluating our service is ongoing, where we receive feedback from young people to be able to adapt and respond to their needs. The Service will be sharing a questionnaire within the next few months to target the individuals who do not engage with our provision in order to receive valuable feedback.

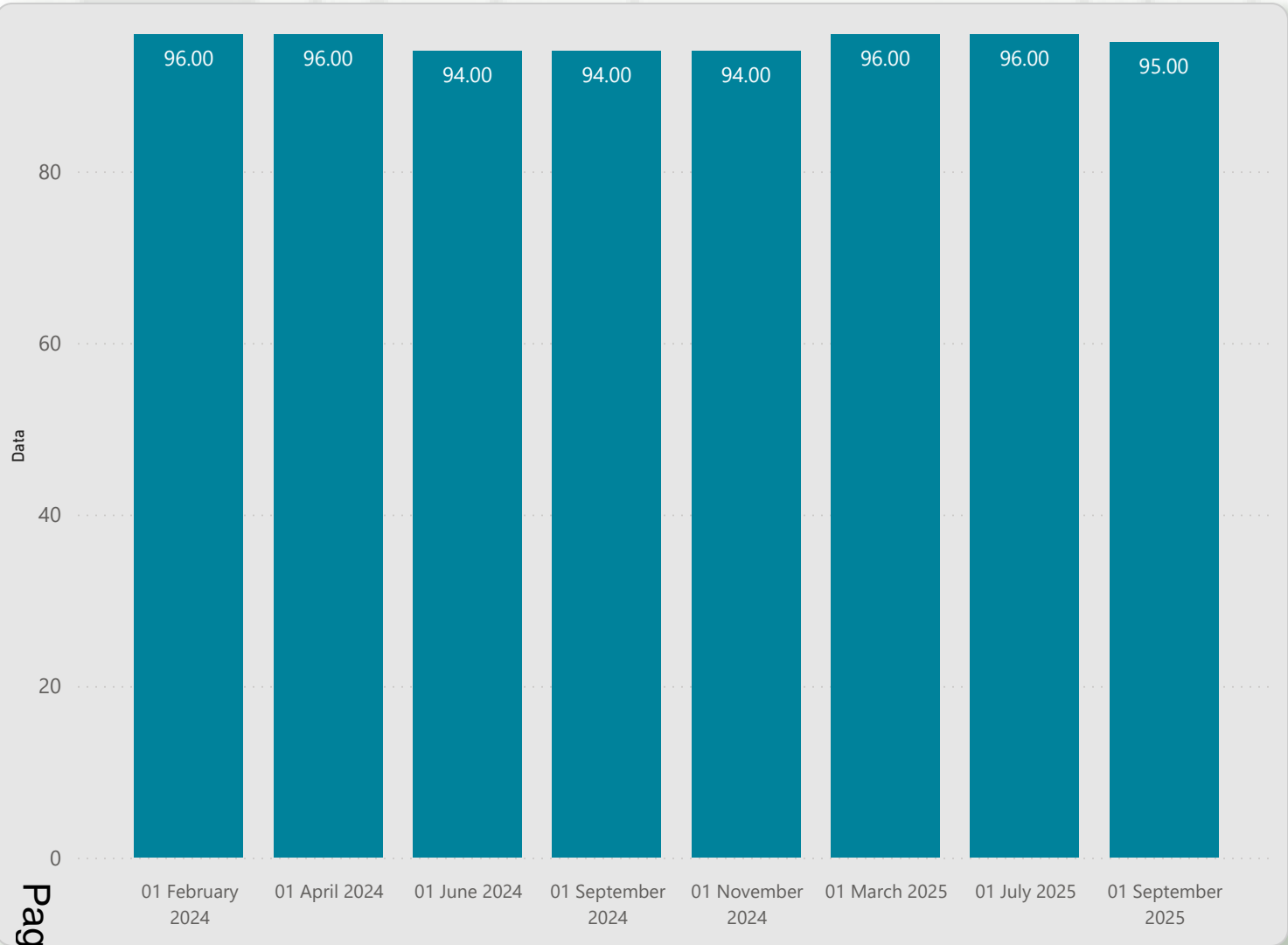
Monthly

Steffan Williams (ADDYSG)

Youth Service

Purpose: I want you to listen to me, and include me; so that I can be a young, healthy, happy and safe person to improve my wellbeing to help me reach my full potential

Indicator: % of young people whose Wellbeing has improved after attending the service



Again, this figure has remained consistently high over the last two years which reflects one of the service's top priorities to improve the wellbeing of Gwynedd's young people. The feedback is collected from the young people at the end of each session in the schools and within the community. The challenge will be to continue with these standards, with the well-being challenges of young people continuing. We as a service continue to use the principles of the 5 Ways to Wellbeing to plan our provision and ensure that young people's voice is central to our plans.

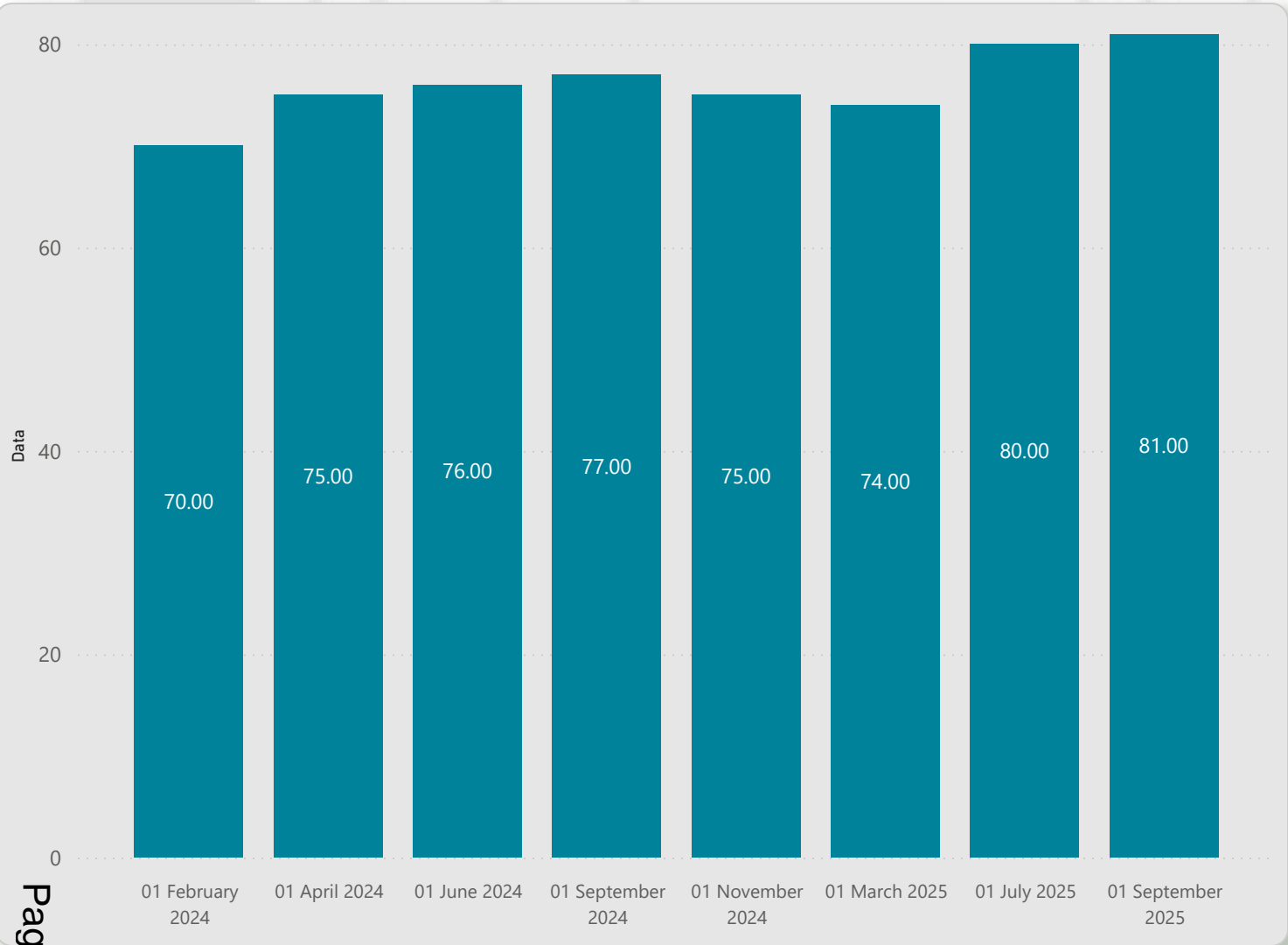
Monthly

Steffan Williams (ADDYSG)

Youth Service

Purpose: I want you to listen to me, and include me; so that I can be a young, healthy, happy and safe person to improve my wellbeing to help me reach my full potential

Indicator: % of young people who have achieved the objectives of their personal plans



This figure has risen since the last meeting. These personal plans are designed in collaboration with young people who include their short and long term goals which are central to their support package. This figure can vary from month to month as the journey of vulnerable young people is not the same and sometimes unexpected challenges need to be overcome as part of their support. The figure of 81% is an average of a figure for the data of young people reaching their short-term goals (90%) and long-term goals (71%).

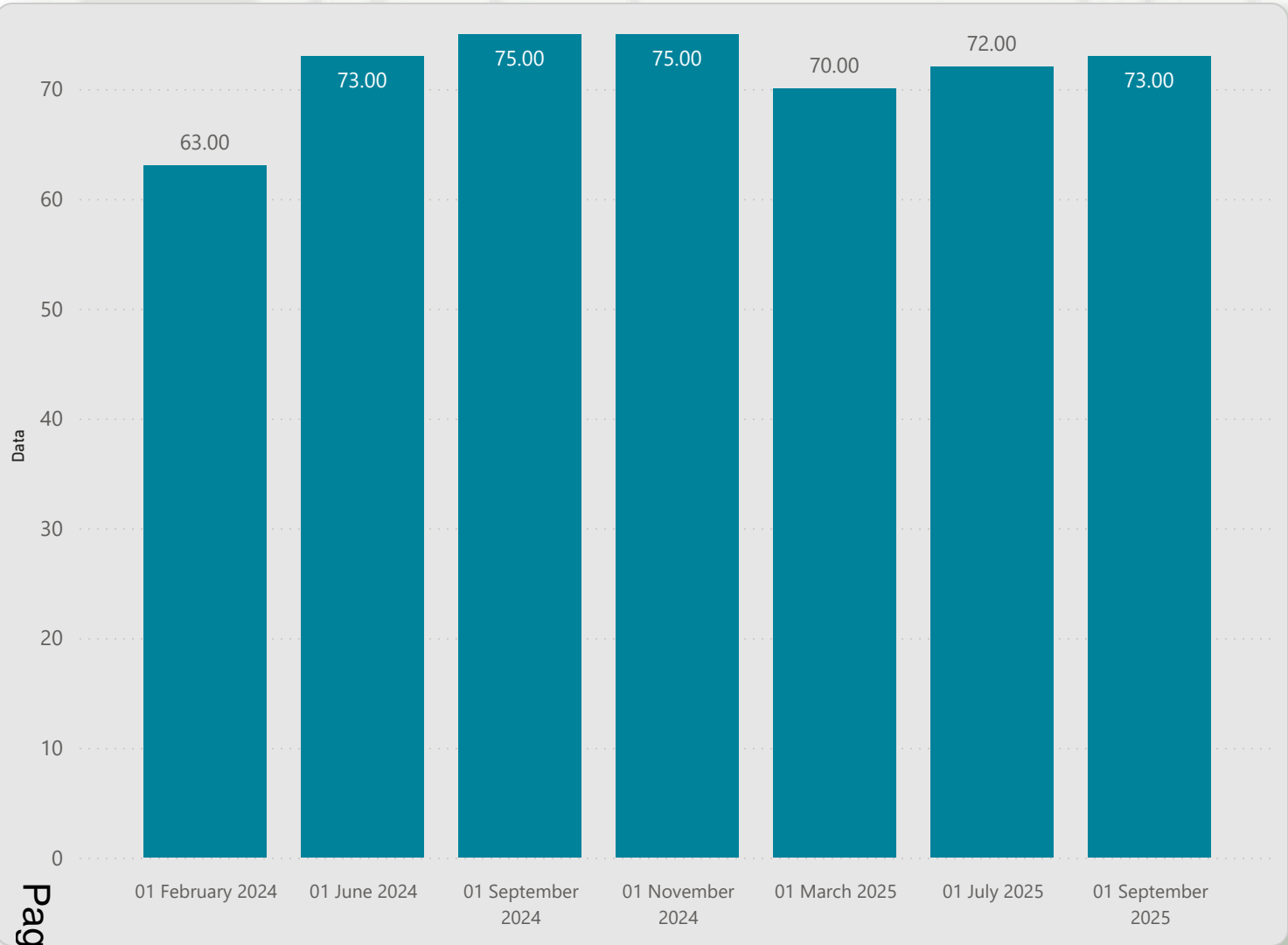
Monthly

Steffan Williams (ADDYSG)

Youth Service

Purpose: I want you to listen to me, and include me; so that I can be a young, healthy, happy and safe person to improve my wellbeing to help me reach my full potential

Indicator: % of young people who have improved their well-being over a 3 month period (16-25 team)



The percentage has increased slightly compared to last quarter's figures. This well-being measure is collected through the WEMWBS program. This programme enables us to monitor mental wellbeing in the general population and evaluate projects, programmes and policies that aim to improve mental wellbeing.

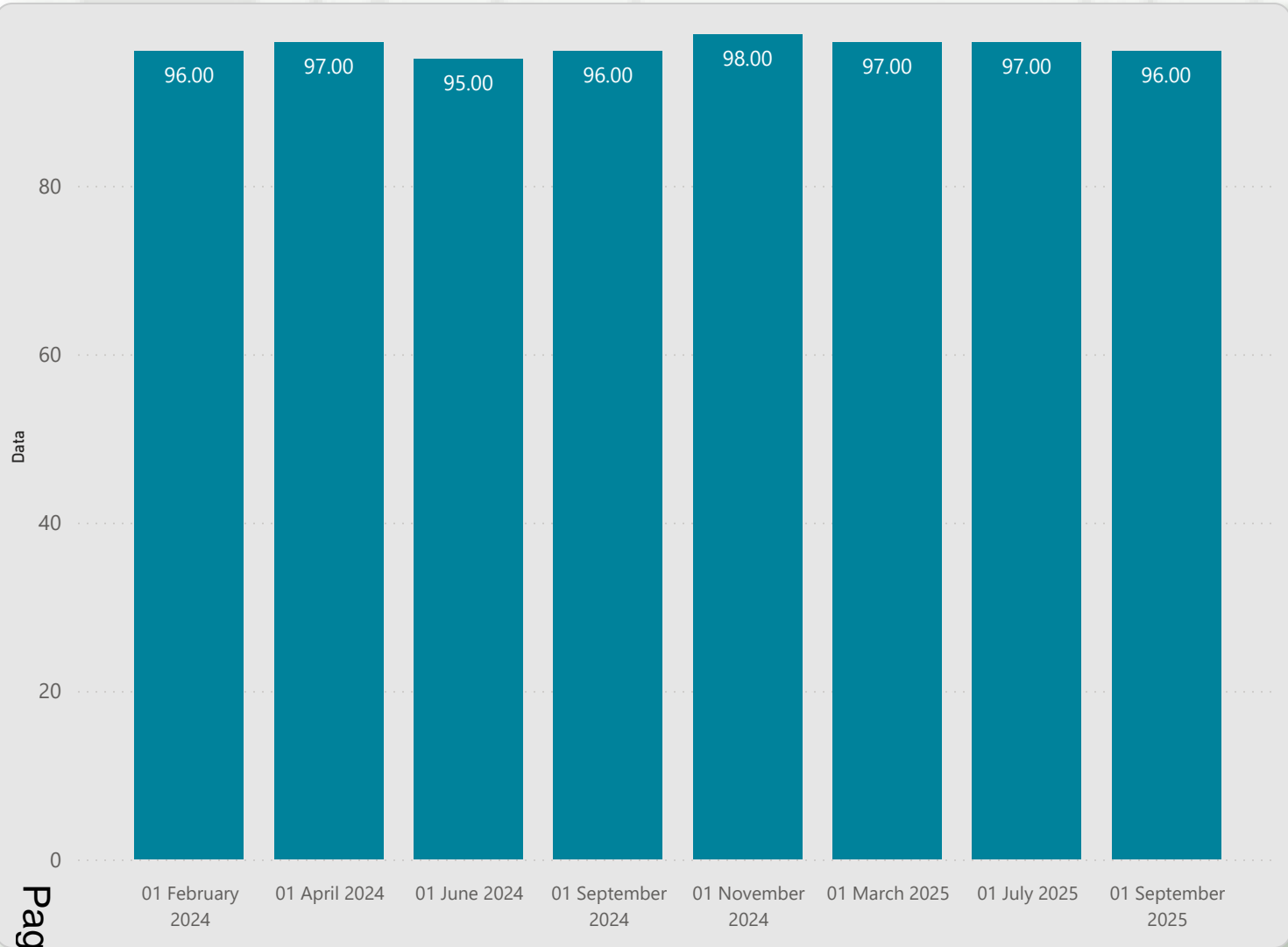
Monthly

Steffan Williams (ADDYSG)

Youth Service

Purpose: I want you to listen to me, and include me; so that I can be a young, healthy, happy and safe person to improve my wellbeing to help me reach my full potential

Indicator: % of young people who have enjoyed the service provided



This figure has remained consistently high over the last two years which reflects on the positive feedback we receive from the young people following attendance our sessions. The challenge now will be to continue to meet these standards and respond to some of the comments we receive to further develop the service. To enrich this data we collect quotes, case studies and host young people's voice forums.

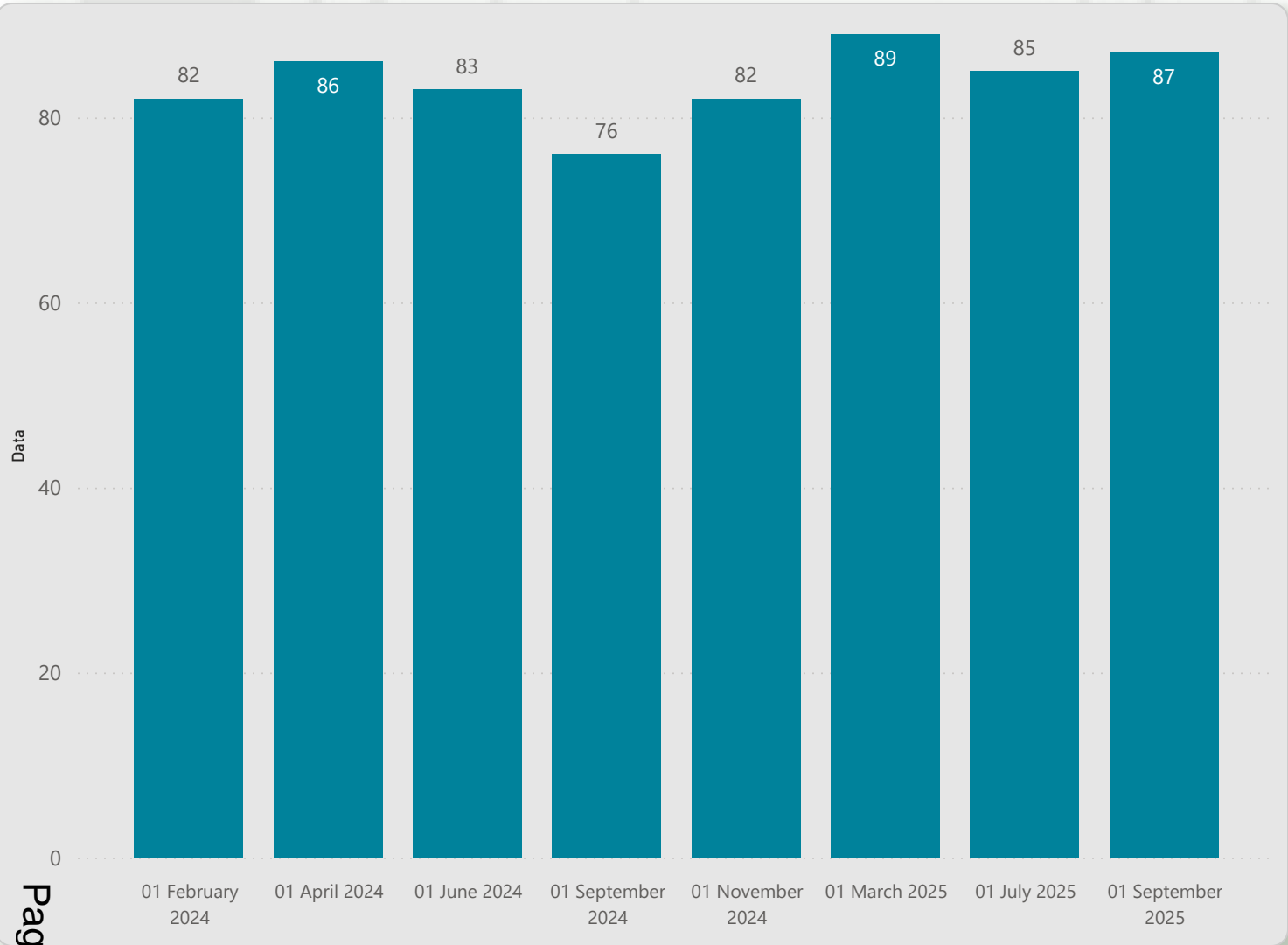
Monthly

Steffan Williams (ADDYSG)

Youth Service

Purpose: I want you to listen to me, and include me; so that I can be a young, healthy, happy and safe person to improve my wellbeing to help me reach my full potential

Indicator: Youth Support Service Case Loads 16-25 year olds



This figure has remained stable over the past year, reflecting the constant demand for the support we provide. This is also related to the decrease in similar services available for 18–25 year olds in the county. The figure is expected to increase slightly over the next few months as more young people who have not engaged since leaving school or college begin to take advantage of the provision.

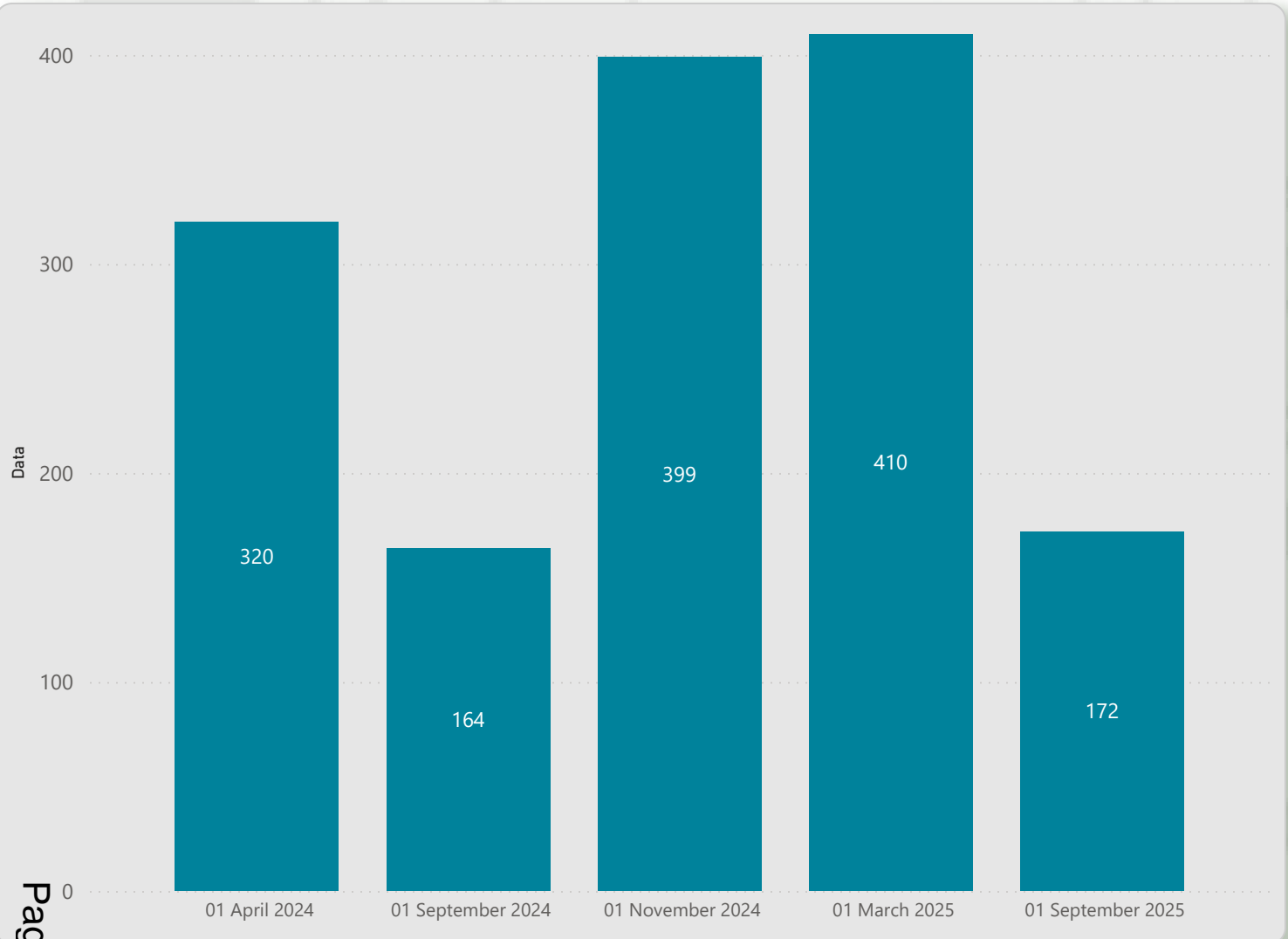
Monthly

Steffan Williams (ADDYSG)

Youth Service

Purpose: I want you to listen to me, and include me; so that I can be a young, healthy, happy and safe person to improve my wellbeing to help me reach my full potential

Indicator: Number of accreditations the young people have completed (measured every 3 months)

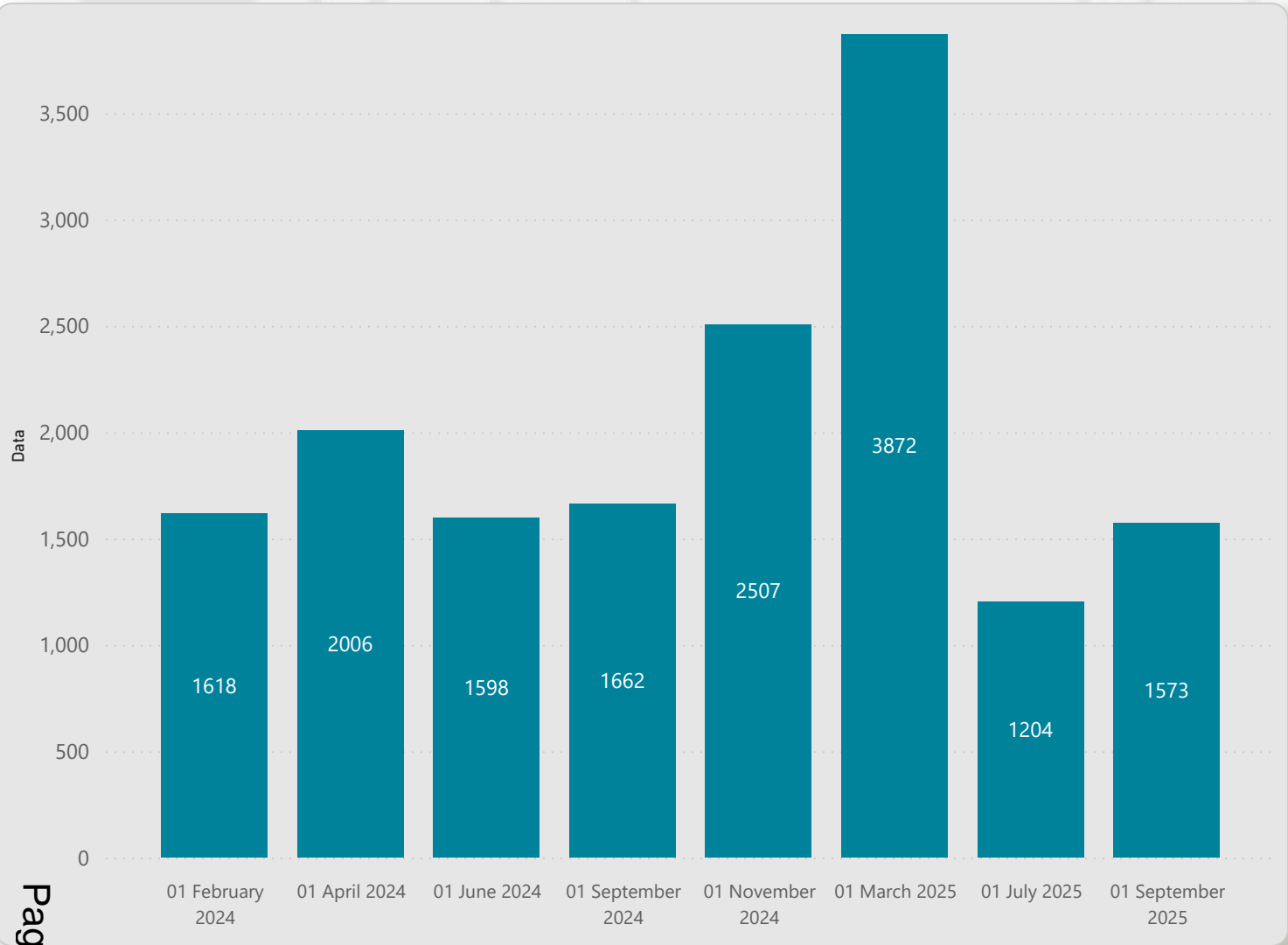


The number of individuals who have completed accreditation is lower in recent times, in line with the normal annual pattern over the summer holiday period when there is less accredited activity taking place. Nevertheless, the levels correspond to what was seen during the same period in previous years, which shows consistency in provision. The current figure also includes accreditations completed at the end of the previous academic year, reflecting the ongoing work of supporting young people to reach formal milestones before embarking on a new period of provision in September.

Youth Service

Purpose: I want you to listen to me, and include me; so that I can be a young, healthy, happy and safe person to improve my wellbeing to help me reach my full potential

Indicator: Number of participations of young people who have used Youth Community Service



In recent times, the number of individuals who have used the Youth Community Service is lower than in normal months. This is mainly because the community clubs, which are funded by the town councils were not operational from April to September. Nevertheless, the figures continue to be in line with the pattern seen in previous years, reflecting a stable trend. From September, the numbers show a significant increase, reflecting the return of young people to regular community provision and highlighting the continued importance of maintaining this activity as a central part of the county's youth service. 360 young people have used the service.

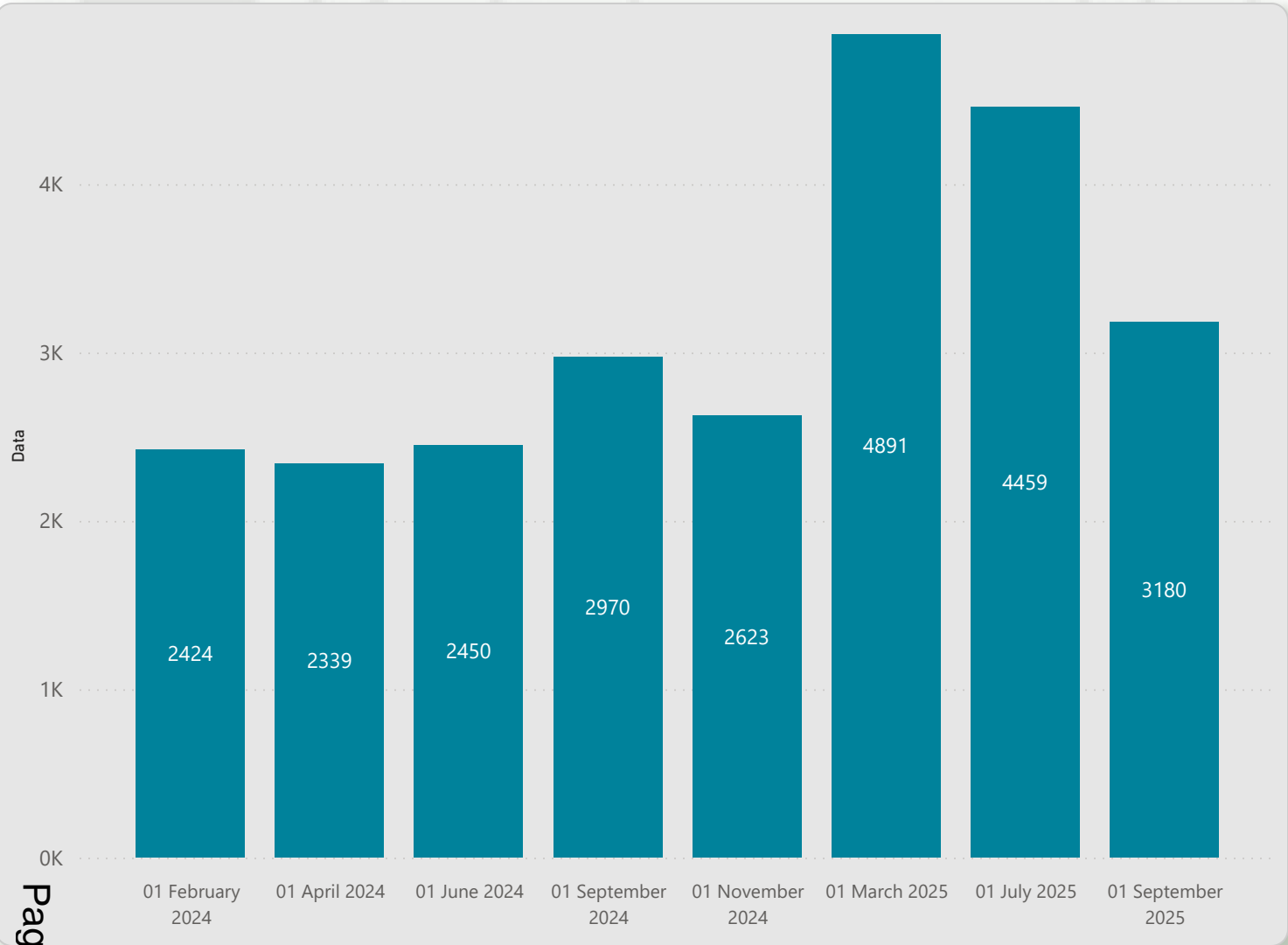
Monthly

Steffan Williams (ADDYSG)

Youth Service

Purpose: I want you to listen to me, and include me; so that I can be a young, healthy, happy and safe person to improve my wellbeing to help me reach my full potential

Indicator: Number of participations of young people who have used the Youth Support Service aged 11-19



In recent times, the number of 11–19 year olds who have used the Youth Support Service is lower than in previous months. This reflects the normal annual pattern, as this is the summer holiday period, and therefore there is less regular provision available in the schools. However, the figures continue to be in line with trends seen during the same period in previous years, which show consistency in usage. The data also includes participation in the Summer of Fun provision offered over the holiday period, as well as the restarting of activity in Secondary schools from September onwards. This suggests that the service continues to reach a similar level of young people, despite the seasonal changes in provision. 730 young people have used the service.

Monthly

Steffan Williams (ADDYSG)

Mandatory Training

% of the Education Department staff (including the Catering and Cleaning Service) who have completed the Safeguarding training

35.20%

% of the Education Department staff (excluding the Catering and Cleaning Service) who have completed the Safeguarding training

95.30%

% of the Education Department staff (including the Catering and Cleaning Service) staff who have completed VAWDASV (Domestic Abuse) training

49.30%

% of the Education Department staff (excluding the Catering and Cleaning Service) who have completed the VAWDASV (Domestic Abuse) training

92.90%

The Catering and Cleaning Service has over 600 staff in Ancillary Services roles. A number of the Catering and Cleaning Service staff **have received basic safeguarding training from the school.**

Of the remaining officers who have not completed the training (with the exception of the Catering and Cleaning Service), the majority are away from work due to long-term illness, maternity or have been suspended.

We are working with the Corporate Services Department to ensure that all staff in the Catering and Cleaning Service are able to complete the mandatory training modules.

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| MEETING | Economy and Community Scrutiny Committee |
| DATE | 11 December 2025 |
| TITLE | Performance Report – Cabinet Member for the Economy and Community |
| REASON TO SCRUTINISE | An Opportunity to Scrutinise the Performance of the Department's Services 2025/26 |
| AUTHOR | Sioned E Williams |
| CABINET MEMBER | Cllr R Medwyn Hughes |

1. Why does it need to be scrutinised?

- 1.1 For Committee Members to scrutinise performance matters within the Department.

2. Background / Context

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to update you on what has been achieved in the area that I am responsible for as Cabinet Member for the Economy and Community Department. This includes outlining the latest regarding the pledges in the Council Plan; the Department's day-to-day work; as well as the latest in terms of the savings scheme and cuts.
- 2.2 We are operating under the Council Plan 2023-28, and I herein report on the progress made to the end of Quarter 2, whilst acknowledging that it is still early days in the context of some of the pledges that are new in the document since April this year. Nevertheless, all matters have been the subject of discussion and have been challenged by me at a performance challenge meeting, and I am satisfied with the performance of the Department.

3. Performance of Projects in the Council Plan

- 3.1 The table in Appendix 1 gives an update on the progress of the four priority projects in the Cyngor Gwynedd Plan 2023-28 which 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 decent wage. However, the responsibility for leading 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.
- 3.2 From the information, 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 the funds that have financed the work since

2023 expire in March 2026 and there is uncertainty around the Government budgets that will replace them.

- 3.3 I would like to draw particular attention to the following matters:

Priority Project: Promoting our Culture and a Sustainable Visitor Economy

- 3.4 The Gwynedd & Eryri Action Plan 2035 (G&E2035) has been put into practice to support a sustainable visitor economy in the County – based on the key points raised in the 2024 Residents Survey, feedback from attendees at the February summit and discussions within the G&E2035 and Ardal Ni Partnership structures. Improvements are being carried out on Gwynedd's most popular beaches and also to public facilities in Eryri through Visit Wales funding. Training for event organisers and tourism businesses has been undertaken. A 'Hwyl in Eryri and Pen Llŷn' marketing campaign through SPF funding has been run to promote out of season visits, the special qualities of the area, to support local businesses and for people to respect the area and our communities when visiting.
- 3.5 The Visitor Accommodation (Register and Levy) Etc. (Wales) Act came into force in September. The Council is working with the counties of Conwy and Anglesey and the Welsh Revenue Authority to ensure that our impact assessment, consultation and decision-making procedures are aligned where possible. A report will be submitted to the Scrutiny Committee at your meeting in February 2026.
- 3.6 Grants worth almost £300,000 have been offered to 69 organisations across Gwynedd to support cultural activities, events and healthy living. The activities of the Diwylliesiant 2 project are underway and support the activities of the Council's Cultural Services, Antur Waunfawr and the Llŷn Eco-museum.
- 3.7 We held a culture workshop at Neuadd Dwyfor on 15 October to co-develop a vision and objectives for culture in Gwynedd for the future. The vision and objectives will be refined and confirmed over the coming months and will set a direction and ambition for the future. The Council has secured funding from the Welsh Government to support research into the contribution of culture to the economy and well-being of Gwynedd's communities which will contribute to a culture action plan.
- 3.8 I am delighted to see progress in our Llewyrch o'r Llechi project which is funded through the UK Government, the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Welsh Government and other funds across the slate communities. The project's activities have now attracted over £35m of investment to Gwynedd. The Annual Wales Slate Celebration was held on 23 October at Neuadd Ogwen, Bethesda where we had the opportunity to hear about the excellent work being done by the Council and our partners. The Yr Aelwyd building in Blaenau Ffestiniog has opened in recent weeks, public art has been unveiled in our slate towns and villages, street and signage improvements have been undertaken, and construction work on the new Parc Padarn visitor centre has been completed. As well as the capital works, important activities within our communities and schools have been carried out to raise awareness of our heritage and to inspire pride and confidence in our communities.

Priority Project: Regenerating Communities and Town Centres

- 3.9 The project has achieved all of the milestones agreed for the last quarter, but there is considerable effort by the services at present to complete expenditure on various grants and support partners to overcome barriers so as to achieve outcomes and submit full claims.
- 3.10 Over the last few months the Supporting Communities Service has continued to review and update the Local Regeneration Plans for each of the 13 regeneration areas. Each area is different, and the local arrangements are tailored to individual areas, and the Service offers further support within areas where local structures have not been established.
- 3.11 Earlier this year, £800k of the Shared Prosperity Fund was secured for a Key Fund during the 2025/6 period. Following an application process, 33 local projects have been supported through the Key Fund (these are noted in the Supporting Communities Service's performance report). During the last quarter, there has been considerable effort to support the local groups/organisations to complete projects on schedule.
- 3.12 Similarly, the Regeneration Programme Service has attracted a cumulative total investment of £8.9m for projects that contribute to the promotion and regeneration of town centres. Currently, efforts are focused on implementing the projects in order to claim the grant funding during Q4.
- 3.13 This year, as part of the Gwynedd Ni Regeneration Scheme, the Town and Community Councils Fund was established as a pilot scheme and proposals for a contribution were invited from each of these Councils. With a budget of £370k, grants have been offered to 55 Gwynedd Town/Community Councils. The nature of the projects varies and includes a series of murals around towns/villages, new play equipment in parks that are managed by local Councils, street furniture which include bicycle storage racks, benches, information panels, improvements to community centres and landscaping.
- 3.14 There will be an opportunity for the Committee to further scrutinise the Department's activity in supporting town centre regeneration as we intend to submit a dedicated report in the new year.

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

- 3.15 In recent months there has been significant effort by the Department to achieve the objectives of the extra one year's worth of the Welsh Government's ARFOR scheme and the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF). These two funding programmes, which expire at the end of March 2026, have been instrumental in supporting the activities of the priority project.
- 3.16 A package to distribute over £900,000 of financial support to the county's businesses and social enterprises is being implemented. Two application rounds have been held, and the results of the second round are about to be released. There has been a concerted effort by the Department to encourage new applicants from all parts of

Gwynedd for the funding; 14 business support sessions were held, with 181 enterprises attending.

- 3.17 There is also a support scheme in place to help people in Gwynedd who are already employed earn a higher salary by improving their skills to get a better job or solving a problem that prevents them from working more hours. Since the summer, 48 people have already benefited from the scheme.
- 3.18 The Department has secured almost £600,000 from the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority to support our work to develop the economy over the next 3 years and to develop an alternative plan for the Trawsfynydd site. I'm pleased to report that good progress has been made on developing a business case for the development of the Trawsfynydd Science Park, to protect, retain and create new well-paying jobs in Gwynedd.
- 3.19 Work is also underway to produce a new strategy for the next decade for Gwynedd's economy and I am grateful for the input received from the Scrutiny Committee and stakeholders. Having a strategy is especially important in light of recent announcements by the UK and Welsh Governments about the future of funding to develop the local economy and establish the [Local Growth Fund](#); with less money for a more limited selection of activities, being able to identify our priorities will be key.
- 3.20 Finally, I am pleased to confirm that construction work has commenced to erect 10 new works units in Minffordd. We anticipate that the units will be ready in the autumn of 2026.

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

- 3.21 While the main milestones of this project have been achieved, I am keen to review our arrangements for supporting the hubs in order to create a model that would be more sustainable for the future. We will be discussing opportunities with partners over the next year.
- 3.22 Over the past few months, the Supporting Communities Service has been successful in securing grant funding from the Shared Prosperity Fund to co-ordinate and implement a Community Resilience project with providers and partners in the third sector. Over the last few months there has been considerable effort in establishing working arrangements and progressing with the work programme. A review of the network of community hub partners is underway which will identify where and how Libraries can be brought into the model.

4. The Department's day-to-day work

- 4.1 The Department's Performance Dashboard can be seen in Appendix 2 and it is scrutinised regularly. I would like to draw the Cabinet Members' attention to the following matters:

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

- 4.2 The grant investment work at Parc Padarn and Glynllifon is ongoing. At Parc Padarn improvements to the Incline, a new Welcome Block and car park improvements have now been completed, along with improvements to the paths network at Glynllifon Park. The average customer satisfaction of the Country Parks is 88%, but it is also worth noting that wider work is currently taking place at Parc Padarn, including investment in the National Slate Museum which is currently closed.
- 4.3 The cumulative number of visits to Byw'n lach leisure centres to the end of September is estimated to be around 420,984 – which is around 40,779 lower than the same period in 2024/5. The economic situation and the significant increase in the cost of living are thought to have put additional pressure on the leisure sector's income. Many households have had to face prioritising essential spending over spending on leisure activities.
- 4.4 The 2025/6 figures (to date) show that Byw'n lach average customer satisfaction has increased by 1% to 84.51% since last year. However, feedback regarding the quality of facilities is scoring the lowest and is a factor that affects customers' experience, and efforts continue to try to identify opportunities to improve them.
- 4.5 Over the last few months we have managed to attract grants to make improvements to the fitness room at Dwyfor Leisure Centre, improvements to the Arfon Tennis Centre, refurbish the 3G pitch at Tywyn, and improvements have been completed to the 3G pitches at Dolgellau and Porthmadog, along with water treatment improvements at the Bala and Arfon Centres.
- 4.6 As reported earlier this year, I remain concerned that the number of Gwynedd pupils receiving swimming lessons in our centres continues to fall. Following discussions with Byw'n lach and the Education Department, we wrote to the Governing Bodies of Gwynedd schools asking them to give further consideration to the risks and inequalities across the county. Byw'n lach is also considering developing specific packages for schools that would potentially make visits to the leisure centres more attractive and offer further value for money.

Maritime Services, Hafan Pwllheli and Victoria Dock, Caernarfon.

- 4.7 You will note from the Appendix that 68% of respondents to a beach customer satisfaction survey considered their experience to be 'very good' or 'good'. The feedback received from these surveys is very useful to enable this service to respond with other Council Departments.
- 4.8 The number of customers with a mooring agreement increased by 9% in our harbours in 2025/26 compared to last year, from 250 to 273 (excluding Hafan Pwllheli and Caernarfon Dock). You will also note that Hafan Pwllheli's berths had a 97% occupancy rate in 2025/26, with 86% of the berths in the outer harbour occupied over the same period.

- 4.9 Concerns remain regarding siltation levels in Pwllheli harbour. Over the past few months the Service (with the technical support of YGC) has moved forward by undertaking further preparatory and technical work as part of a dredging strategy. Fairly recently, strong winds (storm Amy) caused damage to our harbours, and I am very grateful to the staff for their excellent work in dealing with the situation.

Archives, Museums, Arts and Libraries Services

- 4.10 You will note that 93% of Archives Service users are 'very satisfied' with the service (a 2% increase), 5% satisfied, 2% dissatisfied. Most of the comments received were very positive, but of those who were not satisfied, comments were received about the opening hours. Opening hours were reduced to the minimum allowed by the National Archives because of cuts in 2016. The Service secured a grant of £141,000 from the Welsh Government to invest in the Caernarfon Record Office and Dolgellau Record Office. The work will be completed by April 2026 and will improve the energy conservation of the buildings and the user experience and atmosphere in the research rooms.
- 4.11 The Community Arts Service has continued to support arts and well-being activities across Gwynedd, and 99% of attendees to the sessions believed they had benefited from the activity. 'Stiwdio Lles', a project by Frân Wen with Bangor University, offers art sessions on prescription for young people. One attendee noted *"It has to carry on, the arts make such a difference to people's health and well-being."*
- 4.12 Through SPF funding, Storiell's engagement activities and events have remained popular. A company has been appointed to run the Storiell café and it will hopefully reopen in the new year. A public session was held to consult on Storiell's outside spaces and the link with Pontio. Funding was secured for the Lloyd George Museum and Storiell to draw up Audience Development Plans in order to increase visitor numbers to both venues.

Community Regeneration and Support Programme Services

- 4.13 The Economic Development, Tourism, and Community Regeneration and Support services have focused their efforts over the past year on implementing the priority projects outlined in Appendix 1. The performance of these services relies on grant funding and every support package provided to partners, communities and initiatives are monitored and evaluated according to the financiers' terms.

5. External Auditors' Reports (if relevant)

- 5.1 The Annual Assessment Report 2024-25 for the Gwynedd Libraries Service has been received from the Welsh Government's Culture Division. I am pleased to note that the Service satisfies all 13 Core Entitlements. It is noted: *'That customers appreciate Gwynedd Libraries, and they think highly of them. The service continues to perform well in a number of areas including e-loans and virtual visits. In addition, Gwynedd is leading on the implementation of the LMS Cymru project. (...)'*

- 5.2 The aspect of this year's report that is of greatest concern is the reduction in both the total number of staff and the total number of qualified staff. Although it is positive that members of staff are supported through the CILIP Chartership, which will hopefully impact on the numbers of qualified staff in the future, the continued reduction in staffing numbers is likely to have an impact on the service's ability to continue to meet customers' needs to the same high level that it has provided in the past.
- 5.3 The Service has faced changes to the staffing structure – in particular due to the need to make savings and cuts because of the current financial climate, but by supporting training, we are trying to manage this criticism. I would like to convey my thanks to the staff of the Libraries Service for their work and congratulate them on the results of the assessment report.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 The report has been created based on the information and content of a recent meeting to challenge and support the performance of the Department on 10 November 2025, with the Chief Executive, the Head of Department, Service Managers and myself attending this meeting.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Progress reports on milestones of projects in the Council Plan

Appendix 2: The Department's Performance Measures

Cyngor Gwynedd Plan 2023-28 – Year 3 Actions

A Prosperous Gwynedd: Strengthening the economy and supporting the residents of Gwynedd to earn a decent wage

| Department | Project | What we want to achieve during the THIRD year 2025-26 (milestones): | A BRIEF update on progress against the milestones to date (specify date) | Has the milestone been completed / is it likely to be completed by the end of the financial year? (Yes/No) |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|--|
| Economy and Community | Promoting our culture and a sustainable visitor economy | 1 We will have implemented the Gwynedd and Eryri Visitor Economy Plan 2035 work programme and targeted resources to promote the new objectives. | 1. A work plan is in place with funds such as SPF 2 and Visit Wales's Brilliant Basis Fund targeted in terms of resources to implement the objectives. | 1. Yes |
| | | 2 We will have considered national legislation on the Visitor Levy and consulted through the Gwynedd and Eryri 2035 Partnership (G&E 2035). | 2. Discussions took place in the Leadership Team in September 2025. Discussions have taken place with the Welsh Revenue Authority and the Welsh Government as well as other local authorities. A report will be submitted to the Full Council, March 2026 to approve a formal consultation process. | 2. Yes |
| | | 3 We will have promoted and monitored the use of 4 Aros-fan sites across Gwynedd and evaluated the pilot scheme | 3. Since June 2024, 3,518 overnight parking bookings have been made at Arosfan sites (1,256 Cricieth / Pwllheli / Caernarfon and 2,262 Llanberis). Enforcement proceedings have been brought | 3. Yes |

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| | | <p>4 We will have supported Gwynedd's communities and businesses to promote and celebrate culture locally through the 'Diwylliesiant 2' project.</p> | <p>against 96 vehicles that had parked in unauthorised places. Discussions have begun in relation to developing a further Arosfan site in Tywyn. An evaluation report is being prepared to be presented to the Cabinet during 2026.</p> <p>4. Grants worth almost £300,000 have been offered to 69 organisations across Gwynedd to support cultural activities and healthy living. The activities of the Diwylliesiant 2 project are underway with the Cultural Services, the Byw'n Iach company, as well as Antur Waunfawr and the Llyn Eco-museum. An Eco-museum pilot scheme underway in Bangor and Blaenau Ffestiniog.</p> | <p>4. Yes</p> |
| | | <p>5 We will monitor and implement new plans to provide services at Storiell, the Lloyd George Museum and Neuadd Dwyfor, and work with partners in the cultural sector to identify priorities for the future.</p> | <p>5. The Lloyd George Museum improvements completed, and the museum reopened. A review of the spaces and an audience development commission is in progress. Exterior improvements to Storiell are being undertaken, and a second Art exhibition (The Gallery of Contemporary Art) has been held. Audience Development Plan completed. Arrangements are</p> | <p>5. Yes</p> |

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| | | <p>6 We will have supported the communities of Gwynedd to take advantage of the slate industry's world heritage designation, securing Heritage Lottery funding for LleCHI LleNI projects, and funding from the Shared Prosperity Fund and the Levelling-up Fund, including work at:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ogwen – contractors on The Old Post site, complete the upgrade of connecting route to Penrhyn Quarry, official opening of Neuadd Ogwen 2. Dinorwig – contractors on the site of The Slate Museum and Parc Padarn 3. Blaenau Ffestiniog – official opening, the connecting route, official opening of Aelwyd yr Urdd, contractors on the Church St site 4. Public Art – official opening made in 6 towns | <p>underway for registering a charitable company to support Storiell.</p> <p>Neuadd Dwyfor improvements are coming to fruition, with visitor numbers and a nomination as BIFA's Best Cinema of the Year. A culture sector meeting was held on 15 October to discuss vision and objectives.</p> <p>6. Major projects are underway across the slate landscape. Last quarter's performance report can be seen here.</p> <p>The Llewyrch o'r Llechi Project (funded through UK Government funding) has been extended to complete the work. All elements of the programme are now underway.</p> <p>The National Slate Museum has been successful in attracting significant match funding through the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Welsh Government to complete their funding package. Impressive public art installed in 4 of 6 locations.</p> <p>Town centre improvements being carried out.</p> <p>Extremely popular activities are conducted through LleCHI LleNI</p> | <p>6. Yes</p> |
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| | | <p>5. Town Centre Improvements – schemes completed in 6 towns</p> <p>6. Signs and interpretation – installed in 6 towns</p> <p>7. Conservation – several historic structures have received an investment</p> <p>8. Engagement, educating and events – through the LleChi LleNi project we will have reached the outputs of the Action Plan for Year 2</p> <p>9. Governance: We will have reviewed the Management Plan during 2025 and developed the new Interpretation and Visitor Management Plan</p> | <p>within our communities and schools.</p> <p>A thematic interpretation workshop was held with nearly 50 attendees in order to develop interpretation across the World Heritage Site.</p> <p>In the last 12 months LleCHI LleNI has supported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 68 events • 3,100 people attended including 1,938 children <p>The work of reviewing the Management Plan is ongoing, and review arrangements agreed in the Partnership Board.</p> | |
| Economy and Community | Regenerating communities and town centres | <p>1 We will have reviewed and updated the Local Regeneration Plans for each of the 13 local regeneration areas; including local arrangements to co-ordinate them</p> <p>2 A Cross-departmental Group will meet quarterly to ensure collaboration arrangements between the local regeneration plans and the Council's strategic projects</p> | <p>1. The Local Regeneration Plans are updated regularly. Reports were submitted to the Area Forums during Spring 2025.</p> <p>2. A cross-departmental group has been established for the Gwynedd Ni Town Centres Plan 2025/6; and a Community Resilience SPF scheme is supporting hubs in all local areas. There are plans to review wider cross-departmental arrangements through the Assistant Heads Forum.</p> | <p>1. Yes</p> <p>2. Yes</p> |

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| | | <p>3 We will have supported and enabled partners to implement a package of regeneration projects across the communities of Gwynedd by administering the Supporting Communities Key Fund (through SPF funding) during the 2025/26 period</p> <p>4 We will have developed a package of investment proposals to upgrade the County's town and village centres as part of the Gwynedd Ni Regeneration Plan during 2025/26, targeting a Shared Prosperity Fund grant</p> <p>5 We will attract additional investment to regenerate Gwynedd's town centres by targeting the Welsh Government's Transformation Programme</p> <p>6 We will have brought more empty buildings back into use through Cyngor Gwynedd's Empty Properties Programme</p> | <p>3. We managed to secure £800k of funding from the Shared Prosperity Fund for a Key Fund. The fund has been allocated and the local projects are being implemented and will be completed during 2025/6.</p> <p>4. £1.3m of Shared Prosperity Fund funding was secured for a thriving places activity package. The projects are being implemented and will be completed during 2025/6.</p> <p>5. A Transforming Towns grant has been secured for the Porthmadog Community Centre, Cob Crwn, and Llety Arall projects. Preparatory funding has been secured for the Bangor Roman Camp scheme, and the Slate Quay.</p> <p>6. The empty Properties programme is operational; and £995k secured for the now operational Bangor High Street empty properties pilot scheme.</p> | <p>3. Yes</p> <p>4. Yes</p> <p>5. Yes</p> <p>6. Yes</p> |
| Economy and Community | Creating the best possible circumstances in Gwynedd for community | <p>1. We will have provided a programme of support to assist businesses and social enterprises during 2025/26 using funding from the additional year of the Shared Prosperity Fund.</p> | <p>1. Over £900,000 of financial support available to Gwynedd's businesses and social enterprises in 2025/26.</p> | <p>1. YES</p> |

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| | enterprises and businesses to thrive, and support the people of Gwynedd into work | <p>2. We will have managed the transition year of the ARFOR programme in Gwynedd and the region</p> | <p>181 businesses attended advice sessions on making an application for support.</p> <p>202 applications received across two application cycles requesting £1.9M of support (208% of the budget).</p> <p>45 businesses have received an offer of support following the first round of applications. Assessment of the second round of applications is continuing.</p> <p>2. £500,000 of Welsh Government funding secured for the transition year. Cyngor Gwynedd is continuing to manage the programme locally and on behalf of the region.</p> <p>Agreement by the 4 counties and the Welsh Government to focus 2025/26 activities on the recommendations of the ARFOR 1 and 2 independent evaluations; implement a small number of key interventions (likely to include themes on youth and migration); transfer the lessons learnt to mainstream work and consider the</p> | <p>2. YES</p> |
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| | | | findings and recommendations of the Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities' report, and the Government's response. | |
| | 3. We will have run a programme to celebrate and promote the success of Gwynedd's businesses and enterprises, including holding a week of activities during the autumn term | 3. Business Week 2025 was held in October. Seven events were held by the Council and our partners across Gwynedd. Over 5,000 viewed information about the week through our social media . As well as the Business Week our programme of visits to businesses continues, and we continue to share news of local successes through the business bulletin and our social accounts. | 3. YES | |
| | 4. We will have ensured advice for Gwynedd businesses and enterprises that responds to their concerns | 4. Our programme of drop-in sessions for businesses and enterprises is ongoing and is an important means of gathering feedback about local needs. Using feedback from individual businesses and the results of the 2024 Business Survey we have | 4. YES | |

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| | | | <p>provided advice and training that responds to their concerns under the banner of 'Listen and Act'. The Business Survey 2025 is being launched and is currently live.</p> <p>Topics that have recently been covered by events organised by the Council include the basics of human resources, cyber security, and well-being in the workplace.</p> | |
| | <p>5. We will have started construction of 10 new business units in Minffordd during the second quarter of 2025/26</p> | <p>5. Construction of the units continues; the steel frames of the first units are being installed.</p> <p>Signs are being erected and a site visit will be arranged to promote the development as a result.</p> <p>The units will be ready September 2026.</p> | <p>5. YES</p> | |
| | <p>6. We will have worked with partners across north Wales to ensure Gwynedd benefits from the North Wales Growth Deal</p> | <p>6. We continue to support the North Wales Growth Bid schemes, paying particular attention to the schemes that offer the greatest benefit to Gwynedd in the Digital Programme, the Energy Programme, the Agri-food Tourism Programme and the Land and Property Programme:</p> | <p>6. YES</p> | |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A joint venture between the Welsh Government and Ambition North Wales has been established and the procurement process has begun to deliver the Parc Bryn Cegin scheme. • The first phase of the Glynllifon Rural Economy Hub has been approved to establish a centre for developing a Welsh sheep milk market. • The Visit Wales Academy has been launched to support businesses in the leisure and catering sector. • We are continuing to develop the details of the Responsible Adventure Tourism Scheme. • The business case for establishing the Trawsfynydd Science Park is making good progress. | |
| | <p>7. We will have agreed a new Economic Strategy for Gwynedd for the period 2025-28 and prepared bids for resources to implement its priorities</p> | <p>7. A draft strategy was submitted to the Education and Economy</p> | <p>7. YES</p> |

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| | | <p>Scrutiny Committee on 16 October to receive their feedback.</p> <p>The strategy was then cascaded to key partners within the county for further input into the draft.</p> <p>Further revisions to the document are being completed prior to drawing up the final document, with a view to adopting it in the new year.</p> <p>8. We will have provided support for Gwynedd residents to return to work and to increase their ability to earn a good salary</p> <p>8. Delivery of the Communities for Work Plus programme (Welsh Government funding) continues. The 2025/26 performance is ahead of schedule so far with 145 already having secured work following our help.</p> <p>Work to help local people earn a better salary has resumed (SPF funding) and 48 have received support to improve their skills or overcome a barrier that prevented them from working more.</p> <p>We are continuing to work with other north Wales counties to plan the implementation of the Connect</p> | <p>8. YES</p> |
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to Work (DWP funding) programme in the region.

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): | A BRIEF update on progress against the milestones to date (specify date) | Has the milestone been completed / is it 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. Establish two Supporting People Hubs in two new areas. 2. Organise training for the Hubs' employees and volunteers on supporting individuals. 3. Appoint Well-being Champions jobs and host cost-of-living events, various drop-in sessions. 4. Work with a volunteer partner to provide numeracy and budgeting support to residents. 5. Complete the Digital Inclusion Project to provide practical help to teach people to get on-line and distribute IT equipment. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discussions have been held in Bro Peris (Menter Fachwen); and Porthmadog. 2. Well-being of Wales training has been commissioned. 3. Appointments made to the Well-being Champions posts 4. We are working closely with CAB to advise and provide an outreach service at the hubs. 5. We are working closely with Ability Net to offer mentoring and support to individuals with digital systems. 6. A Capital and Revenue Fund has | <p>Partially</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> |

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| | | 6. Run a Food Scheme to include establishing 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. | been established to support feeding projects in the communities. | Yes |
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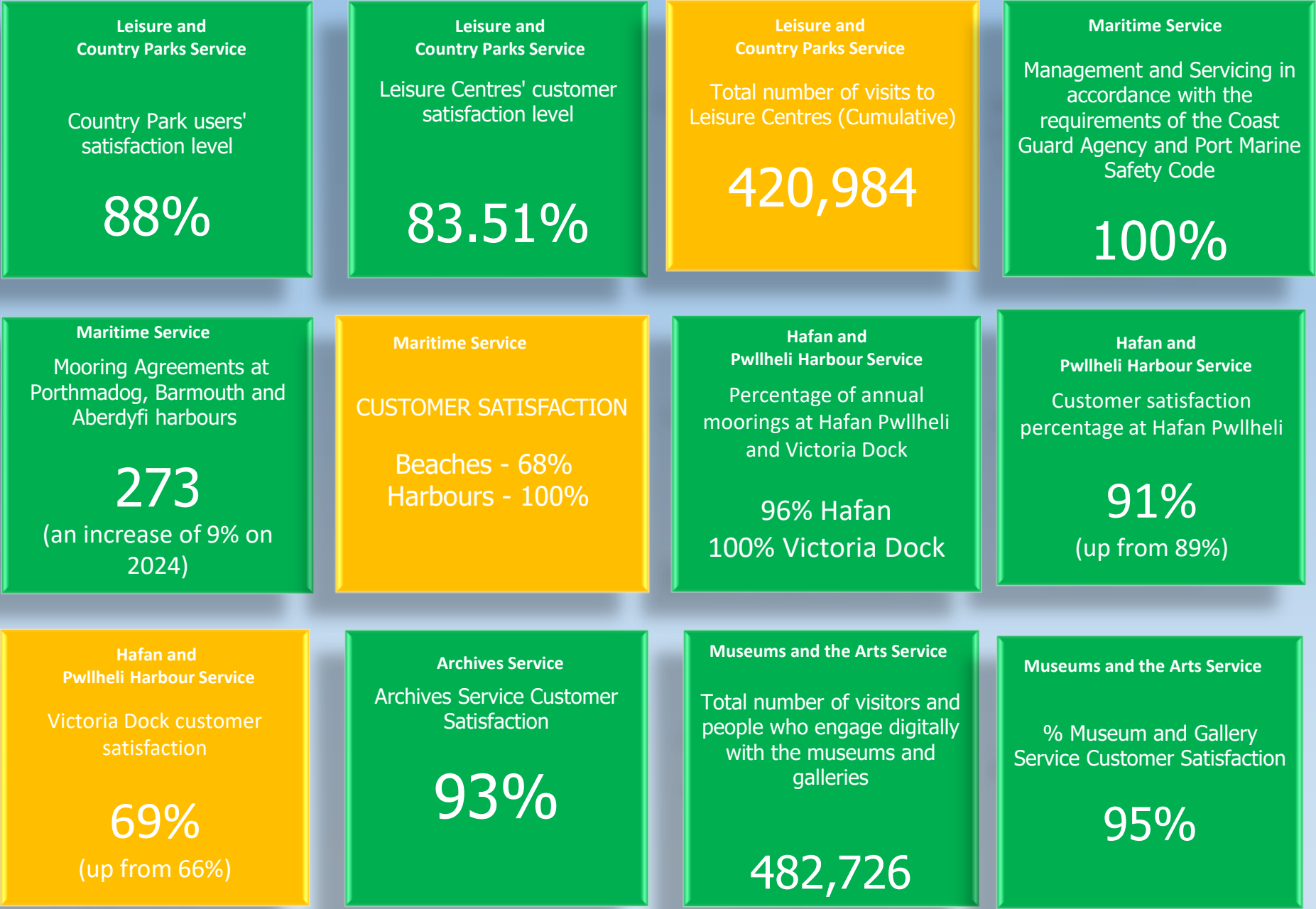
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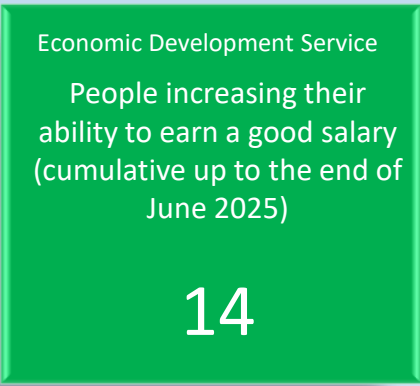
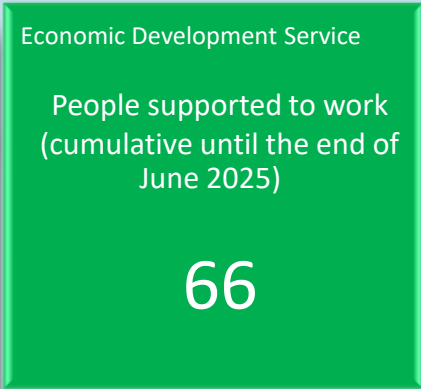
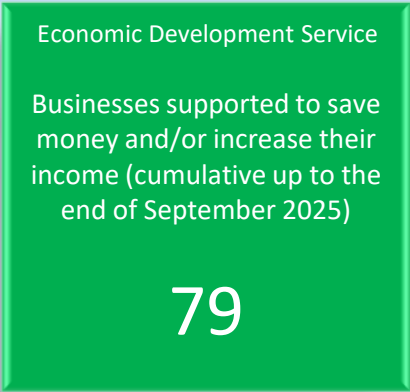
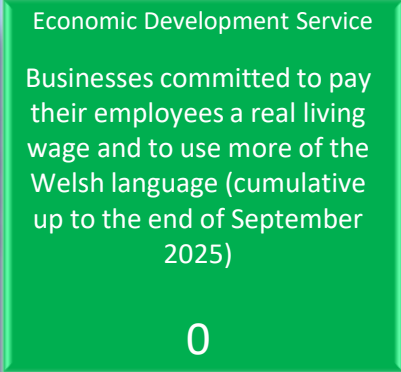
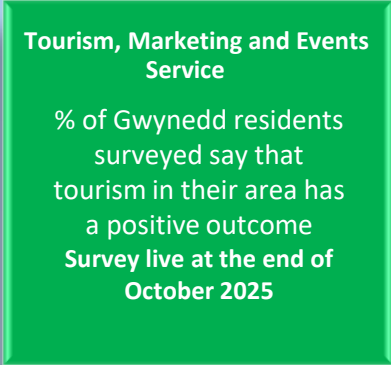
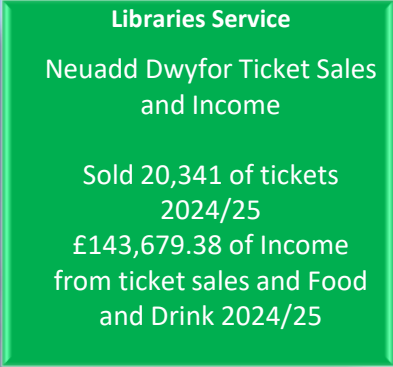
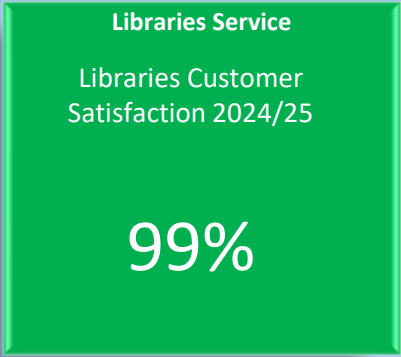
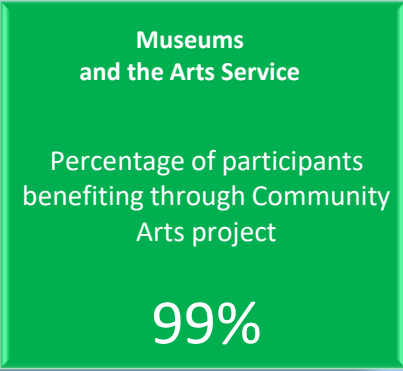
 [CyngorGwynedd](https://twitter.com/CyngorGwynedd)

 [cyngorgwyneddcouncil](https://www.instagram.com/cyngorgwyneddcouncil)

Economy and Community Department Performance Report

2025/26





Regeneration Programmes Service

Investment in Town Centre
Regeneration Programmes

£3,398,526

Regeneration Programmes Service

Number of Commercial Units
that have come back into use

Support has led to 4
properties in a town centre to
come back into use and
improve the image of 6

Community Support Service

Number of Local Groups
receiving advice or support

104

Community Support Service

Number of community
projects receiving support
for development

105

Economy and Community
Department

Percentage of department
staff who have completed
Mandatory Training

Safeguarding – 87.1%
VAWDASV – 90.3%

Parc Glynllifon

Average customer satisfaction **86%** (Parks 88%)

Head: Sioned Williams **Assistant Head:** Llyr Jones

Responsible Manager: Carwyn Williams

Purpose: Ensure a quality, safe environment in our Country Parks which will allow local people and tourists to appreciate and enjoy.

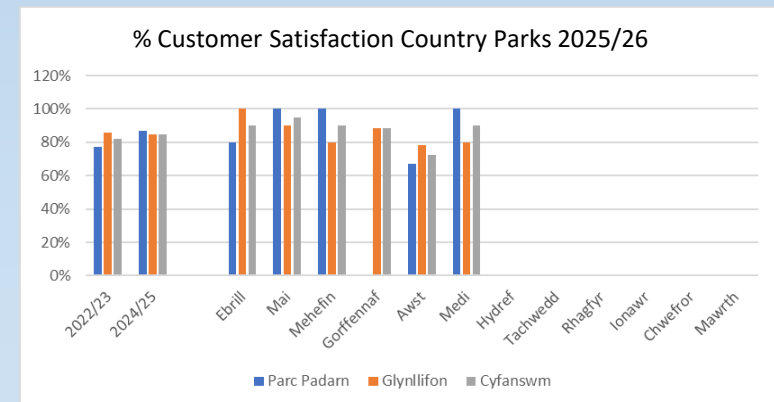
Performance Indicator: % Country Parks Customer Satisfaction

Performance overview:



| Positive | Improvements |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">This was somewhere I'd never heard of, and that surprised me, as it's a great park.The activities set up in the courtyard were fab for all ages (bean bags in buckets, frisbees through holes, knocking tins down, eggs in the tube, etc.) and everyone in our group from 8 to 80 enjoyed these. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">There could be better signage inside the parkToilets were disgusting, paper and discarded sanitary items on the floor, no toilet paper in any of the stalls and no soap in any of the dispensers.Nice gardens. Only one craft shop open. Let down by overpriced cafe. £9.99 for a ham sandwich?Streams are clogged up and water features abandoned or poorly preserved. Many plants who have signs attached are either dead or cut down! The natural forests are lovely but the areas that require human consideration have been given none. |

- Toilets – Customer satisfaction scores have fallen during August mainly because the toilets have been in poor condition over one weekend. It was discovered that the cleaning contractor had not visited. The agreement with the contractor has expired and internal arrangements are in place to avoid any similar cases in the future.
- Grants – Although the Park successfully submitted an EOI application to the Lottery for £2.3m to refurbish the café and other improvements, the development bid was not successful. Following feedback from the Lottery it became apparent that one of the main reasons for refusal was that there was insufficient match funding offered (Council staff time was the only match funding identified at the time). If the bid was resubmitted with more match funding available, then the bid would have a better chance of success. With the grant funding it would be possible to make improvements to some of the features noted in the complaint above.
- Events – For the Summer, we set up Fun Fair games in the craftsmen's yard. This August's income was 104% higher than the August 2024 income.
- Entry fee discount – An advert on the back of all Parc Padarn parking tickets now offers a 10% discount on any Parc Glynllifon day ticket if you visit within 7 days. Approximately 60,000 parking tickets a year are sold. We therefore hope to see a further increase in the number of visitors to the Park over the next year.



Parc Padarn

Average customer satisfaction **89%** (Parks 88%)

Head: Sioned Williams **Assistant Head:** Llyr Jones

Responsible Manager: Carwyn Williams

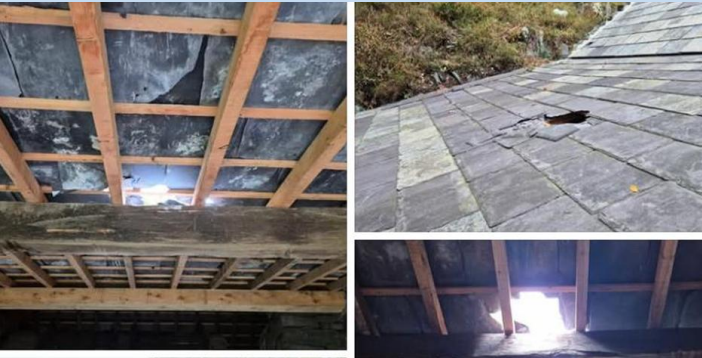
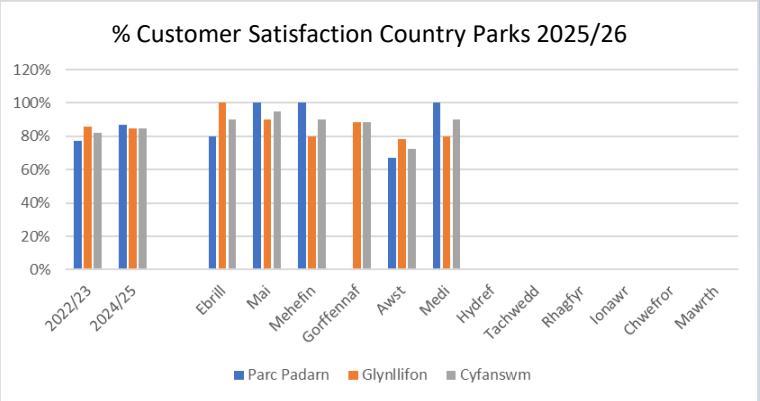
Purpose: Ensure a quality, safe environment in our Country Parks which will allow local people and tourists to appreciate and enjoy.

Performance Indicator: % Country Parks Customer Satisfaction

Performance overview:

| Positive | Improvements |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Beautiful place for a walk - wheelchair accessible | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Very disappointed to arrive at 4:20pm and find the doors already shut. For a tourist destination, I find this very poor. |

- Improvements – The Quarry Hospital is now being opened by the Slate Museum and therefore they will determine the opening hours. Although there is a complaint above about opening hours, the Hospital is open more days and hours than the Park previously offered.
- Grants – Public toilets in the new Welcome block opened to the public and old toilets demolished. Preparing to go out to tender for the interpretation room. Contractors will move forward to finish work on the bus parking area next quarter. Tender for the Fire Queen and Hafod Owen resubmitted after receiving no responses to the first tender.
- Y Glyn charging machines – After a wait of around two years, ScottishPower has now installed an electrical connection. The Environment Department will soon install new machines there.
- Gilfach Ddu – The National Grid has taken a significant part of the Gilfach Ddu car park for the re-cabling scheme and the Slate Museum has closed. However, the Park's parking income is only down 20% for the first half of the fiscal year. Unfortunately, in September the National Grid closed the railway track along the shores of the Lake. That may mean that the loss of parking income may worsen during the second half of the year and continue during 2026/27 until the National Grid leaves.
- Vandalism – After all the effort to repair the roller houses on Incline A, some have already been vandalising them. The case was reported to the police and Cadw.



Byw'n Iach

Average customer satisfaction 84.51%

Head: Sioned Williams; **Assistant Head:** Llyr Jones

Responsible Manager: Carwyn Williams

Purpose: Support the Byw'n Iach Company to provide sports and leisure activities to improve the well-being of Gwynedd

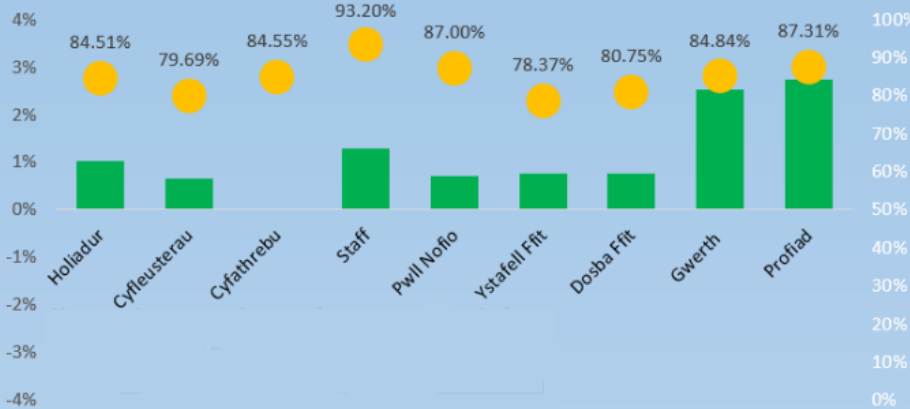
Performance Indicator: % Byw'n Iach Customer Satisfaction

Performance overview:

The 2025/26 interim customer satisfaction figures increased by 1% from 83.51% to 84.51% with all areas improving, apart from Communication which has remained the same. There were 935 comments

Again, the Staff has the best performance (93.2%) with the Fitness Room (78.37%) and Facilities (79.69%) scoring the lowest.

The biggest increase can be seen in Value for Money and Overall Experience which has increased by over 2.5%.



| Positive | Improvements |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Dwyfor - Staff are amazing. Special mention to Will and all the work and research he puts in to his 9.15am classes to make them beneficial to the age group of the women who attendGlaslyn - Staff are all lovely. Very impressed.Penllyn - Excellent staff who are willing to go the extra mile. Have nothing but praise for them all.Plas Ffrancon - Staff are really helpful and friendly. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Dwyfor - I'd like to see a little bit more weightlifting resources with more space around it. Somewhat tight with three people using the area at the same time.Arfon - Extension of weight room needed. During peak time it's getting too overcrowded, machines crammed together, multiple people waiting for machines. Not enough space to use the sledge.Arfon - Update the gym equipment e.g treadmills, weight machinesPlas Ffrancon - Now, even with a concession, membership is very expensive compared to newer establishments. But, the staff is great and the location is convenient.Bro Dysynni - New aqua dumbbells are needed. Some of the old ones keep falling apart which is why more and more customers are buying their own.Glaslyn - Make the gym bigger with more equipment |

For this year, more grants have been secured to make improvements to the Dwyfor and Arfon fitness rooms. A grant has also been confirmed to resurface the 3G Tywyn pitch. It is therefore hoped that the Facilities and Fitness Room score will see an increase once the work is completed.

Byw'n Iach

Total number of visits 420,984 (>9.7% compared to 2024/25)

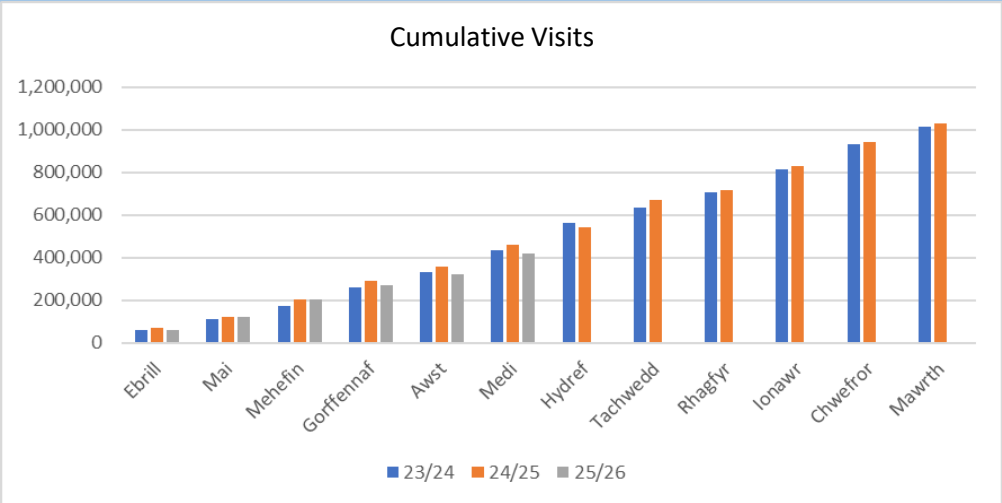
Head: Sioned Williams; **Assistant Head:** Llyr Jones

Responsible Manager: Carwyn Williams

Purpose: Supporting a Byw'n Iach Company to provide sports and leisure activities to improve the well-being of Gwynedd residents

Performance Indicator: Total Number of Byw'n Iach Visits

Performance overview:



- The centre's cumulative visits to the end of September are 40,779 lower than in the same period in 2024/25.
- Further work is being done to analyse the implications of a reduction in numbers on income levels. During the last quarter:
 - Direct Debit – a gradual monthly increase in fitness direct debit numbers has stabilised. The number of Swimming, Gymnastics and Other direct debit users, has steadily declined since April 2024 suggesting that the post-COVID catch-up is now complete. Efforts continue to increase swimming numbers through new offers for children completing the "waves" programme, additional sessions for children with additional needs and growth in the gymnastics programme.
 - Sessions/occasional use, School/club use and other users' income. There seems to have been a shift away from casual use towards paying by direct debit. Concerns about the impact of schools' financial situation remain. A number of schools report that transport costs are an obstacle to regular visits to the centres, and discussions are ongoing with the Education Department to see what can be done to assist the situation.
- Grants – 2 applications submitted to Sports Wales. One application to order new fitness equipment for Canolfan Dwyfor for £100,000 and the other to refurbish the Tywyn 3G pitch for £100,000. Received confirmation that both applications were successful. Consultants have been appointed to assist with the tendering process for 3G Tywyn and tender package being advertised for the remodelling of the Dwyfor fitness space

Economy and Community Department: Maritime Service

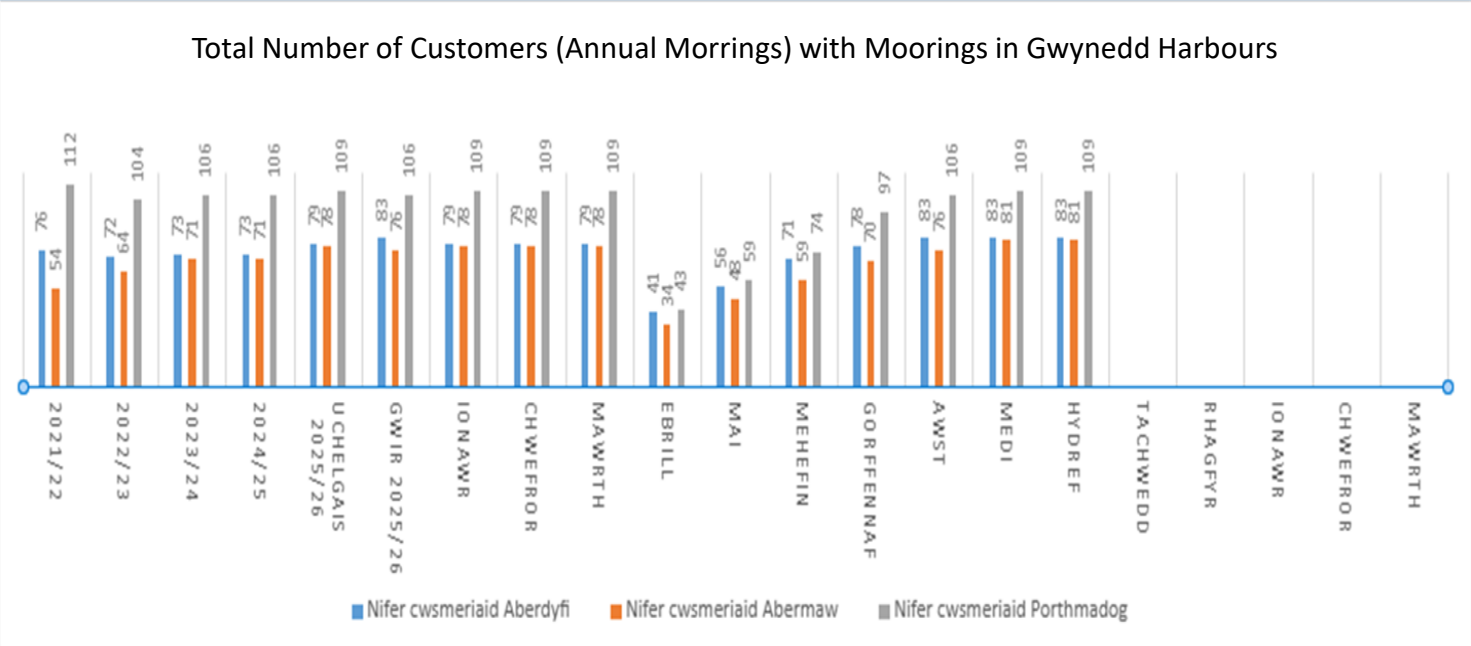
Head: Sioned Williams; **Assistant Head:** Llyr Jones

Responsible Manager: Bryn Pritchard-Jones

Purpose: Manage Gwynedd's beaches and harbours safely by maintaining the number of loyal customers of our harbours and attracting new customers annually

Performance Indicator: Cyngor Gwynedd's total harbour moorings customers

Performance Overview:



The total number of customers with a mooring agreement in our harbours for 2025 has increased by 9% compared to 2024, an increase from 250 to 273. The investment made over the past few years to improve facilities in our harbours has made them more attractive to consumers. Each harbour has been successful in attracting new customers and has seen a significant increase in the number of visitors. This boosts the local economy and is a vital source of income for the service. Activities such as paddleboarding and kayaking, especially among families, continue to be extremely popular within the waters of our harbours.



Following recent strong winds (storm Amy), there was some damage in our harbours. In Barmouth harbour, a boat broke away from its mooring, and one of the navigational aid was washed up on a nearby beach. In addition, a boat sank at its mooring in Porthmadog harbour. Our officers responded at short notice to restore the buoy and the boats to prevent further damage.

As part of our training matrix, service staff are encouraged to continue their personal development. Very recently, one of our staff members completed a ' Harbourmaster Diploma', which was fully funded by the Council.

Following a review held by Trinity House authority at the beginning of October, confirmation was received that 96% of our navigational aids were in an acceptable condition.

Economy and Community Department: Maritime Service

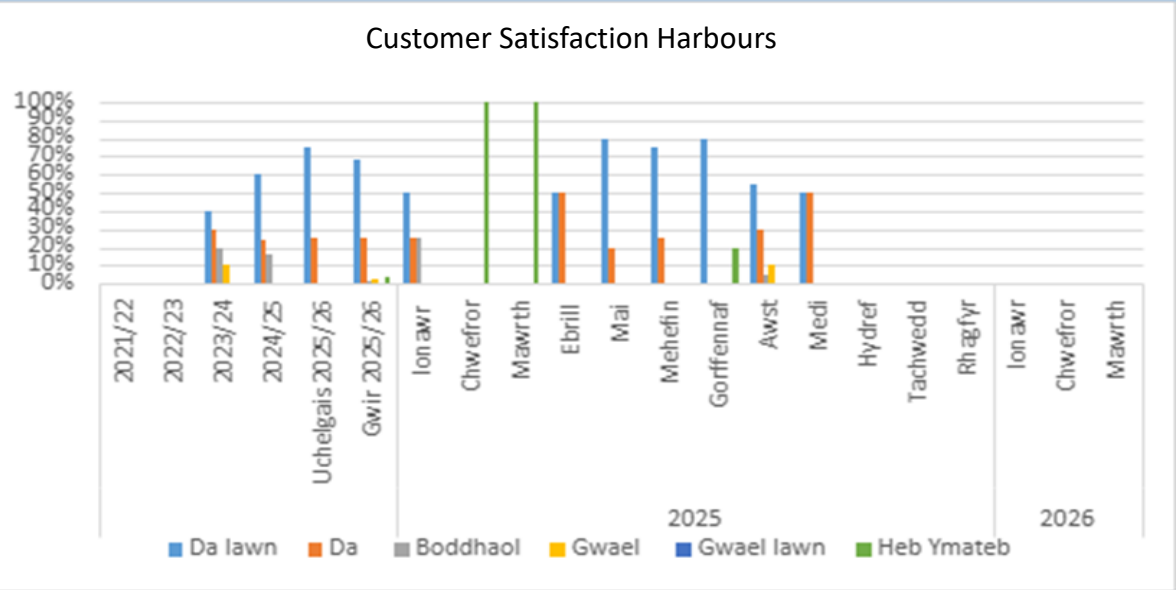
Head: Sioned Williams; **Assistant Head:** Llyr Jones

Responsible Manager: Bryn Pritchard-Jones

Purpose: Manage Gwynedd's beaches and harbours safely by maintaining the number of loyal customers of our harbours and attracting new customers annually

Performance Indicator: Gwynedd Harbours Customer Satisfaction

Performance Overview:



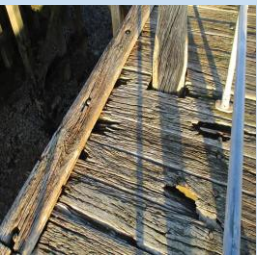
Harbour Committees: Harbour Advisory Committees were held during October, providing the service with an opportunity to update members on matters relating to harbour management, as well as inviting comments and feedback.

Offices: The proposed plans and designs for the development of a new harbour office at Aberdyfi have been completed and have been submitted to the Planning Department of Eryri National Park for comments. In addition, improvements to the Porthmadog harbour office building are nearly completed, which will ensure that there are suitable spaces for staff.



Hwyl yr Harbwr: As part of Porthmadog's harbour's 200th anniversary celebrations, a day of fun and entertainment was held on the harbour grounds recently, which proved very successful despite the bad weather.

All comments received were very positive, with a number of respondents highlighting how clean and tidy the harbours are, and others acknowledging and appreciating the officers' efforts to safeguard and protect boats during the inclement weather. Some customers said service officers had gone "above and beyond" to assist with the safe movement and anchoring of boats, often outside normal working hours. Positive comments about the customer care provided by the team regularly appear in our customer satisfaction surveys, and this is probably one of the main reasons we've been able to retain our customers year on year.



Aberdyfi Jetty: YGC have been commissioned to manage the refurbishment and resurfacing scheme of Aberdyfi harbour jetty. We hope that work on the structure will begin early in the new year. The scheme is funded through SPF funding.

Economy and Community Department: Maritime Service

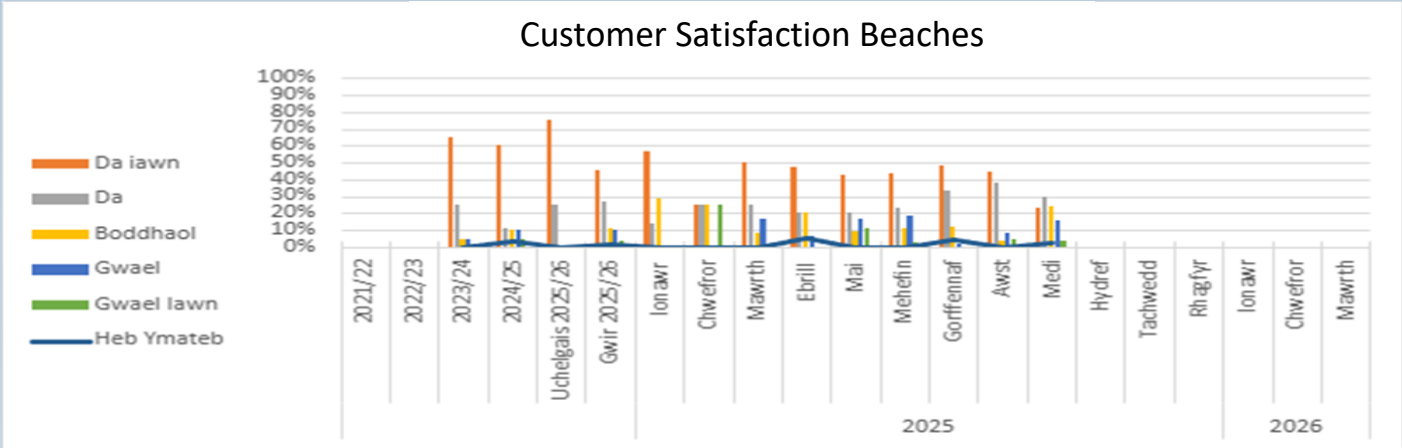
Head: Sioned Williams; **Assistant Head:** Llyr Jones

Responsible Manager: Bryn Pritchard-Jones

Purpose: Managing Gwynedd's beaches and harbours safely by introducing measures that would improve the enjoyment and safety of our beach users

Performance Indicator: Gwynedd Beaches Customer Satisfaction

Performance Overview:



During the most recent period, the Service is undertaking a years-long review of the coastal management arrangements during the summer peak season. This includes internal assessments as well as feedback from users or local organisations as part of the Service's work preparing for next year.

For example, 267 questionnaires were completed, following a promotional campaign in the community magazine 'Abersoch Life'. 68% of respondents said their experience of visiting the beaches was either 'Very Good' or 'Good'.



Oil Pollution: Following a report of oil pollution on Cricieth Promenade beach, service officers took action by carrying out a clean-up campaign at the site. The work was carried out in collaboration with Natural Resources Wales, to ensure a co-ordinated and effective response to the situation. The incident received considerable publicity in the press.

Dead animals: The recent strong winds have led to several dead animal bodies washing up onto the county's coast. Service staff collect and dispose of the bodies as soon as possible , which can be laborious and very unpleasant work. This year, our officers have disposed of 88 bodies from the coast. Also, recently there have been several Portuguese man of war washing up on the coast. While we are not disposing of them, we have put up signs to warn the public of the dangers.



Pwllheli Beach: A contractor has been appointed to undertake improvements to the entrances and promenade on Marian-y-De beach, Pwllheli. The department recently held a meeting with representatives from Pwllheli Town Council to discuss details of the proposed works and get their views on the improvements. The work, which is to be funded by the Welsh Government's Brilliant Basics fund, will begin in the coming weeks.

Economy and Community Department: Pwllheli Hafan and Harbour Service

Head: Sioned Williams; **Assistant Head:** Llyr Jones

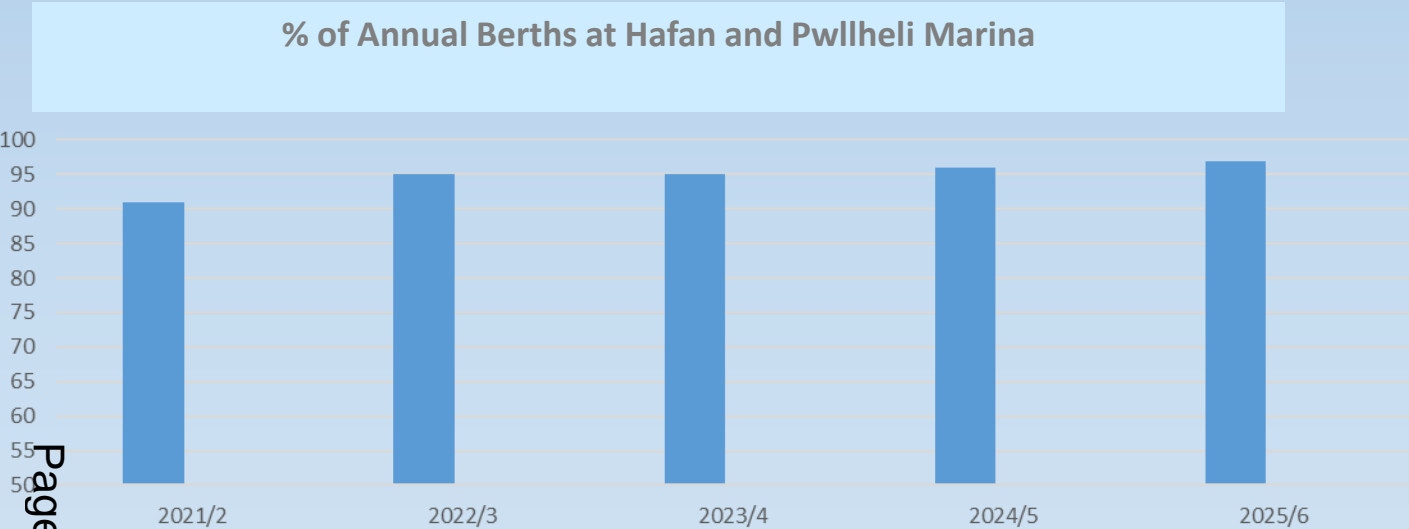
Responsible Manager: Sarah Hattle

Purpose: Provide a quality service at Hafan Pwllheli that meets market requirements ensuring the safe management of Pwllheli harbour.

Performance Indicator: Percentage of annual moorings in Pwllheli Hafan and Harbour

Performance Overview:

So far this year, Hafan moorings have been 97% full and 86% in the outer Harbor. This is not a change from 2024-25 for the Hafan. For the outer harbour, while this actually looks like a 10% increase (77% last year), it doesn't change in the number of anchoring contracts. What has changed is that 5 outer harbour moorings of 24-25 are now inaccessible due to mud, silt and lack of water. The requirement for dredging and increased sedimentation remains the biggest threat to the Hafan.



During April/May, a full hydrographic survey of the harbour was completed. The results of this survey showed a diverse picture across the marina, Plas Heli and the harbour. While some areas remain unchanged, there are areas that have experienced sedimentation of up to 30cm. This is a higher sedimentation rate than anything we've experienced before and it's not clear why this has happened.

We continue to work with YGC to prepare applications for Marine Permits to complete capital dredging and maintenance dredging. Applications are due to be submitted by summer 2026.

Economy and Community Department: Pwllheli Hafan and Harbour Service

Head: Sioned Williams; **Assistant Head:** Llyr Jones

Responsible Manager: Sarah Hattle

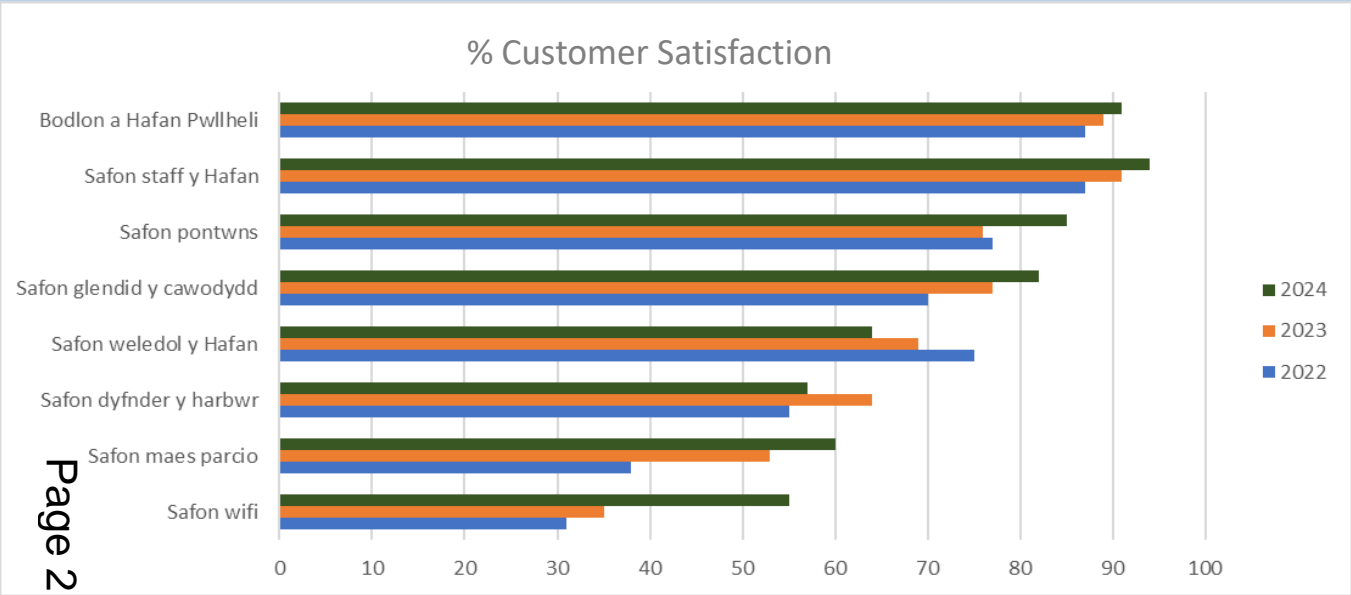
Purpose: Provide a quality service at Hafan Pwllheli that meets market requirements ensuring the safe management of Pwllheli harbour.

Performance Indicator: % Customer Satisfaction

Performance Overview:

This year, a customer satisfaction survey was sent out during October which is due to be completed in November. It is anticipated that the Service will have an opportunity to analyse the results during December.

After listening to our customers' feedback Hafan Pwllheli now has a social media presence via Facebook and Instagram. We are also planning for the provision of a customer lounge that may be available for 2026.



Our application for a grant through the Welsh Government's Department of Marine and Fisheries has been successful. We have received a grant offer of £67,688.21 for the replacement of the existing commercial fishing pontoon and tender racks. Work will commence in January 2026



Economy and Community Department: Victoria Dock (Pwllheli Hafan and Harbour)

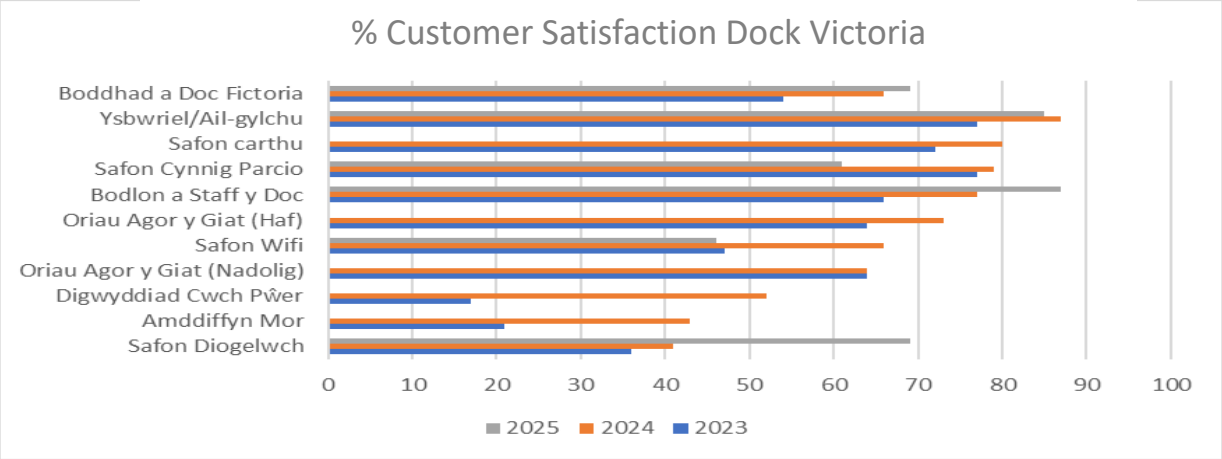
Head: Sioned Williams; **Assistant Head:** Llyr Jones

Responsible Manager: Sarah Hattle

Purpose: Ensure quality service at Victoria Dock that meets market requirements ensuring that the facilities are managed safely.

Performance Indicator: % Victoria Dock Customer Satisfaction

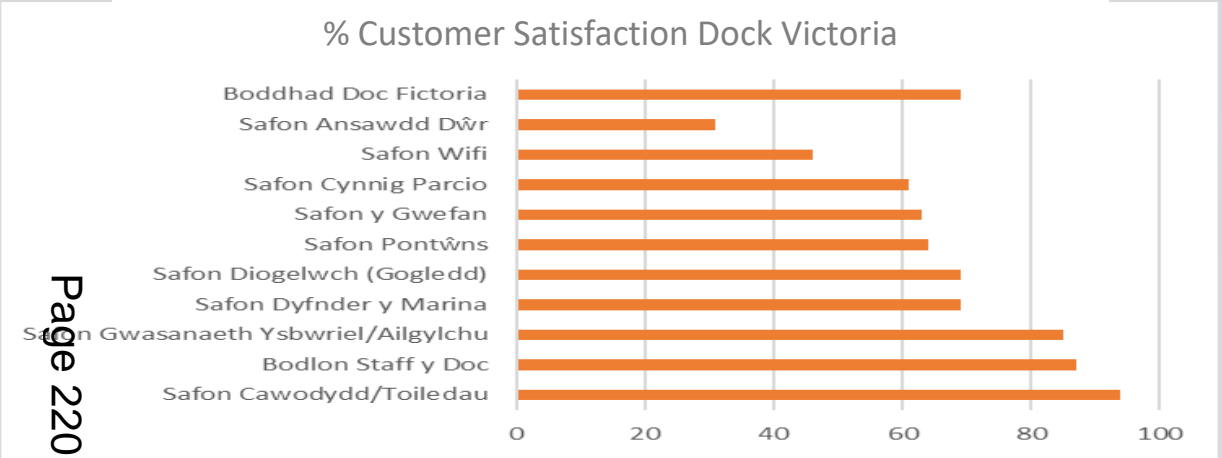
Performance overview:



Caernarfon Harbour Trust (YHCHT) continues to manage Victoria Dock on behalf of Cyngor Gwynedd. This means all day-to-day operations, whilst Cyngor Gwynedd retains responsibility for the infrastructure.

Since improving the reconciling of the annual survey of boat owners, the Victoria Dock Boat Holders Association (VDBHA) has yet to complete this year's survey. Work will be undertaken to further harmonise the VDBHA annual survey and the Hafan Pwllheli Boat Owners' Survey, in order to improve the comparative process.

YHCHT has continued to operate the Dock at its full capacity and through collaboration with YHCHT we have agreed to a full review of the historic management agreement with a view to ensuring it is appropriate for years to come.



Economy and Community Department: Archives Service

Head: Sioned Williams; **Assistant Head:** Roland Evans

Responsible Manager: Lynn Francis

Purpose: Protect the County Archives by collecting, preserving, granting access and promoting the use of the archives so that everyone can discover, learn and understand more about themselves and their area.

Performance Indicator: % of users who are very satisfied with the Service

Performance Overview:

Our users' satisfaction is measured by regularly asking for their views as a means of identifying how we can improve any aspect of the Service.

Between August and September, 274 users completed the customer satisfaction questionnaire. On average 93% of users were very satisfied with the service, 5% satisfied, and 2% dissatisfied.

The majority of comments received during the period were positive, such as:

"Extremely effective"

"Staff excellent – dealt with our many requests for items"

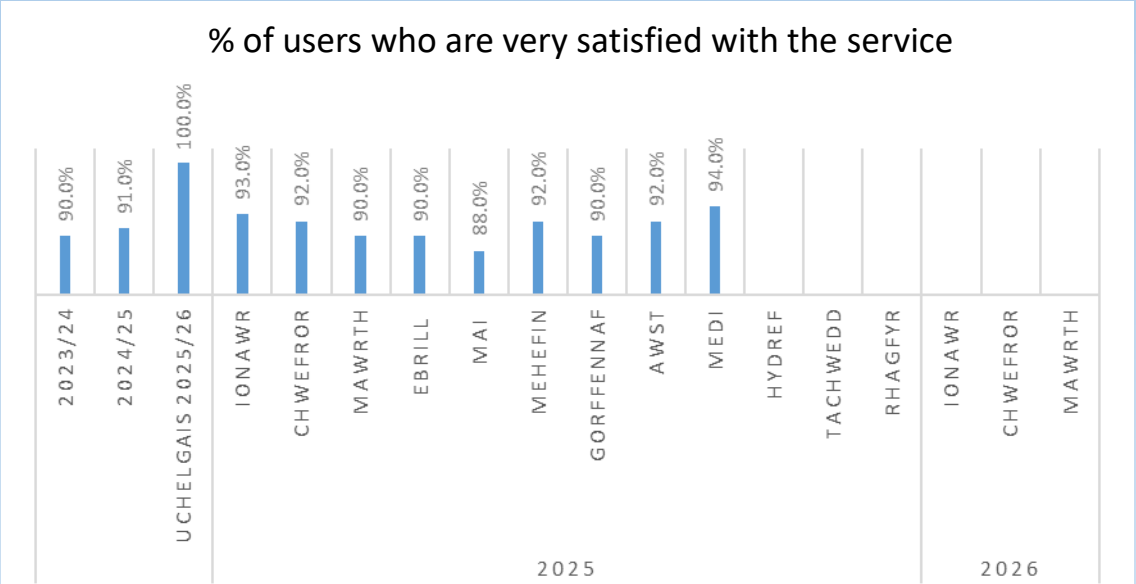
"I have always found the archive staff to be helpful and knowledgeable"

Of those who were not satisfied, a majority of the comments indicated their dissatisfaction with the opening hours:

"Open more days?"

"I am so glad to have been able to visit as I have always found the office to be closed before"

Opening hours were reduced to the minimum allowed by the National Archives due to cuts back in 2016.



Economy and Community Department: Museums and Arts Service



Head: Sioned Williams; **Assistant Head:** Roland Evans

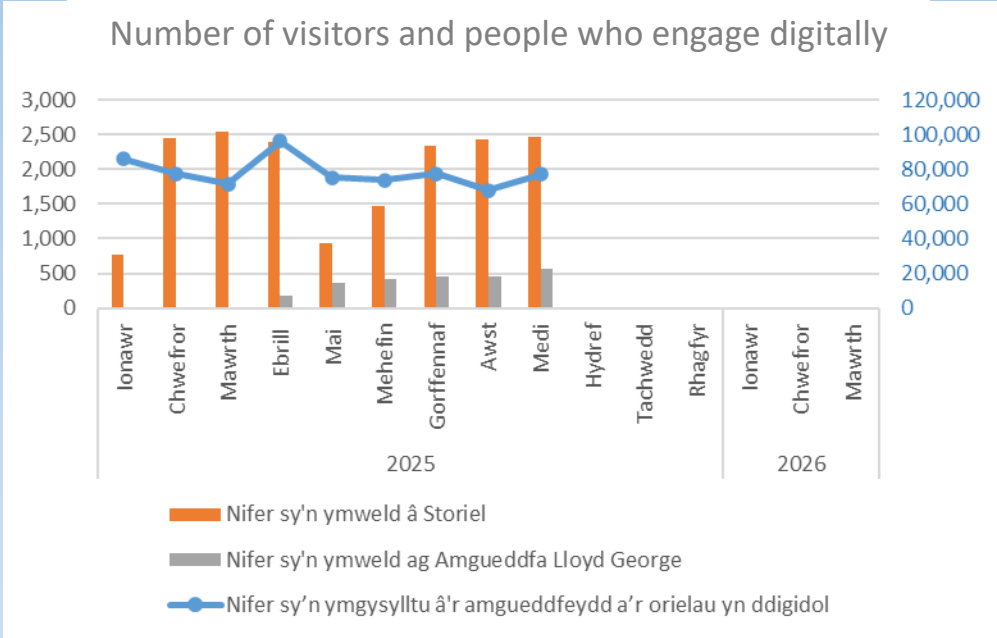
Responsible Manager: Nêst Thomas

Purpose of the Museums and Galleries service: Promote an appreciation of our unique heritage and culture by running the Lloyd George Museum in Llanystumdwy and Storiel in Bangor.

Performance Indicator: Number of visitors and people who engage digitally with the Museums and Galleries

Performance overview:

- Lloyd George Museum: Reopened in Easter 2025 in mid-April. There is a new exhibition in place. We now need to invest in promotion. A commission for audience development and marketing is being realised with a UK Government grant to increase visitors and audience.
- Storiel: As a result of a CELF (National Contemporary Art Gallery for Wales) grant, an Audience Development and Marketing Plan has been completed with an action plan in place. These presentation sessions are underway. A UK Government grant pays for an officer to support marketing and engagement activities to increase visitor numbers and engagement.
- Cumulative total visits only between April – end of September at 14,472
- Cumulative total digital visits and engagement April-end of September were 482,726 including social media such as Trip Advisor, Instagram and Google.
- IT is currently unable to provide information on how many have been on our website so an objective that has been included based on previous figures – the Service aims to have a new website for both museums by 2026.



Economy and Community Department: Museums and Arts Service

Head: Sioned Williams; **Assistant Head:** Roland Evans

Responsible Manager: Nêst Thomas

Purpose of the Museums and Galleries service: Promote an appreciation of our unique heritage and culture by running the Lloyd George Museum in Llanystumdwy and Storiel in Bangor.

Performance Indicator: % Museum and Gallery Service Customer Satisfaction

Performance overview:

Lloyd George Museum Feedback

"This was a really well laid out museum.....came away with a much better understanding of DLG. A lot of museums nowadays I find don't have that clear narrative thread. This means I leave them and don't feel that I've learned a great deal. In this case I left feeling I had really learned something"

"Great visit to this super interesting museum with really good interpretation as well as the opportunity to visit Lloyd George's home. Learned so much about the man, his life and work with really thought provoking and emotive displays . Some really well displayed collections" / "Very pleasant staff on reception"

Complained about not being able to see the film as there was not enough time before the Museum closed. This was during October when the hours are reduced. Otherwise enjoyed the visit.

Other comments refer to the need to pay attention to maintenance elements and discuss with Property.

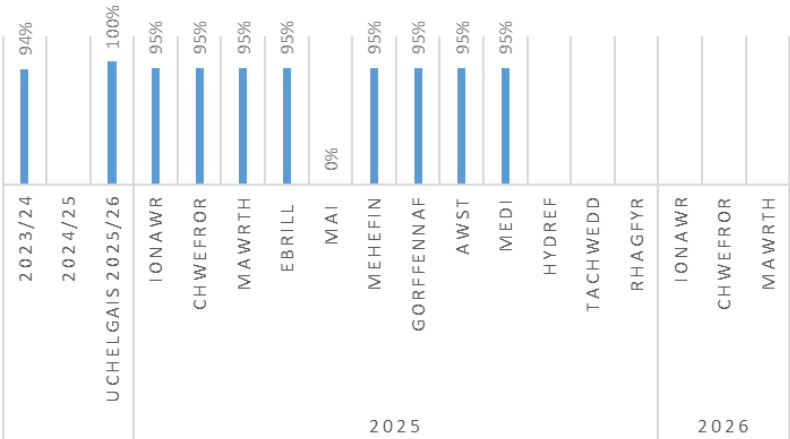
Storiel Feedback

"Very good and interesting Exhibition by Iwan Bala. The main gallery is good for presenting work being light and airy and plenty of space to wonder." / An excellent workshop - relaxed, informative and fun thanks to professor Jwls Williams who gave us a taste of printing lino and gelli. Storiel's staff are welcoming. Bert Isaac's exhibition is an added bonus. Very good."

Other comments refer to

- The café offer needs to be improved: A partner has been appointed to run the café which will open at the beginning of the year.
- External area needs improvement: A new fence has been installed with a grant and further work to be done to the wall. Fell trees when the season permits. Work to tidy up and raise the profile of the exterior continues.
- The findings of the Storiel Audience Development commission with a wide range of feedback showing support and positive experiences but need more work to promote and highlight its profile/extend opening hours etc. - work on this is going to happen through a UK Government grant.

% Museum and Gallery Service Customer Satisfaction



Economy and Community Department: Museums and Arts Service

Head: Sioned Williams; **Assistant Head:** Roland Evans

Responsible Manager: Nêst Thomas

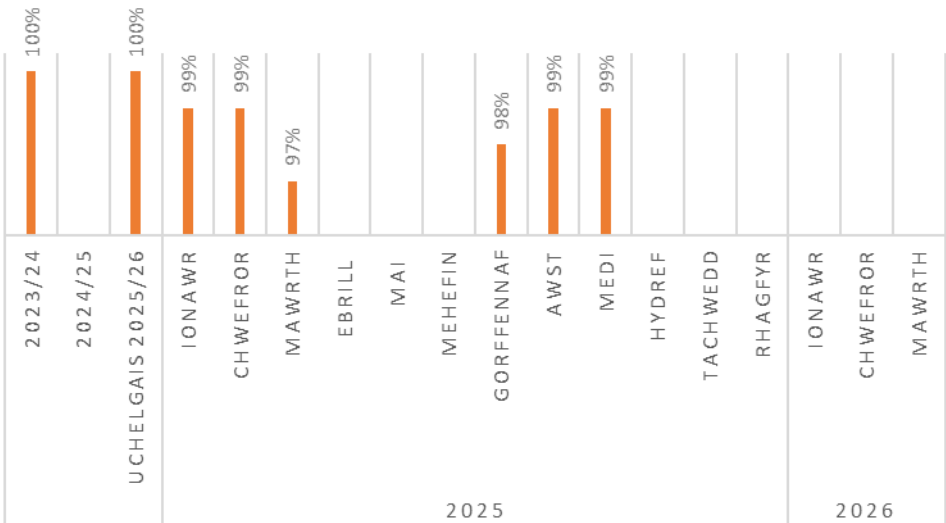
Purpose: Promote the arts for all as a medium that improves the well-being of Gwynedd residents

Performance Indicator: % of Participants benefit through a Community Arts project

Performance overview:

- More data will come through soon but so far, a percentage have responded positively and this period is between 99-100% based on projects such as Porthi Dre, Art Trails for young people; Stiwdio Lles (art on prescription with an Arts Council grant and partnership with Cwmni Frân Wen and Bangor University)
- Continue to provide grants - Community Grants to community and voluntary groups to support arts opportunities for all; Night Out grants; Spark Fund; Arts Support Fund. Multiple timetables mean they are reported by the last quarter. Activities are supported throughout Gwynedd.
- Projects organised by the Service include e.g. Art Trails at sites throughout the county; Craft for Adult Well-being. It collaborates with many such as Youth Service, Cell B, Canolfan Gerdd William Mathias, Theatr Derek Williams.
- A culture conference and further meetings for the sector will be arranged during 2025/6. Workshop held October 15 at Neuadd Dwyfor.
- Examples of feedback -
- Stiwdio Lles Feedback - *“It has to carry on, the arts make such a difference to people's health and well-being.” Gwynedd resident, Public Consultation/ ... [I was] Intending on receiving counselling from the university, but due to the lack of available counsellors... I was personally referred to The Well-being Studio. The therapy I've found in The Well-being Studio has been instrumental. It became my favourite part of the week, and I would tackle challenging days by reminding myself that I will be calm again when I enter the studio.” Contributor, Google Form Survey*
- Priw Celf Feedback - *‘Jessica attended the art club last Saturday. She loved it and hasn't stopped talking about it’*

% of Participants Benefits Through a Community Arts Project



Economy and Community Department: Libraries Service

Head: Sioned Williams; **Assistant Head:** Roland Evans

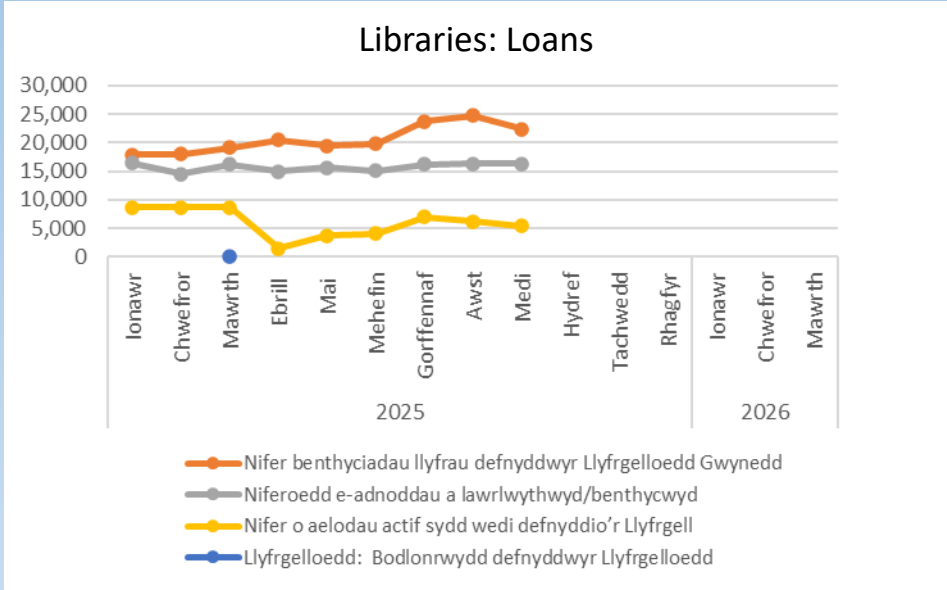
Responsible Manager: Rhian Evans

Purpose: Help me to find the books I want to read in the library, at home or on-line, give me access to computers and IT equipment, help me to use IT, provide activities to help me learn or socialise and help me to find up-to-date information about things that are important to me.

Performance Indicator: Number of Gwynedd Libraries Loans

Performance Overview:

- We have seen a more stable pattern in terms of loans and active members over the past few months with normal busyness during the summer holidays.
- Digital loans continue to increase per month and over the coming months we will be running a campaign to promote the Borrowbox Service to Gwynedd primary schools.
- We have run a number of events over the half term including Painting with aerosols, green crafts and Halloween exhibitions and activities including the presentation of Peni Pen Pwmpen at Bangor Library.
- We have re-launched our Warm Welcome offer in all of Gwynedd's Libraries with the opportunity to join in activities such as playing Chess, making jigsaws and a dementia choir. We have a Jukebox memories session in collaboration with Dementia Actif and we have launched memory sacks which have been positively received by our partners in the field. We will be running informal activities for adults, such as Paned a Paent and Gair tu ôl i'r Gân (the Words behind the Song).
- We continue to distribute SIM cards and data vouchers to individuals facing an emergency through the National Databank scheme.
- Our 1:1 Digital Support sessions remain stable
- We will be collaborating on the Taith Tywyn pilot, namely a community transport service in the Tywyn area that will operate from Tywyn Library



Economy and Community Department: Libraries Service

Head: Sioned Williams; **Assistant Head:** Roland Evans

Responsible Manager: Rhian Evans

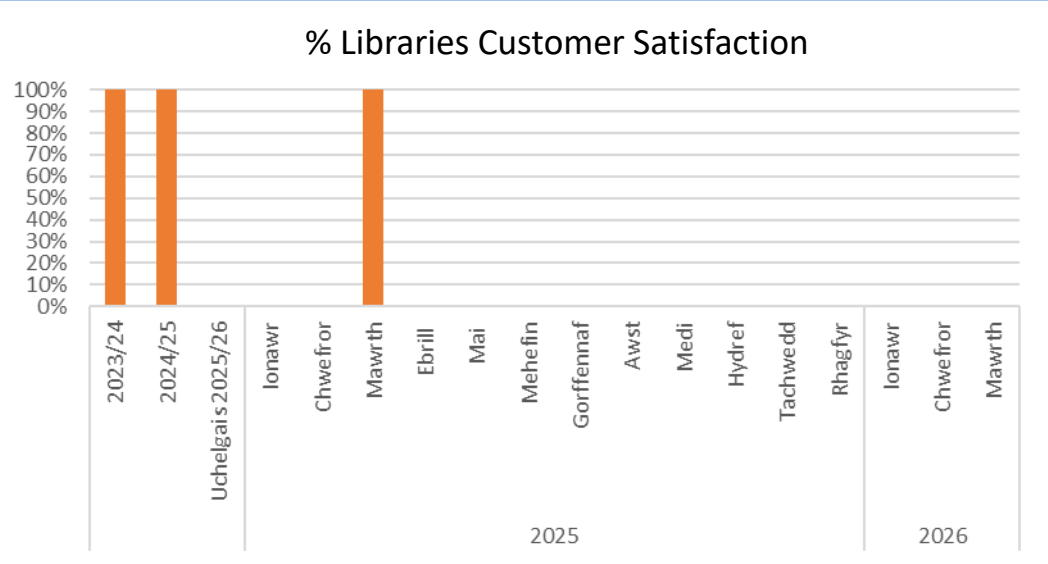
Purpose: Help me to find the books I want to read in the library, at home or on-line, give me access to computers and IT equipment, help me to use IT, provide activitis to help me learn or socialise and help me to find up-to-date information about things that are important to me.

Performance Indicator:

| July/August snapshot of activity at Gwynedd Libraries | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| Library | Taking part in the Summer Reading Challenge for children | Taking part in Summer Activities for children | Number of Visits July/August | Number of Loans July/August | Number of Unique Borrowers July/August | Number of New Borrowers July/August |
| Bangor | 100 | 138 | 9182 | 9014 | 2769 | 201 |
| Caernarfon | 243 | 212 | 8953 | 13148 | 3297 | 172 |
| Pwllheli | 156 | 168 | 4043 | 5138 | 1573 | 74 |
| Dolgellau | 68 | 119 | 1779 | 3475 | 838 | 46 |
| Tywyn | 53 | 41 | 1768 | 2906 | 751 | 36 |
| Blaenau | 38 | 15 | 1817 | 1728 | 467 | 32 |
| Porthmadog | 103 | 145 | 3868 | 5575 | 1363 | 20 |
| Bethesda | 11 | 10 | 821 | 976 | 309 | 17 |
| Barmouth | 33 | 27 | 1696 | 1853 | 553 | 26 |
| Penygroes | 25 | 9 | 783 | 1010 | 366 | 8 |
| Bala | 113 | 15 | 1410 | 1671 | 497 | 41 |
| Cricieth | 11 | 53 | 649 | 999 | 300 | 10 |
| Nefyn | 45 | 64 | 625 | 1020 | 289 | 13 |
| TOTAL | 996 | 1016 | 37394 | 48513 | 13372 | 696 |

Overview of performance % Customer Satisfaction

To coincide with the 7th Library Standards framework we will be undertaking a comprehensive survey during November 2025 including a general survey of all Libraries as well as a specific survey for children and young people.



Economy and Community Department: Neuadd Dwyfor, Pwllheli

Head: Sioned Williams; **Assistant Head:** Roland Evans

Responsible Manager: Rhian Evans

Purpose: *To provide a social space that inspires, educates and supports the well-being of the people of Gwynedd through the arts and culture.*

Performance Indicator: % Neuadd Dwyfor Customer Satisfaction

Performance Overview:

During August and September, 124 users completed the customer satisfaction questionnaire. On average, 96% of users were very satisfied with the service,

The majority of comments received during the period were positive, such as:

“All ran very smoothly from buying the tickets on-line to checking in and buying drinks in reception. The staff were lovely too !”

“Particularly enjoy the supper club that you put on once a month. ”

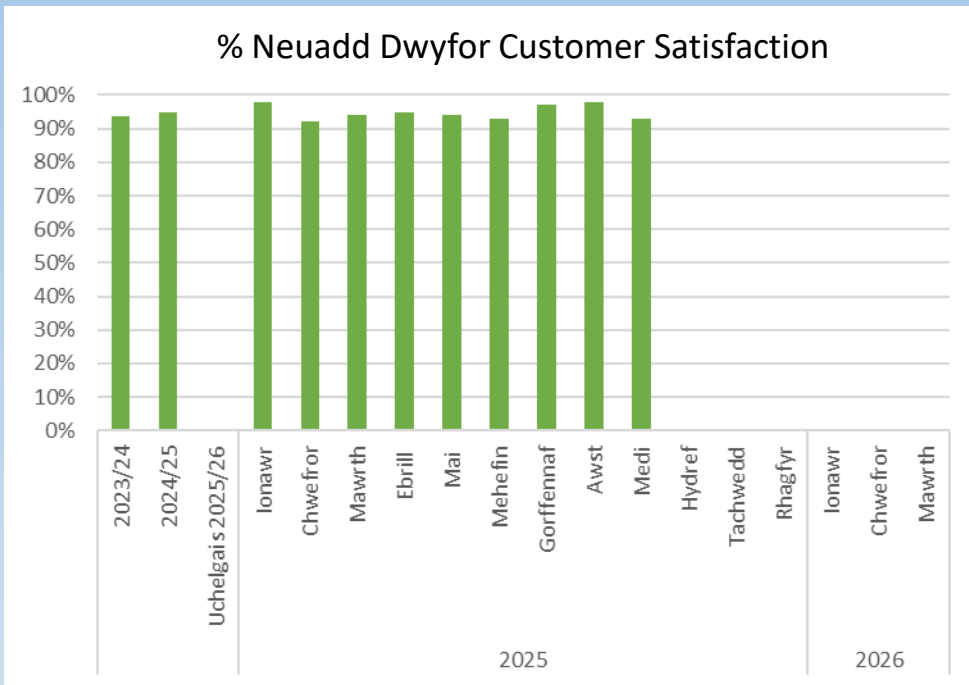
"It was another great night, thank you!"

"It was great to see a different show. Thank you for the opportunity in our town."

“Love everything about this theatre from its traditional circle to its modern foyer and fitting out, and the friendly helpfulness of the staff. Pwllheli can rightly be proud of this gem.”

The frequent negative comments about other users disrupting enjoyment by talking during the film, or the temperature being too hot/too cold, the lack of food and drink on offer and deficiencies in our technical equipment especially the sound system. However, where there are constructive comments, we try to give them consideration, as part of our ongoing performance improvement processes.

We are currently planning to re-establish the user group which will provide valuable feedback and suggestions for future programme planning.



Economy and Community Department: Neuadd Dwyfor, Pwllheli

Head: Sioned Williams; **Assistant Head:** Roland Evans

Responsible Manager: Rhian Evans

Purpose: *To provide a social space that inspires, educates and supports the well-being of the people of Gwynedd through the arts and culture.*

Performance Indicator: Neuadd Dwyfor Ticket Sales and Income

Performance Overview:
During summer 2025, a reduction was seen in the number of tickets sold compared to summer 2024, especially during August. Partly, because of the fine weather during the school holidays and the range of films targeted at children that were released over the summer this year.

Encouragingly, we see that ticket purchases are on the rise during September with nights such as Taylor Fever, Al Lewis and Cabarela attracting interest and advance sales.

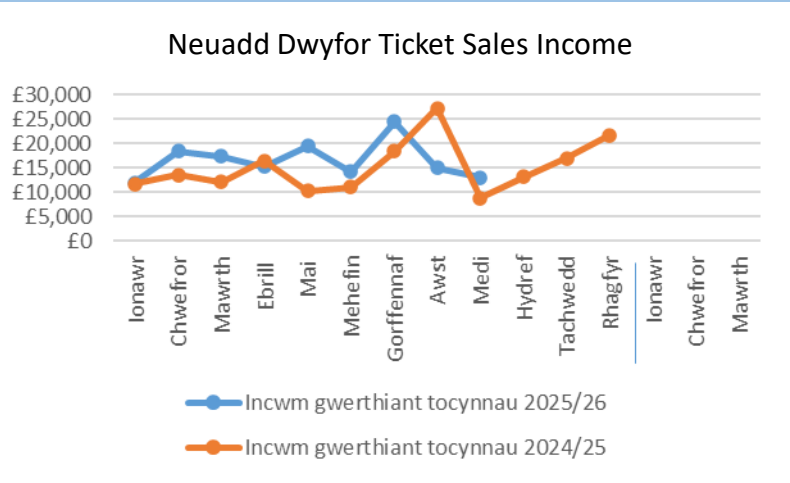
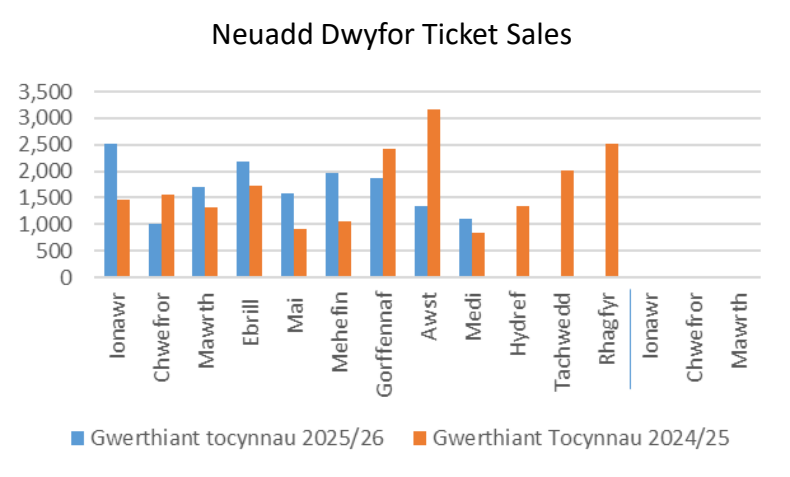
One of our priorities was to enhance the variety of the programme by offering more live music events, in addition to the usual film and theatre show offerings. The popularity of the above events shows that this priority is working and that we are responding to our users' visiting pattern.

Welsh of the West End has been confirmed for 2 performances in 2026 following the success of their May 2025 performance.

A Bingo night is in the pipeline for January. Here we will be launching Gwynedd Libraries' Bingo 21 challenge and an opportunity to test the popularity of Bingo nights.

Craft events for adults on Saturday afternoons are a new addition to the programme as well.

All these ideas are a means of renewing Neuadd Dwyfor and appealing to audiences old and new.



| Total Cumulative Ticket Sales & Income | January | February | Tuesday | April | May | June | July | August | September | October | November | December |
|---|---------|----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Cumulative Ticket Sales 2025/26 | 2,508 | 3,521 | 5,228 | 7,406 | 8,981 | 10,954 | 12,814 | 14,146 | 15,247 | | | |
| Cumulative Ticket sales income 2025/26 | £11,889 | £30,211 | £47,586 | £62,762 | £82,223 | £96,395 | £120,786 | £135,793 | £148,762 | | | |
| Cumulative Ticket Sales 2024/25 | 1,470 | 3,037 | 4,352 | 6,089 | 7,008 | 8,073 | 10,488 | 13,648 | 14,483 | 15,828 | 17,833 | 20,341 |
| Cumulative income from ticket sales 2024/25 | £11,588 | £25,032 | £37,029 | £53,478 | £63,711 | £74,659 | £93,088 | £120,317 | £129,029 | £142,142 | £159,015 | £180,708 |

Economy and Community Department: Tourism, Marketing and Events Service

Head: Sioned Williams; **Assistant Head:** Roland Evans

Responsible Manager: Sian Jones

Purpose: To support a visitor economy for the benefit and well-being of the people of Gwynedd; its environment, language and culture

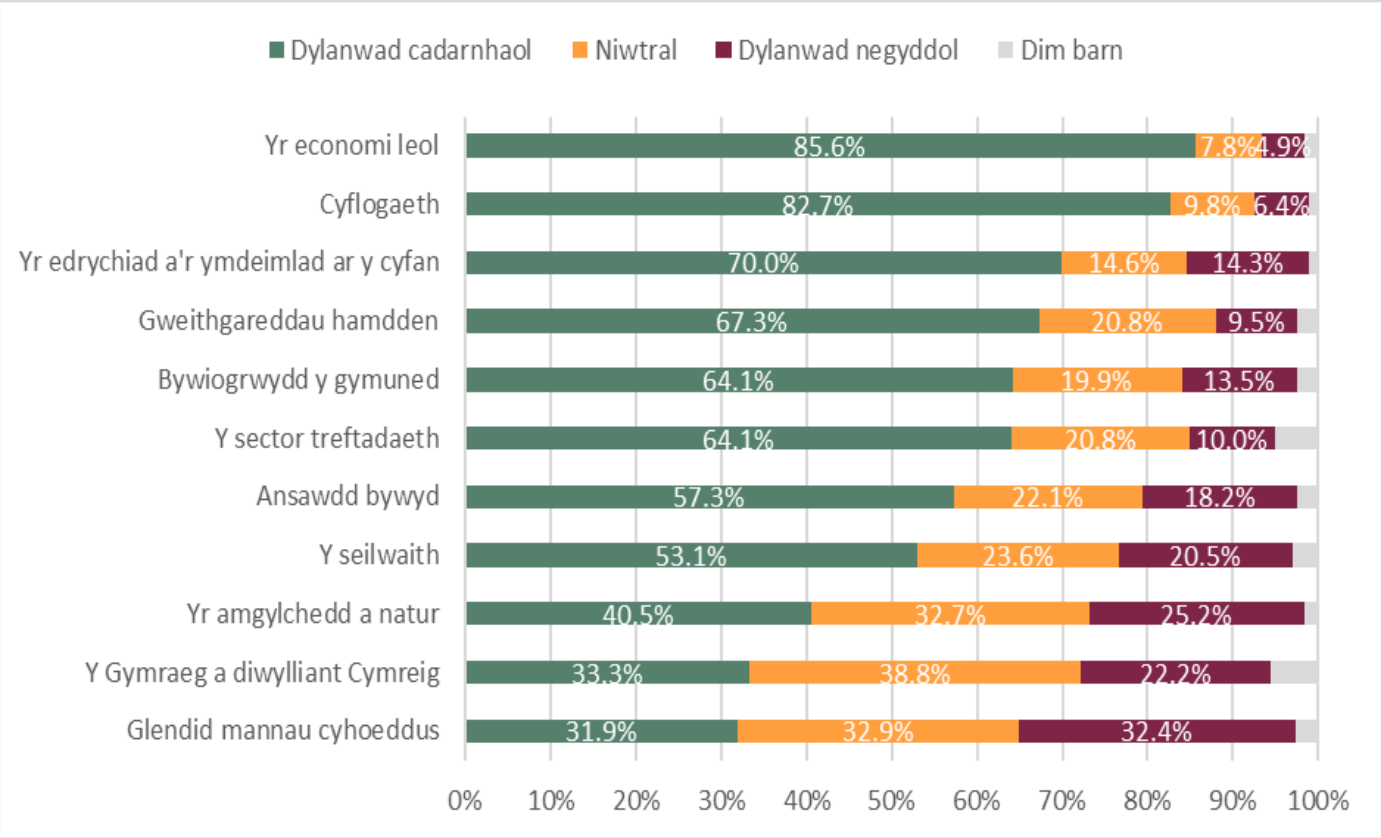
Performance Indicator: Percentage of Gwynedd residents surveyed say that tourism in their area has a positive outcome

Performance Overview:

Percentage of Gwynedd residents surveyed say that tourism in their area has a positive outcome

The data is collected in an annual survey which is completed by residents of the county by completing a questionnaire on the Council's website. The survey will be live on-line from the end of October 2025 and will run until mid-November 2025. A period that coincides with the timing of similar research conducted in the county in 2023 and 2024. The questionnaire format is based on international research models into the area of resident views on tourism and pilot research in which the Council participated through Visit Wales in 2023. In 2024, 1,506 county residents responded to an on-line survey on the Council's website to find out residents' views on the impact of tourism on their area of Gwynedd. Respondents are generally asked to state if they believe that tourism is having a positive, negative, or neutral impact on their community. For those who would note that there were negative consequences arising from tourism in their area, they have an opportunity to identify what problems are arising and to what extent they are a problem.

Specific questions will be asked in the 2025 survey about the UNESCO Slate designation, the Overnight Stay Scheme (Cynllun Arosfan), events, holiday homes, the Welsh language and the tourism levy and the results can be filtered down to the level of the 13 Regeneration Areas, AONB Area, Eryri National Park Authority Area within Gwynedd and the 67 zones within the UNESCO Slate designation. The results will be an important medium to shape the sustainable tourism vision, work plans and bids for future funding.



Economy and Community Department: Tourism, Marketing and Events Service

Head: Sioned Williams; **Assistant Head:** Roland Evans

Responsible Manager: Sian Jones

Purpose: To support a sustainable visiting economy for the benefit and well-being of the people of Gwynedd; its environment, language and culture

Performance Indicator: **Percentage increase in businesses and enterprises successfully receiving the Gwynedd and Eryri 35 Business Pledge**

Performance Overview:

66 signed up to the Gwynedd and Eryri 35 Sustainable Business Pledge between April and October 2025. Percentage increase of 288% from the number of baselines established in 2024-5.

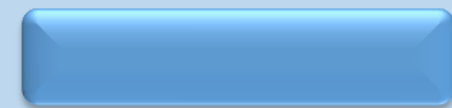
The business needs to sign up to seven principles before it can apply to sign up for the pledge:

- Support local
- Celebrate local traditions and culture
- Promote sustainable travel
- Reduce the environmental impacts of your business
- Protect your local communities
- Promote the Safety of our mountains and coast
- Lead on a positive culture of digital communication

By committing to this Pledge, the business will play an important role in preserving the natural beauty and cultural importance of Gwynedd and Eryri – and contributing to a sustainable visitor economy.

The **Gwynedd and Eryri 35 Business Pledge** is part of a package of resources to raise awareness and embed the principles of the sustainable visiting economy of the Gwynedd and Eryri 2035 Plan which includes:

- Principles of sustainable tourism in Gwynedd and Eryri module** which has been newly included on the **Gwynedd and Eryri Ambassadors Scheme Platform** (471 have registered on the County Ambassador scheme. 240 have passed three Bronze level modules, 154 have passed 6 modules to Silver level and 137 have passed 9 or more modules to reach Gold level)
- Code of good practice for area visitors - **Gwynedd and Eryri 35 Visitor Pledge** [Gwynedd and Eryri Visitor Pledge](#)
- Accreditation / Gwynedd and Eryri 2035 Sustainable Business Pledge** [Gwynedd and Eryri Business Pledge](#)
- Gwynedd and Eryri 35 Information Bulletin**



Economy and Community Department: Economic Development Service

Head: Sioned Williams

Responsible Manager: Dylan Griffiths

Purpose: To improve the conditions for businesses to thrive in Gwynedd, supporting them to establish, compete and grow and help the people of Gwynedd to take advantage of the opportunities.

Performance Indicator: **BUSINESSES COMMITTED TO PAY THEIR EMPLOYEES A REAL LIVING WAGE AND TO USE MORE OF THE WELSH LANGUAGE**

(Indicator of the impact of providing support from the Council – all businesses receiving funding have to commit to paying the real living wage and use more of the Welsh language)

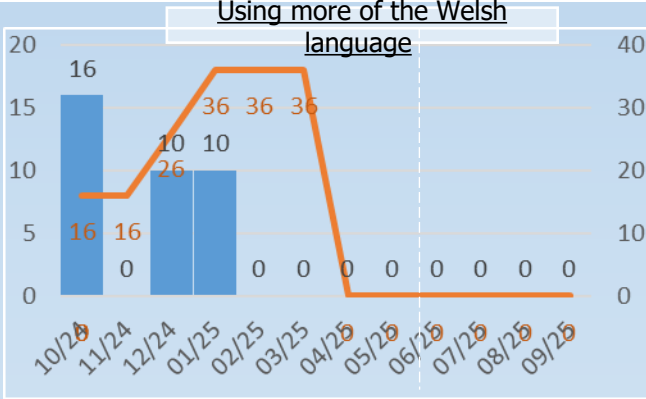
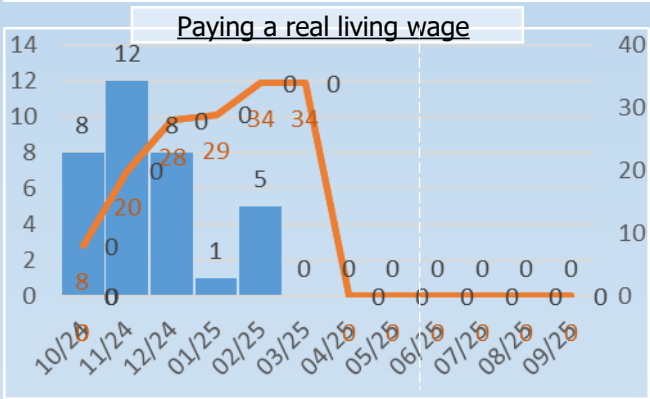
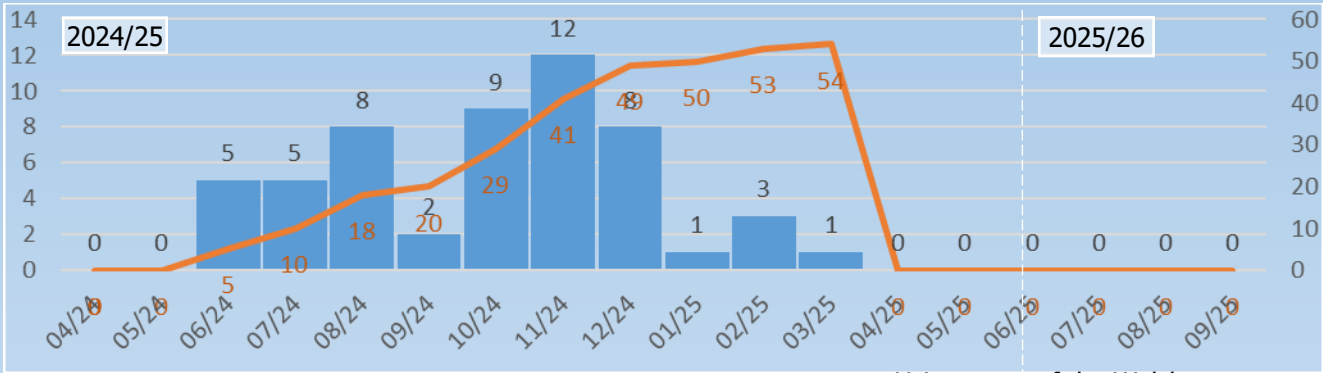
Performance overview:

A business that receives an offer of support from the Council has to commit to increasing their use of the Welsh language and to working towards paying the real living wage (minimum of £13.45) to their employees. 54 businesses have committed to our requirements in 2024/25.

More funding was secured to provide support to businesses at the start of the summer and a grant offer has been released to 47 local enterprises in October. In turn, this number will appear in the indicator.

Over a hundred requests for support are currently being assessed by the Service.

The number of businesses *paying the real living wage and using more of the Welsh language* will be monitored after completing the work funded by the Council.



Economy and Community Department: Economic Development Service

Head: Sioned Williams

Responsible Manager: Dylan Griffiths

Purpose: To improve the conditions for businesses to thrive in Gwynedd, supporting them to establish, compete and grow and help the people of Gwynedd to take advantage of the opportunities.

Performance Indicator: BUSINESSES THAT HAVE ENGAGED

(Regulatory data which counts the Service's work encouraging businesses to engage in the Council's business support provision)

Performance Overview:

Engagement is the first step to ensuring that businesses receive support and that the Council understands their needs. We monitor the number of businesses that a) receive our information bulletin, b) come into contact individually, or; c) attend one of our events.

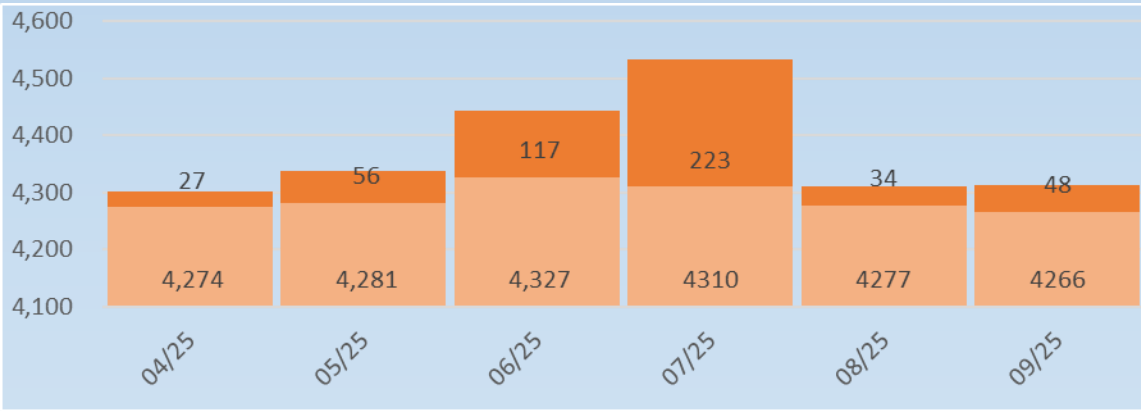
An average of 4.373 have engaged monthly during 2024/25. There was a high number in June/July as support sessions for prospective grant applicants were held.

The number of enterprises receiving our information bulletin is fairly stable (about 4,300) although there is a constant turnover.

Beyond the bulletin, there is an ongoing programme of events and visits to businesses and social enterprises.

One of the highlights of our activities is the Gwynedd Business Week in October. Events were held by the Council in all parts of Gwynedd and over 5,000 people saw information about the week via our social media.

The Service's annual opinion survey of the needs and wishes of Gwynedd businesses is also currently being carried out.



132: Bars show the performance of the indicator per month. For 2025/26, we have enriched the data presented by distinguishing subscribers to the business bulletin (light orange) and engagement through another method (dark orange).

Economy and Community Department: Economic Development Service

Head: Sioned Williams

Responsible Manager: Dylan Griffiths

Purpose: To improve the conditions for businesses to thrive in Gwynedd, supporting them to establish, compete and grow and help the people of Gwynedd to take advantage of the opportunities.

Performance Indicator: BUSINESSES SUPPORTED TO SAVE MONEY AND/OR INCREASE THEIR INCOME

(Regulatory data which counts the work of the Service providing financial support or practical support/training to businesses through one of our schemes.)

Performance Overview:

The Council provides financial and practical support to businesses to help them reduce their costs and / or increase their income.

Our intention is to contribute positively towards the resilience of the businesses in question (and commit the businesses to pay a real living wage to their employees and use more of the Welsh language). The amount of support we can provide is entirely dependent on how much funding we secure (from the UK and Welsh Governments mainly) to realise our support schemes.

The number of businesses receiving support is important regulatory data that measures the Council's effort in the field and the resource available to us.

For 2025/26, the Service has managed to secure a package of support worth over £900,000 for our local enterprises with SPF funding and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority.

Until the end of September, 79 businesses had received support (69% of the similar period in 2024/25).

The support package available in 2025/26 includes a competitive grant for eligible businesses. To encourage prospective applicants, 14 support and information sessions were held across Gwynedd to help

prospective applicants draw up suitable applications.

The sessions were attended by 181 businesses, here is a selection of feedback:

'Aled Roberts was an excellent support to me – explained everything clearly which ensured that I understood what he shared. I'm very grateful to him for his time and expertise.'

'I had a very beneficial meeting. Constructive and Professional guidance noting careful work that I will need to do to complete the application form.'

'I feel that attending the session has been invaluable to me and I encourage any individual who intends to complete the application form to attend one of the sessions before starting to complete the form.'

The response of local businesses to the opportunity has been way beyond the funding that is available; this is testament to positive evidence of the willingness of businesses to invest, but it's inevitable that several applicants for support will be disappointed.

Economy and Community Department: Economic Development Service

Head: Sioned Williams

Responsible Manager: Dylan Griffiths

Purpose: To improve the conditions for businesses to thrive in Gwynedd, supporting them to establish, compete and grow and help the people of Gwynedd to take advantage of the opportunities.

Performance Indicator: PEOPLE SUPPORTED INTO WORK

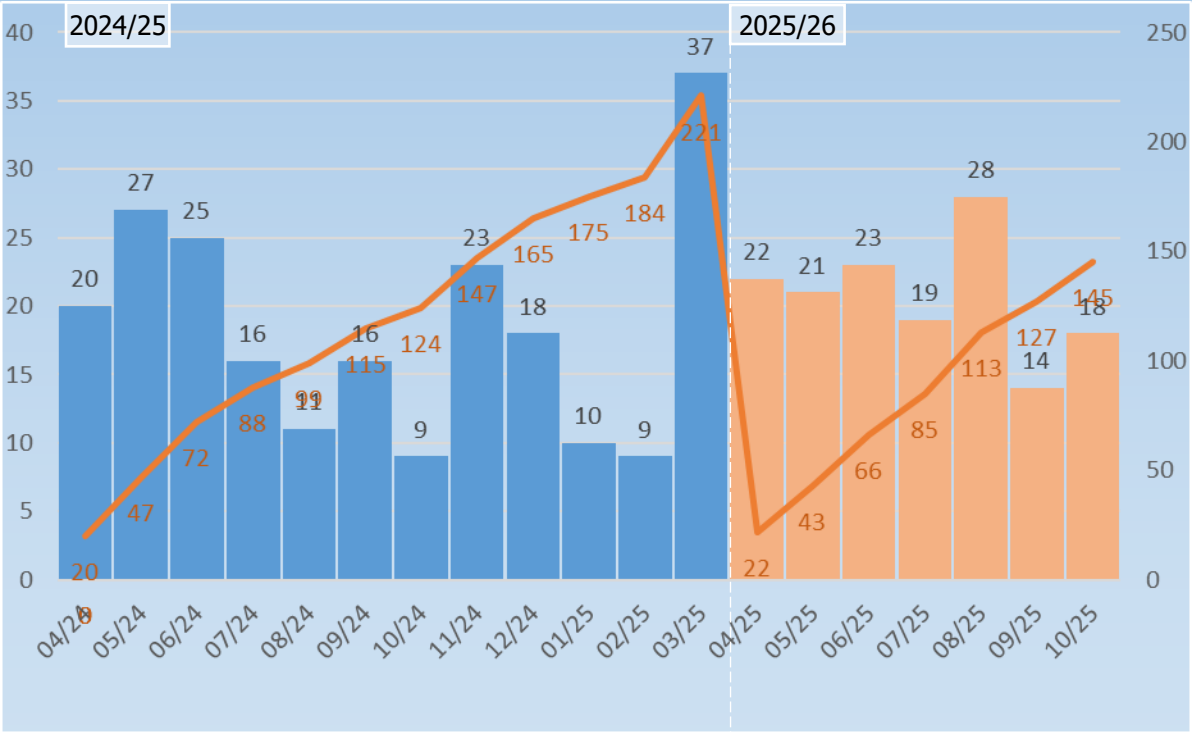
(Indicator of the impact of the Council's support to help working-age residents who are economically inactive to secure a job)

Performance Overview:

Our Gwaith Gwynedd team focuses on supporting individuals who have been out of work for a long time for reasons such as illness or disability. The individuals need intensive support to help them be ready for work. The cost of the work is paid by the Welsh Government.

So far this year, 145 local people have secured a job as a result of the help they have received from Gwaith Gwynedd.

The Welsh Government is reviewing the working method in the field. The UK Government's Department of Work and Pensions is also changing the way they work and is looking to devolve funding to the Welsh Government and Local Authorities.



Page 234
Bars show the performance of the indicator per month and the line shows the cumulative total for the year (starting again in April annually). The previous year (blue) and the current year (orange) are shown to allow comparisons.

[Back to the dashboard](#)

Economy and Community Department: Economic Development Service

Head: Sioned Williams

Responsible Manager: Dylan Griffiths

Purpose: To improve the conditions for businesses to thrive in Gwynedd, supporting them to establish, compete and grow and help the people of Gwynedd to take advantage of the opportunities.

Performance Indicator: PEOPLE INCREASING THEIR ABILITY TO EARN A GOOD SALARY

(Indicator of the impact of the Council's support to help residents in work obtain the skills they need for a better job or solve a problem to prevent them from having to increase their hours)

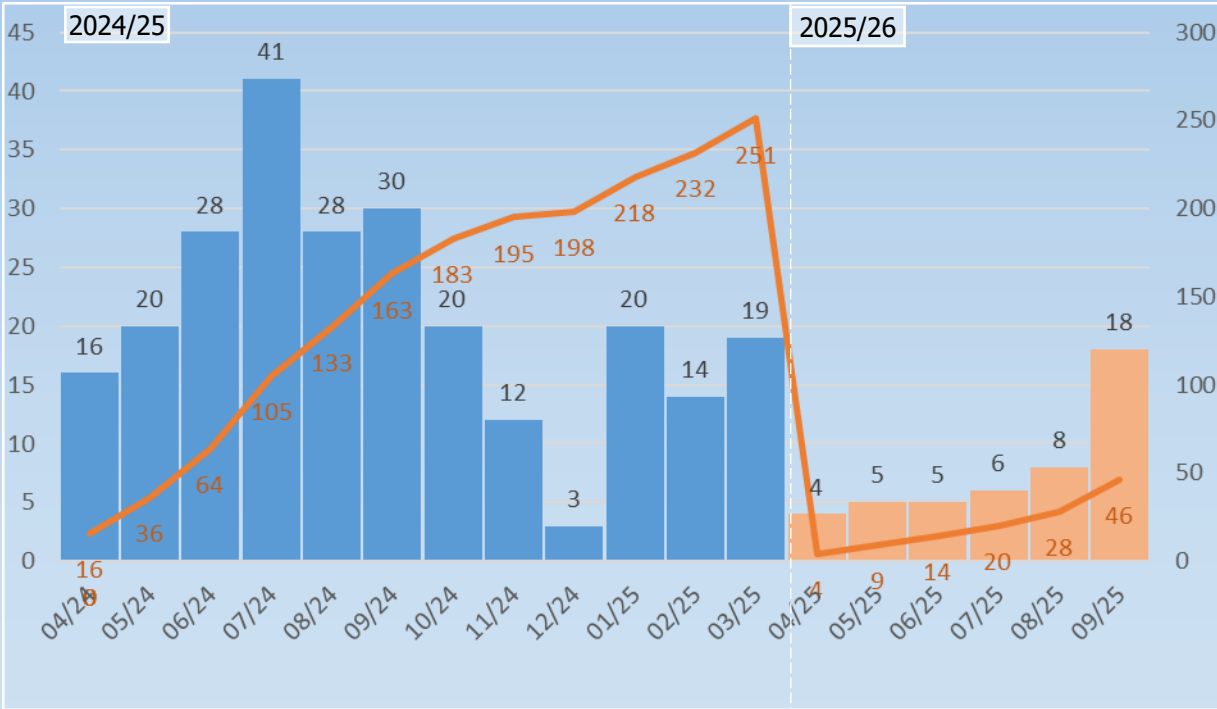
Performance Overview:

Residents who work fewer hours than they could are a feature of the labour market in the county. There are also many residents who do not earn a salary that is enough to meet their needs.

The Council has extended the scope of Gwaith Gwynedd to include help for residents who are already working to overcome a problem that prevents them from working more hours or getting the skills they need to get a job that pays better.

As a result of the success of the work, further resources to continue our activity in this important area have been secured.

There are 46 people in Gwynedd with a better ability to earn a good salary as a result of the support of the Service so far this year. It was the beginning of the summer before we received confirmation of funding from the SPF; as a result, there was a decrease in our activity at the start of the year



Bars show the performance of the indicator per month and the line shows the cumulative total for the year (starting again in April annually). The previous year (blue) and the current year (orange) are shown to allow comparisons.

[Back to the dashboard](#)

Economy and Community Department: Regeneration Programmes Service

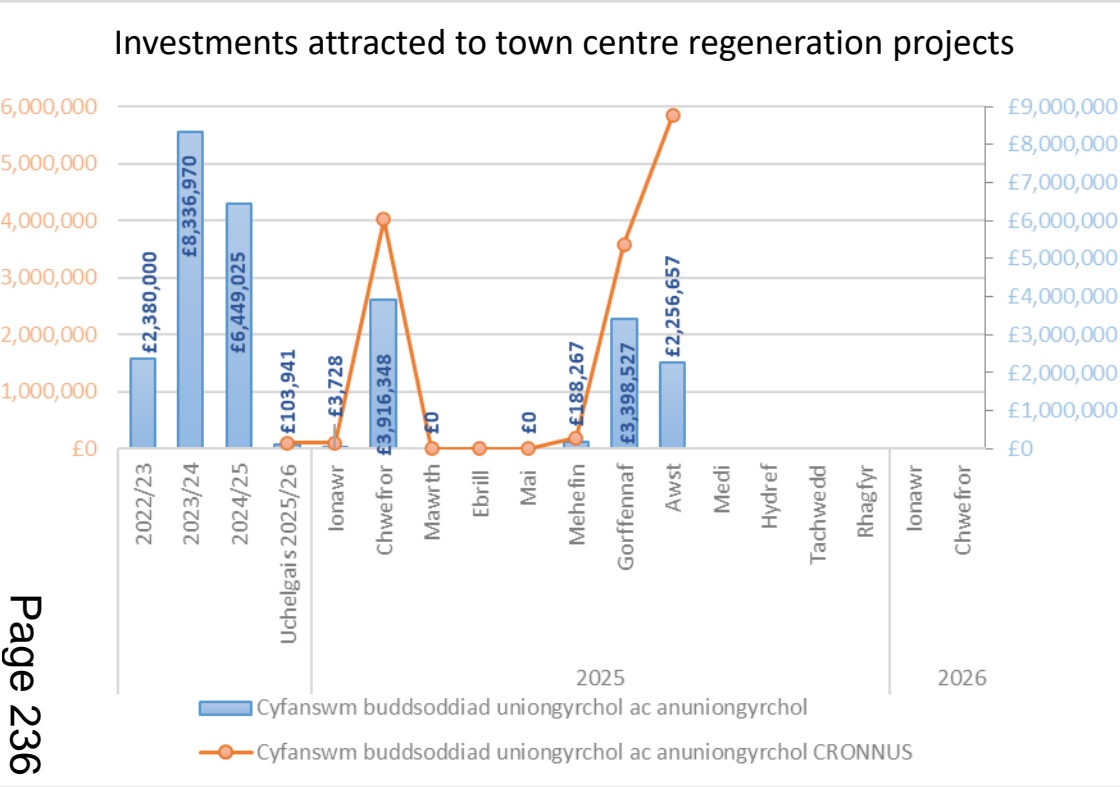
Head: Sioned Williams **Assistant Head:** Llyr Jones

Responsible Manager: Esyllt Rhys Jones

Purpose: To develop and manage regeneration programmes to bring life back into town centres, to make Gwynedd a better place to live.

Performance Indicator:

The Regeneration Programmes Service is responsible for targeting financial support from various funding sources (including the UK Government, the Welsh Government the lottery and others). The Service is responsible for bringing relevant officers/partners together to develop and form any scheme. This indicator is based on the offer letters received from a funding stream which means that it's possible to move from a developmental phase to an operational phase and the Service has the ability to follow the Project Management steps formally. The amounts secured vary annually and depend on funders and the regeneration programmes of external bodies.



The Regeneration Programmes Service has succeeded to:

- Secure funding from the Transforming Towns Fund to implement the Bangor Empty Properties Pilot scheme with the intention of working with the owners of 5 empty properties in the city.
- Complete the Aelwyd yr Urdd upgrade scheme, Blaenau Ffestiniog as part of the Llewyrch o'r Llechi scheme and support other external partners' schemes.
- Implement a cross-section of town centre infrastructure schemes under the work of Llechi Cymru including signage and art.
- Implement a cross-section of schemes funded through funds such as Transforming Towns, Brilliant Basics, the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Shared Prosperity Fund which includes the administration of a Fund for Town and Community Councils.



Economy and Community Department: Regeneration Programmes Service

Head: Sioned Williams; **Assistant Head:** Llyr Jones

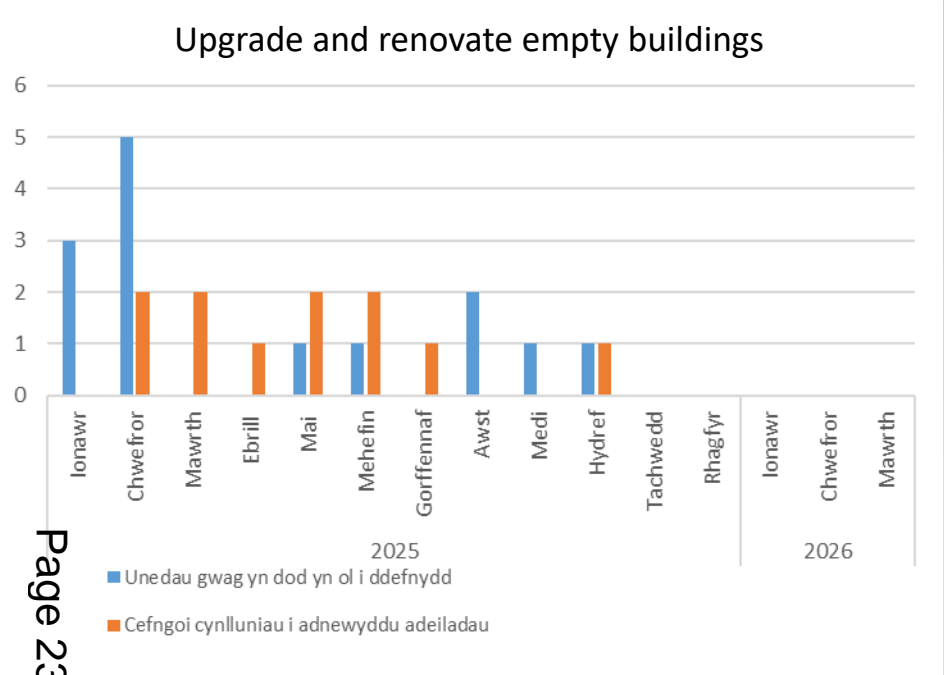
Responsible Manager: Eryllt Rhys Jones

Purpose: To develop and manage regeneration programmes to bring life back into town centres, to make Gwynedd a better place to live.

Performance Measure : Upgrade and Renovate Empty Buildings

Performance Overview:

The Regeneration Programmes Service is responsible for installing the infrastructure to stimulate economic growth and regeneration of Gwynedd's town centres. Upgrading and bringing empty buildings, some of which have been vacant for a long period of time, back into use lays the infrastructure for regeneration and economic growth.



Empty units brought back into use

- Work on coordinating the cross-departmental Empty Properties Group, identifying interventions and support, and advancing to respond to the Action Plan has progressed significantly;
- An application for funding of up to £1M from the Welsh Government to deliver some of the Bangor Pilot schemes has been successful.
- Support to bring two properties in town centres back into use through support, grants and loans.

Supporting building refurbishment schemes

- Improving the image of one building in a town centre through the financial support of Transforming Towns



Economy and Community Department: Community Support Service

Head: Sioned Williams; **Assistant Head:** Llyr Jones

Responsible Manager: Lindsey Ellis

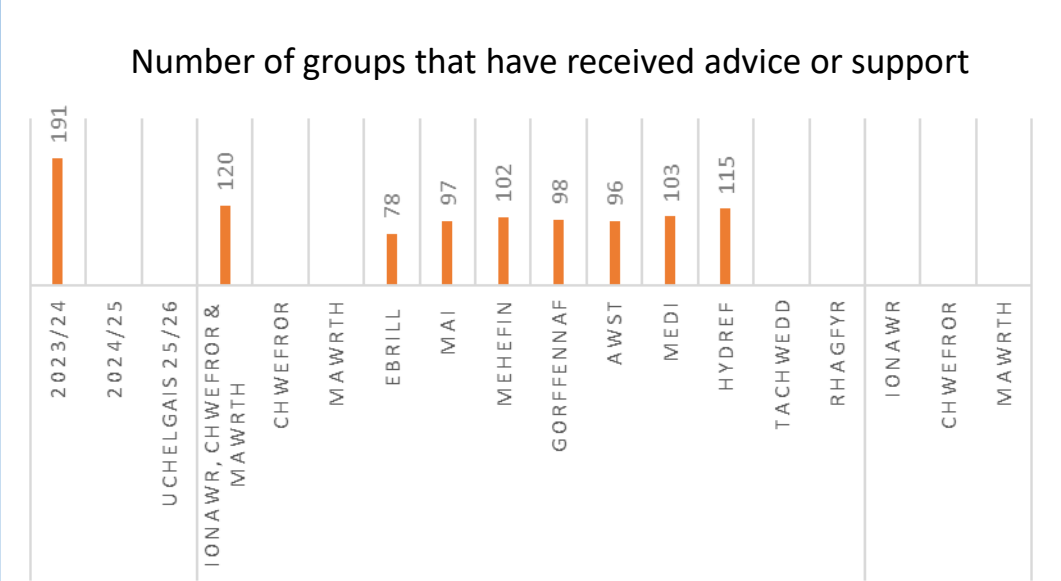
Purpose: To support local groups to play a key role in the regeneration process to improve communities .

Performance Indicator: Number of groups that have received advice or support

Performance Overview:

The work of ensuring that Regeneration Support Fund projects are completed on time continues, as well as projects that have been approved from the Community Support Fund – a total of 33 projects.

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|----------------------------|-------------|
| | | Dwyfor: 4 | |
| | | Menter y Tŵr | £38,202.30 |
| | | Pentrefelin Hall | £30,720.00 |
| | | Y Ganolfan, Porthmadog | £94,545.72 |
| | | Menter Rabar | £58,991.00 |
| | | | £222,459.02 |
| | | Arfon: 6 | |
| | | Pentra Deiniolen Committee | £100,000.00 |
| | | Theatr Bara Caws | £30,000.00 |
| | | Antur Nantlle Ltd | £65,000.00 |
| | | Partneriaeth Ogwen | £80,000.00 |
| | | Llety Arall | £44,577.00 |
| | | Nantporth CIC | £25,000.00 |
| | | | £344,577.00 |
| Meirionnydd: 6 | | | |
| Llanfachreth Village Hall | £10,482.00 | | |
| Seren Bach Nursery | £90,000.00 | | |
| Deudraeth Cyf | £21,686.00 | | |
| Dysynni Hockey Club | £20,000.00 | | |
| Bro Ffestiniog Rugby Club | £60,000.00 | | |
| Cwmni Pum Plwyf Penllyn Cyf | £23,712.50 | | |
| | £225,880.50 | | |



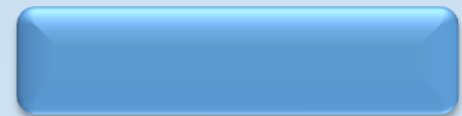
The cycle of Ardal Ni (Our Area) network meetings have been held in Meirionnydd and the area action plans have been updated in collaboration with community groups and Community and Town Councils.

Cist Gwynedd, the community grants portal has allocated £144,870 worth of grants in addition to £900,000 SPF.

Warm Welcome Schemes – 21 in Arfon, 16 in Dwyfor, 13 in Meirionnydd.
Food Schemes – 19 in Arfon, 7 in Dwyfor, 14 in Meirionnydd

The service manages and implements the Community Resilience project, SPF which lays a strong foundation for collaboration in our communities with partners in the 3rd sector. The review of the Network of Community Hubs partners is ongoing identifying where and how Libraries can be brought into the model.





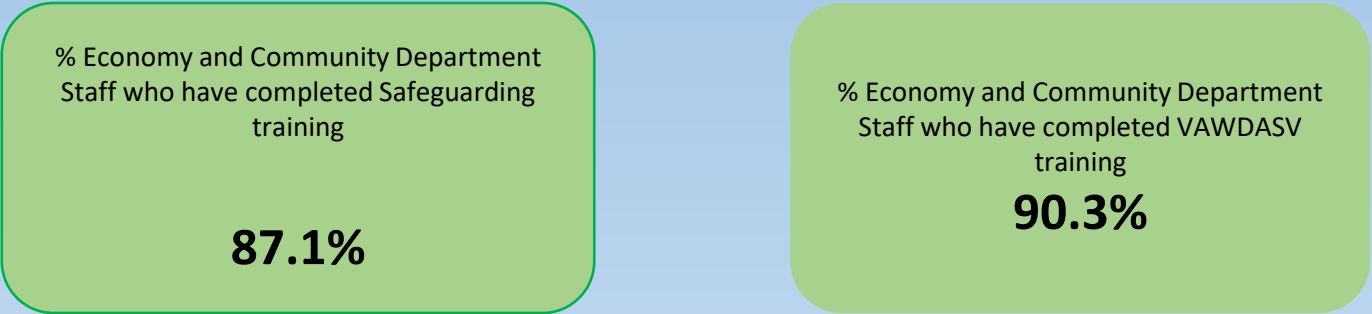
Economy and Community Department

Head: Sioned Williams; **Assistant Head:** Llyr Jones and Roland Evans

Responsible Manager: All department managers

Purpose: Ensure that department staff complete mandatory 'Safeguarding' and 'VAWDASV' training in accordance with their contract of employment.

Performance Measure: Percentage of department staff who have completed mandatory Safeguarding and VAWDASV (Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence) training.



| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| MEETING | Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee |
| DATE | 11 December 2025 |
| TITLE | Finance Cabinet Member Performance Report |
| REASON TO SCRUTINISE | To report to the Scrutiny Committee on the performance of the Finance Department |
| AUTHOR | Dewi Morgan, Head of Finance Department |
| CABINET MEMBER | Councillor Huw Wyn Jones |

1. Why it needs to be scrutinised?

So that Members of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee are satisfied that I, the Cabinet Member for Finance, have a handle on performance issues within the Department.

2. Background / Introduction

The purpose of this report is to update you on what has been achieved in the area for which I am responsible as Cabinet Member for Finance. This includes an update on the commitments in the Council's Plan and the Department's day-to-day work for the period to the end of October 2025.

We are implementing the 2023-28 Council Plan, and here I report on the progress made up to the end of October 2025, recognising that it remains early days in the context of some of the promises that have been new in the document since April last year. However, all issues are the subject of discussion and scrutiny by me in a performance challenge and support meeting, and I am satisfied with the Department's performance.

3 Logic and justification

3.1 Council Plan Projects Performance

The Finance Department leads on two priorities in the 2023-2028 Council Plan, namely:

- Managing the impact of national budgetary cuts
- Digital Plan.

I am very satisfied with the work that has been achieved during 2024-2025, and the progress made against the milestones set for the two priorities in the 2025-2026 financial year are detailed in Appendix 1.

The need to discover and implement financial savings across the Council remains if we are to continue to set a balanced budget in the future and to keep the annual Council Tax increase to a reasonable level. I am satisfied that the work of the Finance Department in this area has been effective, but challenges remain to ensure successful implementation in all parts of the Council.

The Digital Plan includes a number of projects to improve the functioning of the Council and to ensure that we make the best use of resources. The majority of these projects are to be implemented over several financial years and on the whole, I am satisfied with the progress being made on these projects.

3.2 Day to day work of the Department

Appendix 2 contains the performance measures for services across the Department. The detailed report in Appendix 2 includes data on the most recent period, along with further context and explanation that provides more detail on the performance of all areas up to October 2025.

It will be seen in Appendix 2 that there are 27 measures which are a reflection of the Department's services/responsibility (the blue tiles display managerial data rather than performance measures). Two of these are new since the submission to the Committee in June 2025, namely staff who have completed Safeguarding Training and staff who have completed Domestic Abuse Training.

The measures are regularly discussed at the Challenge and Performance Support meetings and 23 of the measures (85%) appear green, which is a confirmation of the good work identified against the performance of the services. Two measures (7.5%) have been recorded in amber and are receiving further attention as part of the discussions surrounding the challenge process. Two further measures have been recorded in the red, which is a cause for concern. The Department regularly updates the measures and reviews if a new measure needs to be introduced to reflect any change within any service. The red and amber measures are highlighted below.

Income Service (one red measure)

The balance of the value of sundry debts over 6 months of age as at the end of October 2025 is £3,184,411. This was an increase of £1,377,158 since the end of the previous month, with £1.2m of this increase going to the Health Board and other councils. The other council's debt was the result of an administrative error within Gwynedd Council where the relevant department had entered the incorrect order number on the invoice, but this situation has now been resolved and the debts have been paid.

As usual, the next highest category of debts are invoices charged to individuals for their care at £903,077. The Adult service is continuing in discussions with the Board and it is therefore hoped that the Board's debt will decrease as a result.

As I reported to the June meeting, the comprehensive review of the situation regarding old debts as well as the Unit's operational processes continues with the support of the Ffordd Gwynedd Consultant. The work has identified some areas where the operational aspects of the Unit can be streamlined, e.g. process automation and the aim is to establish more effective arrangements to reduce arrears. There is quite a way to go with this work but I am confident that there will be positive outcomes for this work.

Taxation Service (one red and one amber measure)

Another area that is subject to a comprehensive Ffordd Gwynedd review is the Taxation Service, and this is the service where there is the same other red measure where there is concern about performance, as well as an amber measure. The collection rates for Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates are lower than they have historically been and in comparison to other local authorities in Wales.

By the end of October 2025 Council Tax collection (i.e. in-year collection) was 63.17%, compared to 63.55% in 2024/25 and 66.42% in 2019/20 (which was the last year before the pandemic).

A specific report on "Council Tax Collection Rates" was submitted to the Governance and Audit Committee on 13 November 2025. We continue to work on managerial data with the hope of being able to identify areas that need attention and prioritise them moving forward. A link to the papers can be found here (item 10): [Agenda for Governance and Audit Committee on Thursday, 13th November, 2025, 10.00 am.](#)

Similarly, by the end of October 2025 the Non-Domestic Rates collection (i.e. collection within a year) was 60.84% compared to 64.76% for 2024/25. External agency employees have been temporarily employed to work on the backlog of work, and a review is underway and action is being put in place to strengthen our recovery arrangements.

Payments Service (one measure amber)

In October 2025, local invoices were processed for payment in an average of 20 days, while non-local invoices took 27 days. Within these days, the Payments Unit has taken 3 days to process the invoices, which is an improvement from the 6.5 days average in 2023/24 and previous years. The files show amber as the service believes there is room for further improvement.

4. External Auditors' Reports

The report **Financial Sustainability Review – Cyngor Gwynedd** was published in October 2024. It was submitted to the Governance and Audit Committee on 16 January 2025 in conjunction with the 'Financial Sustainability of Local Government' report, Audit Wales' assessment of the national situation in Wales. The report included one recommendation: *"We found limitations in the Council's strategic approach to support its long term financial sustainability. To address this, the Council should implement a long-term financial strategy that supports its understanding of its medium-long term financial position and informs its transformation and prioritisation of services."*

The Committee approved management's response, which included consideration of a further report commissioned by CIPFA on the Council's financial sustainability. The draft report has been received and officers from the Finance Department are currently working through the report.

The report **Strategic Management of Balances and Reserves – Cyngor Gwynedd** was published in September 2025.

It was submitted to the Governance and Audit Committee on 9 September 2025. The report included one recommendation: *"To ensure its reserves are used strategically, the Council should enhance its current arrangements by adopting a reserves strategy that includes criteria to determine when and how reserves should be established and prioritised, and a proportionate method to support the rationale behind the sums held in reserves at year-end."*

The Committee approved management's response, which stated that by 31 March 2026 we will develop a reserves strategy that incorporates these matters as well as other relevant issues.

The "ISA260" report – **Audit of Accounts Report** – was published by Audit Wales in November 2025 and approved by the Governance and Audit Committee on 13 November. This report summarises the main findings of the Auditor General's audit of the Statement of Accounts 2024-25. An unqualified opinion was issued on the accounts and the report did not contain any recommendations.

5. Consultation

The report has been prepared based on information and the content of a recent meeting to challenge and support the performance of the Finance Department on 20 October 2025, with the Cabinet Member, Head of Department, Assistant Heads of Department and service managers present at the meeting.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Progress reports on Council Plan projects

Appendix 2: The Department's Performance Indicators

Gwynedd Council Plan 2023-28 – Year 3 Actions – November 2025 Update

Efficient Gwynedd: Putting Gwynedd residents first and treating them fairly and ensuring that the Council performs well and effectively

| Section | Project | What we want to achieve during the THIRD year 2025-26 (milestones): | A BRIEF update on progress on milestones to date (insert date) | Is the milestone completed/likely to be completed by the end of the financial year (Yes / No) |
|---------|---|--|---|--|
| Finance | Managing the impact of national fiscal cuts | 1. Monitor that the savings and cuts of £3,463.390 for 2025/26, which were approved by the Full Council 06/03/25, together with any savings still remaining to be realised are prioritised by the Departments for realisation during the financial year Annex 3 - Savings and Cuts | 1. Savings of £45.8 million realised since 2021/22. The latest position has been reported to the Governance and Audit Committee 09/10/25 and to Cabinet 11/11/25. | 1 Yes |
| | | 2. Monitoring that the Departments are prioritising the realisation of savings that have slipped from previous financial years. | 2 During the year we monitor and report on the performance to Cabinet 11/11/25 and 20/01/26 and to the Governance and Audit Committee 09/10/25 and 15/01/26. | 2 Yes |
| | | 3. The Chief Executive, Directors and Head of Finance to meet quarterly to review the realisation status of all the Council's savings and cuts and to consider the plans that | 3 Due to other demands the meeting were not held during the first half of the year, but they will be held before the end of the year. | 3 Yes |

| | | | | |
|----------------|---------------------|--|--|---------------------------|
| | | <p>have slipped in order to carry out an objective assessment of how realistic they are expected to be realised.</p> <p>4. Report to Cabinet 14 October 2025 and 20 January 2026 and to the Governance and Audit Committee 9 October 2025 and 15 January 2026 on the status of the realisation of all the Council's savings and cuts plans.</p> <p>5. Collaborate with the Chief Executive and the Directors and Heads of Department on the 2025/26 savings and cuts plans, looking at efficiencies and alternative ways of delivering services.</p> | <p>4 Have reported on the end of August position to the Governance and Audit Committee 9 October 2025 and to Cabinet 11 November 2025.</p> <p>5 Following the establishment of the Medium Term Financial Plan Programme Board, as part of work for the Board, the Finance Department provides information on savings and cuts for 2025/26.</p> | <p>4 Yes</p> <p>5 Yes</p> |
| Finance | Digital Plan | <p>The following plans are either self-funded from resources that the Council already has, or have received full support to be implemented over the next two years:</p> <p>The projects that will be implemented in 2025/26 are:</p> | <p>The annual report has been completed in draft form and shared for a second round of feedback, as well as receiving input from the Authority's designer. It will be presented to the Cabinet on 16 December.</p> | Yes |
| | | <p>CC3 – redesign of the Council's corporate website</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreeing a design • Developing and testing the changes • Bringing the new design live | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design completed • The changes have been tested • Further development work is underway to roll it out as a "Beta" and receive feedback from the public. | Yes |
| | | <p>CC2 – improvements to the Council's telephone provision</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Voice Executive Leader" position filled • The Contact Centre live and fully operational on the new solution | Yes |

| | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement exercise already completed and work has commenced on solution engineering • Project manager in place • 'Voice Executive Leader' position to be filled in Q1 • Contact Centre solution to go live in Q1 • Everyone has migrated to the new provision by the end of Q2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All users have been migrated to the new solution. | |
| | | GCB1 – introducing Artificial Intelligence for discussion and regular activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solutions for analysing the content of documents and emails already submitted for the Department of Education • Copilot suitability assessment to be carried out during Q1 and Q2 before the technology can be fully rolled out • Paper research on other opportunities to deliver DD solutions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copilot is being trialled by a handful of officers • Further discussions have been held to create a series of 'Case Studies' to evaluate the benefits and risks of introducing AI and where within the Council • Workshops with an external provider will be held to develop the 'Case Studies' • We will revisit the need to introduce a dedicated resource following the practice of creating the 'Case Studies'. | Yes (but AI will establish itself as an ongoing effort) |
| | | GSB5 – review of the organisation's ERP systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review has already been undertaken and a business case for the introduction of a Payroll/HR system will be underway in Q1 • Rollout of the new solution to start Q3 and continue until the end of 2026/27 • Review of financial systems to continue | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council's Cabinet has approved a request to allocate funding from the transformation fund to fund the project • Partnered with a specialist procurement company to form a requirements specification • Competition launched through a specialist framework | No, the establishment of the system will continue until Quarter 3 2026/27. |

| | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two responses have been received and are being evaluated The evaluation exercise is to be completed by the end of November The successful provider will be confirmed by mid-December. | |
| | | GWYD2- business continuity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New cyber resilience officer added to team in 2024/25 Setting up an incident response plan Testing the incident response plan Establishing cyber resilience groups and responding to a cyber incident in Q2 Creating an annual report on the resilience of our services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cyber incident resilience and response governance groups set up Revisited the idea of introducing two groups, with the Digital Board agreeing that establishing one cyber group is more sensible to avoid confusion and duplication of tasks Work to create the response plan will be embedded by the governance groups Responsibility for the Cyber Assessment Framework (CAF) will be owned by the group A project manager has been designated to facilitate the work of establishing the CAF Annual report to be prepared following maturity of response plans. | No – this will be a permanent work-stream. |
| | | GSB7 – make the best use of the Microsoft365 platform <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a Copilot suitability assessment to measure the readiness of our | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information governance officer has begun to assess the impact of the product from an information management perspective | No – work is ongoing on this project. |

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|-----|
| | | <p>data/content's infrastructure and health to deploy artificial intelligence on a large scale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of the use of the packages from a technical and information governance perspective • Administration of our use of the platform reducing the burden of platform costs • Getting the extended team in place to use the platform to its full potential • Analysing the impact of the exercise • Preparing a business case for ongoing support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new 3-year deal agreed with Microsoft and we have successfully moved 285 officers to (cheaper) educational licenses • Direct support with Microsoft piloted for a year and continuation of support has been presented as a bid for consideration of permanent funding from 2026/27. | |
| | | <p>GWYD1 – upgrading analogue to digital lines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This task continues with significant progress made in 2024/25 • Prioritise the central resource to carry forward work that has already been carried out (Step 1) to identify analogue links that need to be upgraded • Move the project to Phase 2, identifying which links need to be continued and organising to turn off the unnecessary links • Identifying alternative technology for the services that need to continue • Collaborate with the departments so that they own the tasks and cost of migration to the new provision | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant savings realised by switching off unused historical links • A collection of links that the project team cannot conclude on has been submitted to the departments for further implementation. | Yes |
| | | <p>GWYD3 – upgrading broadcasting provision in Council chambers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements to visual broadcasting provision in the Dafydd Orwig and Hywel Dda Chamber | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New display screens have been introduced at Siambr Hywel Dda • The Democratic Service is working with the provider who delivered SHDd to identify the | Yes |

| | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|--------------------------|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introducing new video conferencing provision to a new seminar room at HQ Make minor adjustments to voice deficits in the other meeting rooms Introducing video conferencing equipment suitable for departmental meeting rooms | <p>effort and costs to fully reform broadcast provision in SHDd and Siambr Dafydd Orwig – this will be presented as a bid</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department based meeting rooms provisioned with AV and hybrid meeting capabilities Having agreed with an external company to set up conference provision in the new meeting room – the company is co-ordinating the work with the builders but the work has stagnated recently as we await the outcome on the room setup design. | |
| | | <p>GD2 – Data Chart</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data subgroup to create a data charter <p>GD4 – data reporting platform</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpreting the needs Review available options Procurement of a solution as a pilot <p>Measuring the impact of the pilot and preparing a business case for expanding provision</p> <p>GD6 – performance reporting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A data sub-group to collaborate with the Corporate Management Team to create recommendations to improve performance reporting reports | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant work is underway with the company Basis Cross-departmental officers involved in the exercise. | No. |
| | | GWEI1 – introducing a digital account to all officers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The research has been completed and a business case has been | Yes – the first phase of |

| | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|---|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Running workshops to identify the needs • Assessing needs for all officers, casual workers and volunteers • Preparing a business case for attracting financial support | submitted as a bid for the realisation of the project during 2026/27 | submitting the business case for bid competition has been completed, and if successful, the work of introducing the solution will commence next year. |
| | | GSB6 – internet of things <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application for SPF funding submitted to employ a temporary resource for one year to research solutions and create a range of case studies for its use • Preparing a business case for permanent resources • Collaborating with the Digital Board in North Wales Ambition to roll out the internet of things network in the north Wales region (LoRaWAN) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application for SPF funding has been successful • Procurement exercise undertaken to select a suitable provider • A provider has been appointed and an initial series of workshops have been held with officers from the Care sector and the Climate and Environment areas • A shortlist of projects has been presented and will be discussed further in follow-up workshops • The final list of projects to be promoted to 'Case Studies' will be decided after the follow-up workshops • Business cases have been submitted to Ambition North Wales to extend the Internet of Things network and to introduce | Yes. |

| | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|----|
| | | | 70 additional sensors on public litter bins. | |
| | | GWE14 – promoting Gwynedd Council as a digital employer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employing a 'Digital Transformation Trainee' | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our efforts to appoint a "Digital Transformation Trainee" have been unsuccessful We will retry next year, but we have to look at our requirements and manage our expectations Despite the disappointment of failing to appoint a trainee, a new software engineering degree apprentice has been appointed for Gwynedd Consultancy and placed with the Development Team A further programme of activities to engage with schools is to be delivered through the Workforce Sub-group | No |

Finance Department Performance Measures Report

Period:

- **October 2025**

Mandatory Training

Staff who have completed the
Safeguarding training

98.7%

Mandatory Training

Staff who have completed the
Domestic Abuse training

97.8%

Benefits Service

Days to process a benefit
application

16.99

Benefits Service

Days to process a change in
circumstances notice

5.05

Payroll Service

Incidents that have resulted
in further adjustments to salary.

September: 30
October: 12

Payroll Service

Statutory information on time

100%

IT Dept (Sept/October '25)

Number of incidents recorded
by the IT ServiceDesk

4252

IT Dept (Sept/October '25)

Total number of incidents
resolved

4184

IT Dept (Sept/October '25)

Incidents resolved within a
week

83%

IT Dept (Sept/October '25)

Incidents resolved with 1 day

63%

IT Servicedek only (1st line)

Incidents resolved within 1 day

63%

IT Dept (Sept/October '25)

Satisfaction: A very happy or happy percentage. *Suggest a questionnaire to ALL IT users.*

100%

IT
(Infrastructure)

Number of cyber incidents

0

IT
(Infrastructure)

Number of serious service interruptions

0

IT
(Infrastructure)
Core Network Availability

99.99%

63%

IT (Development)

Number satisfied declared

100%

IT (Development)

Failure Demand (checks)

10% ↓ 1%

IT (Digital Learning Service)

Customer Satisfaction



Insurance and Risk Management Service

Unsuccessfully defended liability claims (Insurance Unit)

0

Insurance and Risk Management Service

Unsuccessfully defended liability claims (Insurer)

0

Income Service

Value of sundry debts > 6 months old

£3,184,411

Pension Service

Continue to calculate and pay retirement benefits promptly



Pension Service

My Pension Online –
Increase in membership and visits



Investment and Treasury
Management Service

Pension Fund – asset value
increased to

£3.3bn

Investment and Treasury
Management Service

Pension Fund - Pension Returns
managers above benchmark

0.0%

Internal Audit Service

Annual plan completed
(2025/26)

34%

Internal Audit Service

Community councils audited

71

Taxation Service

Council Tax collection rate for
the current year

63.17%

Taxation Service

Current year's Non-Domestic
Rates collection rate

60.84%

Finance and Accounting Service

End-of-year 2024/25 position of
departments finalised



Finance and Accounting Service

Budget 2025/26 – Works
completed



Payments Service

Average number of days to
process local invoices to be
paid

20

Payments Service

Average number of days to
process non-local invoices to
be paid

27

Mandatory Training

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Overview of performance:

Based on the latest data, 3 members of staff have not completed the Safeguarding training, and 5 have not completed the Domestic Abuse training. A personal message has been sent to all those who have not completed the Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse training demanding that the course be completed – some of the officers are new to the Council in recent weeks

| Number of individuals who have completed Mandatory Titles | | | | | | | | Data updated 12/11/2025 |
|---|--|--|--|---|--|---|--|--|
| Finance Department | | | | | | | | |
| Number of unique individuals | | Number of unique individuals who have completed FoI | | Number of unique individuals who have completed Prevent | | Number of unique individuals who have completed Domestic Abuse | | Number of unique individuals who have completed Equality |
| 226 | | 23 | | 171 | | 221 | | 217 |
| | | 10.2% | | 75.7% | | 97.8% | | 96.0% |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | Number of unique individuals who have completed Safeguarding | | Number of unique individuals who have completed Data Protection | | Number of unique individuals who have completed Health and Safety | | Number of unique individuals who have completed Language Awareness |
| | | 223 | | 219 | | 115 | | 105 |
| | | 98.7% | | 96.9% | | 50.9% | | 46.5% |

Benefits Service

Service Manager – Dylan Griffith

Purpose of service: Is to process Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction Scheme, Education Benefits, Free School Meals and Pupil Development Grant, Discretionary Housing Payments promptly and accurately, in order to support the citizens of Gwynedd to pay their rents and Council Tax bills and to ensure that Gwynedd's children receive the appropriate support.

Overview of October performance: The average time taken to process a new benefit application for October is **16.99** days which shows an improvement when compared to the same period in 2024/25 at **20.20**.

218 new applications were processed in October.

On average, the time taken to process a change in circumstances notice during October is **5.05** days.

This also shows a slight improvement when compared to the same period in 2024/25, which is **6.34**.

1,739 change in circumstances assessments were processed during October.

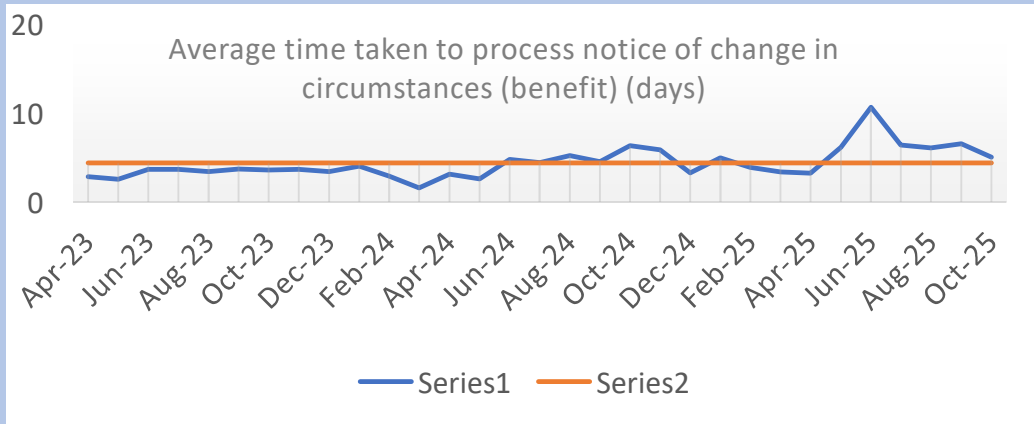
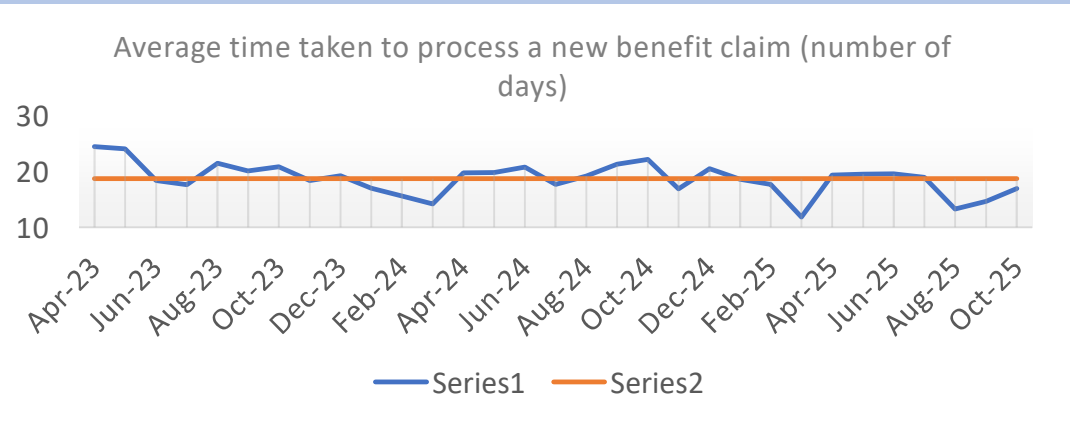
In addition to the above, the following data was received through electronic information sharing arrangements with the Department for Work and Pensions:

ATLAS (Automated Transfer to Local Authority Systems) : October – **1,911**

UCDS (Universal Credit Data Share) : October – **6,129**

VEP (Verify Earnings and Pensions) : October – **22**

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Benefits Service

Service Manager – Dylan Griffith

Financial value for Gwynedd residents during the current financial year :

Housing Benefit :

Currently **2,664** Gwynedd residents receive Housing Benefit with a financial value of **£9,385,522.13**.

Council Tax Reduction :

In addition, **8,283** Gwynedd residents receive a Council Tax Reduction award with a financial value of **£11,675,747.76**.

Discretionary Housing Payments :

The Benefits service is also responsible for processing claims for Discretionary Housing Payments, and currently have helped **953** families with financial aid with a value of **£304,449.18** from the Discretionary Housing Payment Fund, and have agreed to pay a further **£239,709.68** to the end of the current financial year, which totals to **£544,158.86**.

This extra award is to help the resident towards paying their rent. Through this process, we have been able to assist a significant number of Gwynedd tenants to remain in their current homes or to move to a new property.

Free Schools Meals :

The Benefit Service is also responsible for processing entitlements to Free Schools Meals and **2,771** of Gwynedd children have so far been deemed eligible.

School Essentials Grant :

Furthermore, the Benefit Service processes School Essentials Grant entitlements and to date we have assessed a financial value of **£274,425** for **2,091** children.

Payroll Service

Service Manager – Martin Morris

Purpose of service: To pay staff accurately and on time, and also to keep proper accounts for the payment of external bodies such as HMRC.

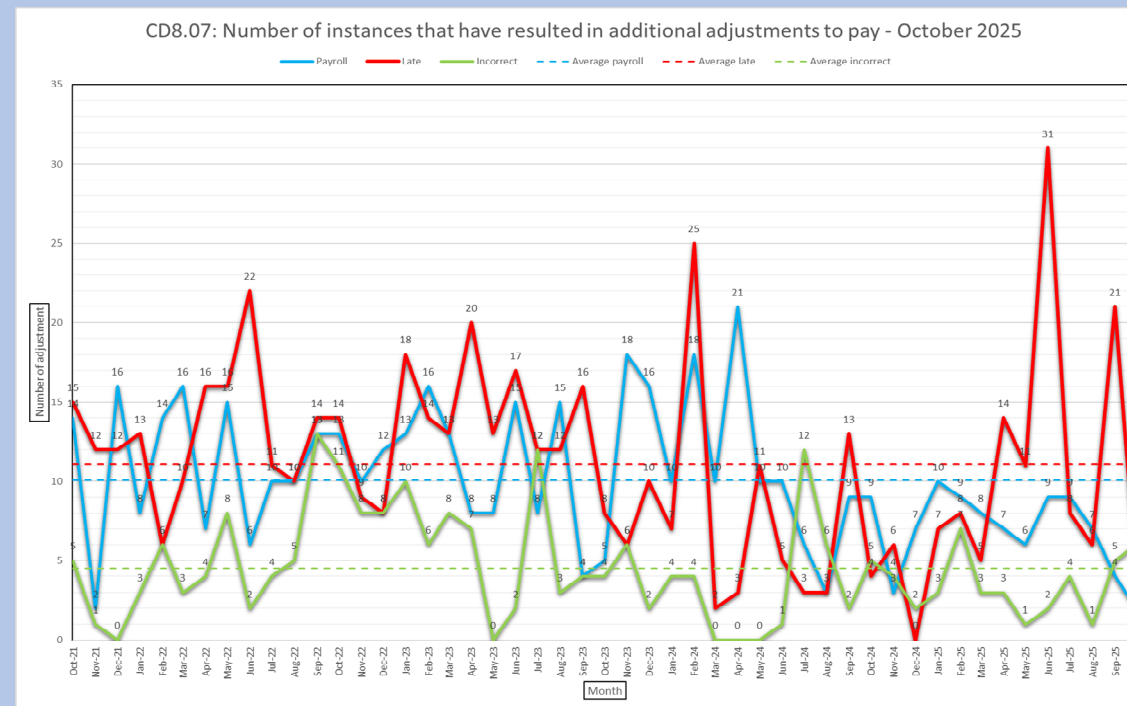
Overview of performance:

Pay increases for the year 2025/26, effective from 1st September 2025, applied as part of October pay to all workers employed under teacher's national terms and conditions, including any backpay that is owed.

Around 94 items received as part of the September payrolls that related to previous periods, with a 142 similar items received as part of the October payrolls, with the majority of the October information coming from schools.

Some initial work done within the current payroll system in order to tidy the information in readiness for transferring to the new payroll / HR system, once that has been chosen.

All payments and statutory information sent to external agencies before any relevant deadlines.



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IT Service – Support –

Service Manager – Bryn Goodman Jones

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Service purpose: To collaborate with our customers to offer, develop and evolve solutions in response to business needs.

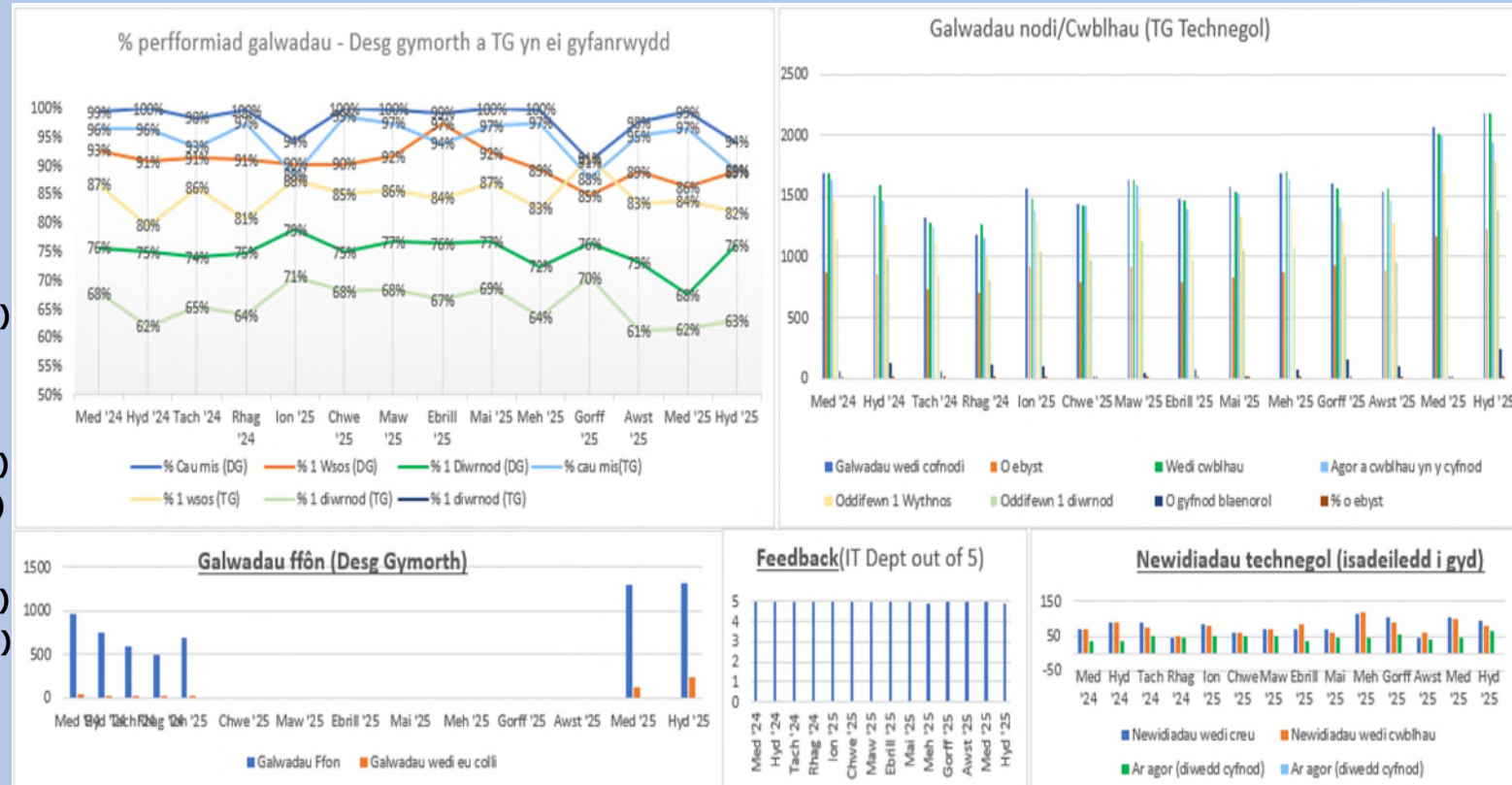
Performance Overview: 2 months (September / October '25)

Phone Calls to the Helpdesk

- Phone calls received: - **2609**
- Percentage answered - **87%**

Requests for Technical Support

- Total support requests recorded: **4252**
- Total support requests via emails **2386 (56%)**
- Total support requests *opened and closed* for period: **3945**
- Support requests completed (*all IT:*) **4184**
 - Completed within **1 week:** **3464 (83%)**
 - Of the above completed in **24 hours:** **2608 (63%)**
- Support requests completed (*1st line only*) **2631**
 - Completed within **1 week:** **2311 (83%)**
 - Of the above completed in **24 hours:** **1831 (63%)**
- Technical Changes
 - Number of technical changes created: **202**
 - Number of technical changes completed: **178**



- The work to update ALL computers under the Council's management to Windows 11 has been completed. This is to ensure the security and compliance of the digital estate and just under 3,000 have been upgraded or replaced in the past 12 months. This has had an affect on the ability of the IT Service Desk to resolve incidents as quickly as usual. The number of requests received by phone, email, and walk-ins has also increased over the period, mainly related to the upgrade work. Performance remains acceptable in terms of speed and quality

IT Service - Infrastructure

Service Manager – Gwyn Jones

Service purpose: To develop and support the Council's infrastructure to provide a resilient and secure platform to host the Council's information technology services.

Performance Overview:

Period statistics

Statistics are recorded through the IT Help Desk. As a call is closed, all users who have logged that call are given the offer to leave feedback.

(Complex) Changes are a record of changes that can affect a system/server/network, and therefore several users. These are mostly entries from our internal users and do not include feedback.

| | | | | Feedback | |
|---------|--------|--------|-------------|----------|---------------|
| | Logged | Closed | Remain Open | Count | Average Score |
| Calls | 841** | 803 | 157 | 13* | 5 |
| Changes | 153 | 142 | 33 | | |

* number of responses was 1.62%

** Increase in the number of calls from the previous period, due to the Telephony project (migration of users, and questions regarding new solution).

***Availability

September: Upgrade of Core Authentication Services shows as reduction in availability (however, these are a resilient pair, and would not have been service affecting)

October: Core – Fault at Ffordd Y Cob caused by BT changing circuit unannounced! (Additional steps have now been added to stop this happening)

Systems – Essential Maintenance on Core Network by the Network Team (this was between 22:00 and 01:00, with systems still available during this time)

| Availability*** | September 2025 | October 2025 |
|------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Core Network | 100.00% | 99.98% |
| Critical Systems | 99.99% | 99.93% |

Cyber Security

| | Attacks Blocked | Suspicious Emails Blocked | AntiVirus Warnings (Blocked) | SOC Incidents |
|----------------|-----------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|---------------|
| September 2025 | 49049 | | 17 | 2 |
| October 2025 | 58398 | 64368 | 18 | 5 |

Projects (of note):

- Core Network upgrade is progressing. Next steps to upgrade Data Centre network hardware and improve network connection into Caernarfon (with PSBA/BT)
- Server Infrastructure Software Upgrade completed (over 2 days). No impact to systems/users
- Patching Policy release (available via Porth Digidol on the intranet)
- Telephone System – This project should be completed by the end of November
 - 1621 members of staff have received the new software and are using it successfully (around 50 remain)
 - 1473 phone handsets replaced (e.g. in Schools) (Around 60 left)
 - Additional sites are now being discussed (e.g. Residential Care Homes etc.)
 - Multiple Contact Centres and Call Queues have been established successfully
- No Cyber Security Incidents/Risks of note to report in this period.

IT Service - Development

Service Managers – Elfyn Evans, Rhodri Fretwell

Service purpose: To collaborate with our customers to offer, develop and evolve solutions in response to business needs.

Development - projects that enable the Council's services to operate more effectively and efficiently, as well as providing direct benefit to the people of Gwynedd.

| Completed | Accepted | In progress | Waiting for comment |
|-----------|----------|-------------|---------------------|
| 12 | 2 | 43 | 42 |

Satisfaction feedback – By reflecting on projects and listening to the feedback from our customers, we continue to learn and improve.

'Were you happy with the proposals, a solution on service in general that was received by the development unit?'

| Happy | Happy, but room for improvement | Not happy |
|-------|---------------------------------|-----------|
| 4 | 0 | 0 |

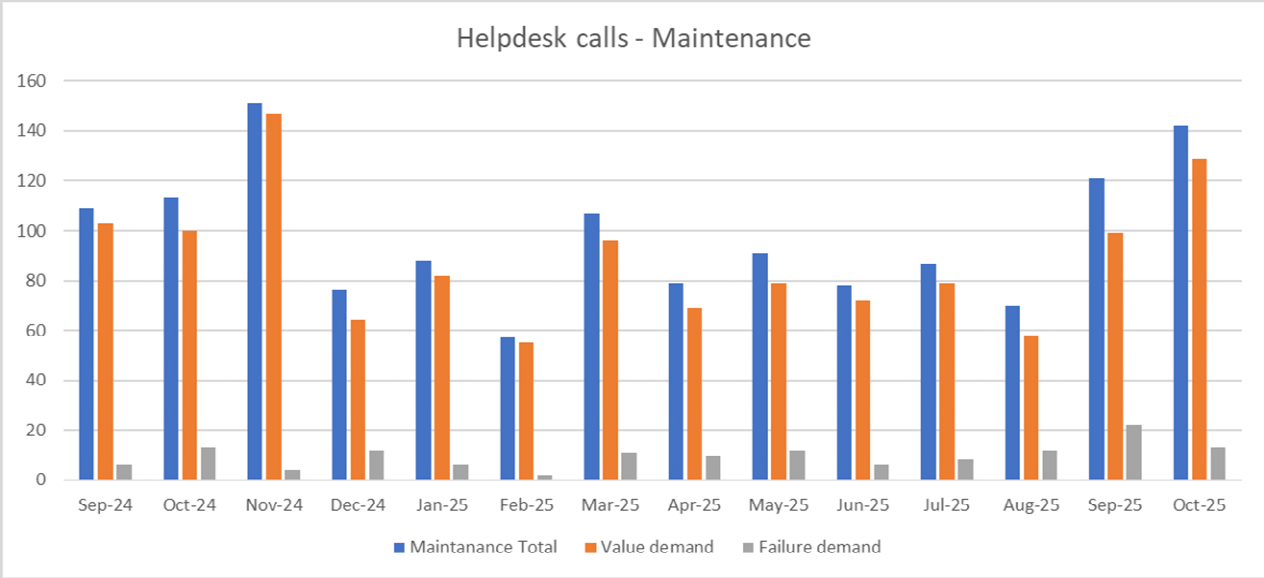
Opportunities to improve – None in this reporting period

Maintenance – responding to calls for support from our customers / maintaining our systems

- **Value demand (90%):** improvements to systems, as well as the provision of technical/expert support to users.
- **Failure demand (10%):** customers are struggling to achieve what they need to do or report defects in a system.
- **12 of the calls completed in the period received 5* feedback (September to October)**
- **798 Helpdesk requests during period 25/26**

Projects of interest

- Installing street waste bin sensors
- Health and Safety system - pilot phase
- Establishing information screens system at Pencadlys reception
- Artificial intelligence – Categorization/Automation of General Enquiries
- G-Werthu / Hwb hysbys



IT Service – Digital Learning Service

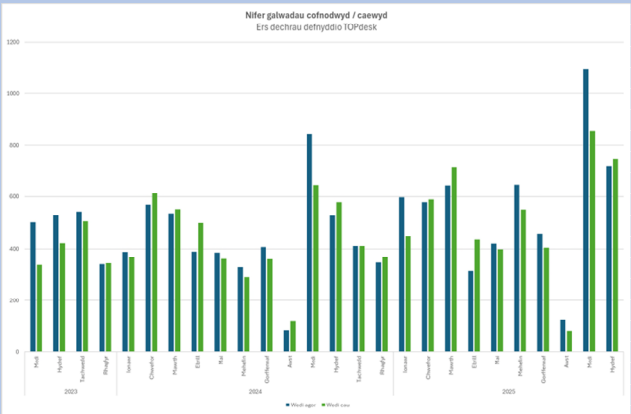
Service Manager: Gwenan Pritchard

Purpose: To lead, support and collaborate with our schools to deliver the highest quality digital teaching and ensure the best opportunities for Gwynedd's pupils.

Calls – Sept / Oct 2025

| Month | Open | Logged | Resolved | Open at the end of the period |
|-------|------|--------|----------|-------------------------------|
| Sept | 523 | 1093 | 853 | 763 |
| Oct | 763 | 719 | 746 | 736 |

Calls since Sept 2023



Devices supported by the service

| Devices | |
|--------------------------------------|--------|
| Windows Teachers Devices | 1,946 |
| Windows Secondary Pupils Devices | 6,481 |
| Chromebooks | 6,718 |
| Ipads (across sectors) | 2,966 |
| Historical devices/servers (approx.) | 30 |
| Total | 18,141 |

| Project | Progress |
|--|--|
| Schools MIS (Management Information System) The project is moving concentrating on the migration of primary Schools at the moment. | Schools successfully migrated Ysgol Waunfawr Ysgol Cae Top Ysgol Llandwrog Ysgol Cymerau Ysgol Rhiwlas Ysgol Crud y Werin Ysgol Bethel Ysgol y Faenol Ysgol Trefferthyr Ysgol Hiraël Ysgol Gwaun Gynfi Ysgol Ffridd y Llyn Ysgol Bro Tryweryn Ysgol Glancegin Ysgol Llanllyfni Ysgol Santes Helen Ysgol Nebo |
| Moving away from the Anti Virus WithSecure to Defender for EndPoint | Completed |
| Upgrading devices from Windows 10 to Windows 11 | Completed |
| Retiring all historic domain devices from schools and ensuring all systems are working on Hwb managed cloud devices | Completed |
| Rationalisation of the number of servers on prem in schools | |
| Upgrade of schools dinner system to the latest version | Completed |
| Implementation of a central door management system in Schools | 3 schools |

Insurance and Risk Management Service

Service Manager – Gwyn Varney

Service purpose: To support Council departments in assessing the threats and opportunities they may face in providing their services and prioritising their activities on the basis of the assessment. Protect the interests of taxpayers by ensuring appropriate insurance arrangements and handling claims.

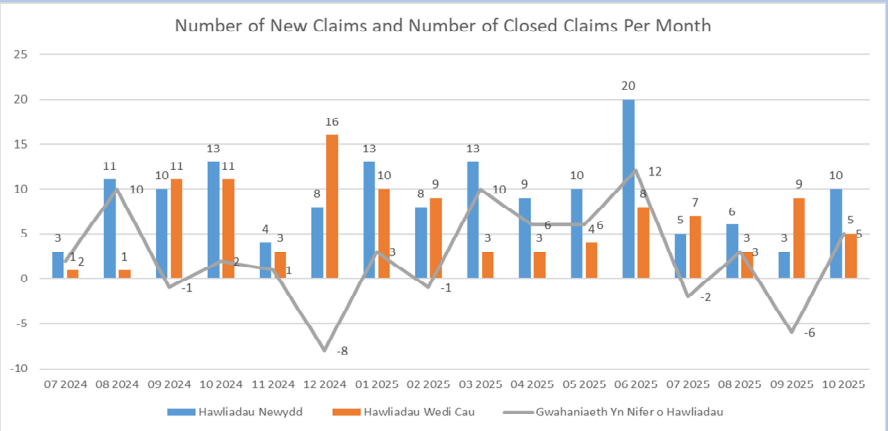
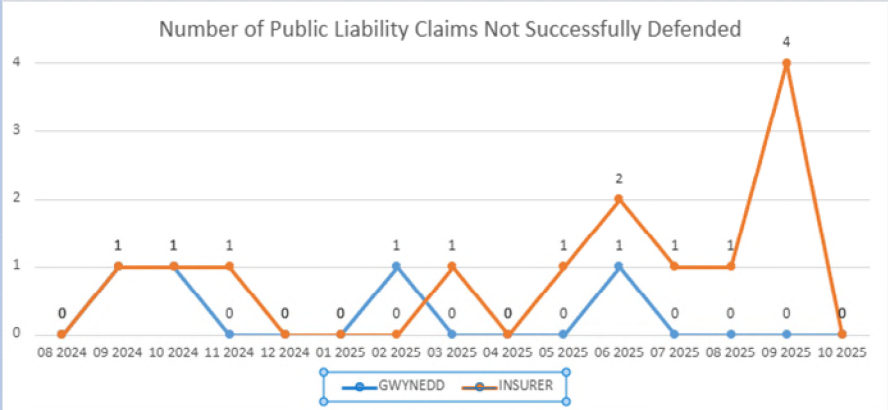
Overview of performance:

As the case has been for some time now, issues remain very challenging. Some of the latest key challenges include:

- A very tight timetable when going out to tender for several aspects of Council Insurance cover
- The complexity of claims continues to increase. This means more work, time and attention required by the Insurance Unit in order to be able to make an genuine liability decision.
- What is required as information from our brokers and insurers has increased, which means more research and work required by the Insurance Unit
- Developments in what the Council is doing poses further challenges for this service in terms of reporting and ensuring that further measures that may be required by insurers are in place

Despite these challenges, some successes can be noted, such as:

- The desire to achieve and succeed within the Insurance Unit remains very high, as well as a strong feeling of being part of a team in the Unit.



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Income Service

Service Manager – Stephen Williams

Service purpose: To process miscellaneous income and collect the Council's debts promptly and efficiently in order to maximise income, while considering the needs of departments and acting sensitively to the financial circumstances of debtors.

Overview of performance:

Income Unit Performance for October 2025.

- Value of sundry debts > 6 months old.

The total has increased significantly since the previous meeting on the 25th September 2025. The balance at the end of October 2025 is £3,184,411 which is an increase of £1,377,158. £1.2m of the increase pertains to the Health Board and another council. The other council has not paid 4 invoices to the value of £334K owing to problems with purchase order numbers in respect of the invoices however confirmation has recently been received that they will be paid soon. Arrangements are in place to solve the problem of failing to quote accurate order references on invoices as the financial systems of an increasing number of entities will not authorise payments without such details being quoted. Enquiries have been made with the Health Board as to their reasons for withholding £885K worth of invoices. As is the usual case the next highest category of debt is in respect of invoices raised on individuals for their care with an outstanding balance of £903,077. If the Health Board's debts are deducted the total reduces to £1,812,558. The Adults, Health and Wellbeing service are in discussions with the Health Board and as a result it is hoped that there will be a reduction in the Board's debt.

As usual debts other than those in respect of the Health Board will be targeted in order to reduce the outstanding balance further.

- Rate of collecting debts within the month.

The performance in respect of the months following the previous meeting is as follows:-

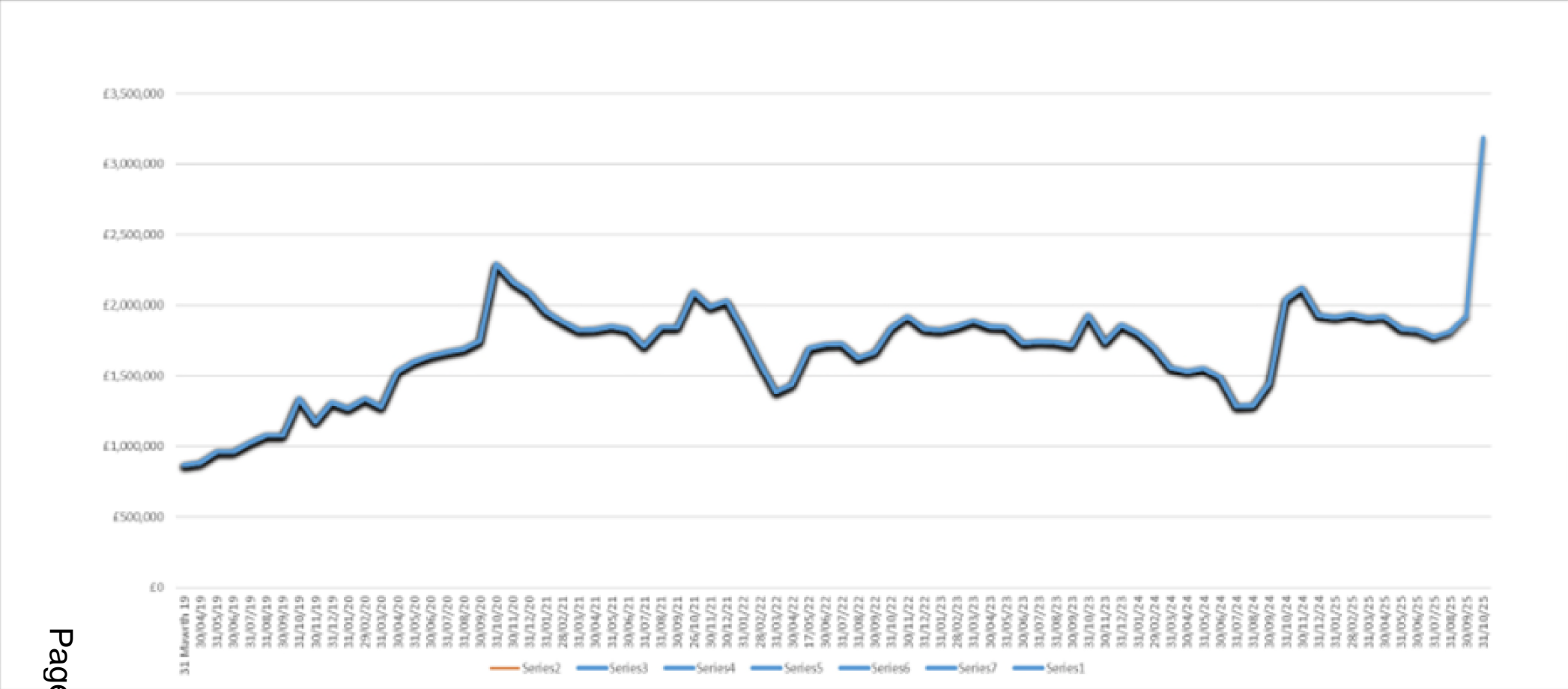
- o September 2025 65.40%
- o October 2025 80.88%
- o Average collection rate for the period :- 73.14% per month.

By the 7th of November 2025 86.35% of the invoices raised in September 2025 have been paid.

- The in-depth review of historic debts and the working processes of the Income Unit continues and areas for streamlining have been identified e.g. increased automation and the intention is to establish more efficient working practices to reduce the debt levels. The review is undertaken in conjunction with the Ffordd Gwynedd Consultant.
- Discussions to address the official complaint received via the Older People's Commissioner for Wales are continuing
- Since the previous meeting there have been staffing changes within the Unit. It is hoped that these appointments will contribute towards reducing the debt levels.



Value of Sundry Debts Aged > 6 Months as at 31 October 2025



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Pension Service

Service Manager – Meirion Jones

Purpose of the service: To administer the Local Government Pension Scheme on behalf of over 40 employers, including Cyngor Gwynedd, Isle of Anglesey County Council, Conwy County Borough Council in order to calculate and pay pensions promptly and accurately.

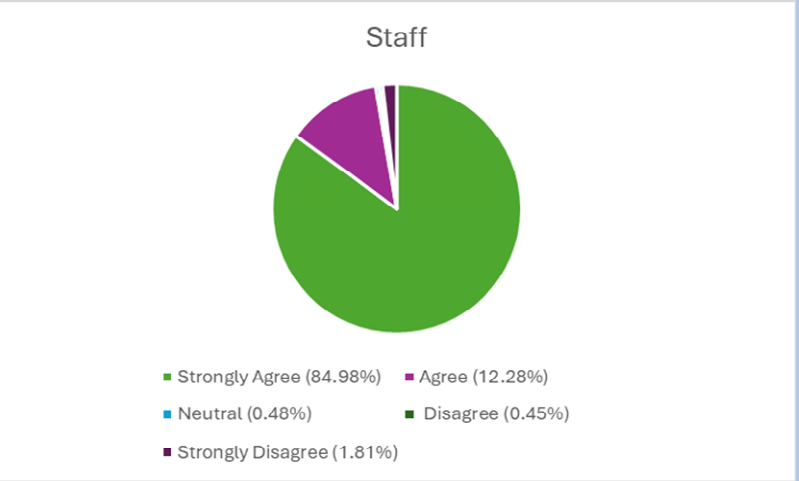
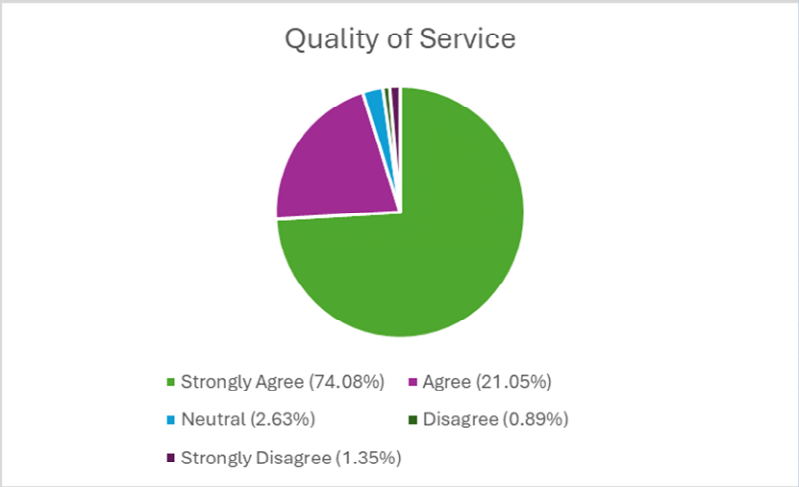
Overview of performance:

| Measures | September 2025 | October 2025 | Average 2024/25 |
|---|----------------|--------------|-------------------|
| The average number of working days taken to send a letter informing the value of retirement benefits - estimate. | 1 | 0.9 | 0.88 (2618 cases) |
| The average number of working days taken to send a letter informing the value of retirement benefits – true value. | 0.9 | 0.6 | 0.74 (1001 cases) |
| The average number of working days taken to complete dependents' calculations and payments following the death of a member of the scheme. | 3.4 | 1 | 4.02 (419 cases) |



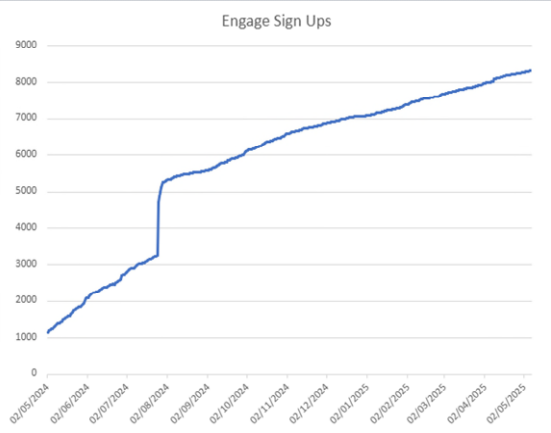
Member Satisfaction Survey:

A Member Satisfaction Survey is sent out at the end of each process, e.g. retirements and the payment of refunds so that members can give their views on the quality of the service received and their views on the service provided by the service staff. Here is the summary for April – September 2025 (58 surveyed participants):



My Pension Online:

The 'My Pension Online' system continues to be very popular, with a large number of members visiting the site on a daily basis. Since the system was upgraded in April 2024, all members must re-register for the new site. The graph shows that around 8,500 have registered on the system in recent months. We have had very positive feedback to the new site, with members enjoying the new additions to the system e.g. a personal video statement and a retirement planner.



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Investment and Treasury Management Service

Service Manager – Delyth Wyn Jones-Thomas

- **Purpose of the service:** Maximise the return on investment of the Pension Fund, and maintain proper accounts; Invest the Council's cash flow safely, with interest acceptable; Long-term loan management.
- **Overview of performance:**
 - Gwynedd Pension Fund
 - Changes are underway to the arrangements of the English and Welsh Local Government Pension Scheme, and the Gwynedd Pension Fund is working with the Wales Pension Partnership to implement these developments. Wales will remain a single pool by creating a new investment management company by March 2026.
 - The audit of the Pension Fund's financial statements has been completed and the report will be presented to the Pensions Committee on 24th November 2025. The Fund's Annual General Meeting will also be held on the same day, and employers, officers and members of the board and committee are expected to attend.



Quarterly Performance (end June 2025)
Quarterly performance equals the benchmark. The Fund returned 2.7% over the quarter with the fund's assets increasing by £95.4 million to £3.3 billion.

The Fund performed strongly in all asset categories with global equity and income investments performing very well.

Council Treasury Management – A number of indicators are reported to the Governance and Audit Committee and the performance for the period to 30th September is as follows:

| Indicator | compliant. |
|-------------------------|------------|
| Benchmark Commitments | ✓ |
| Loan Maturity Structure | ✓ |
| Fluidity Revelation | ✓ |
| Security Disclaimer | ✓ |
| Average Interest Rate | 4.16% |

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Internal Audit Service

Service Manager – Luned F Jones

Purpose of the Service: To provide confidence to the citizen and the Council about the Council's control environment and governance arrangements by reporting independently and objectively to the Head of Finance and the Governance and Audit Committee.

Internal Audit strengthens the organisation's ability to create, protect, and sustain value by providing objective, independent, risk-based and objective assurance, advice, insight and foresight to the Governance and Audit Committee

Overview of performance:

47 pieces of work were included in the final modified audit plan 2025/2026. 16 of these assignments were completed by 31 October 2025, representing 34% of the plan. For the purposes of this measure an assignment may be counted as completed if a draft or final report or final memorandum has been released or if the assignment has been closed and no further time is expected to be spent on it. The performance ambition was 95%.

Defining, measuring and communicating the added value of the Internal Audit Service is a core challenge for the profession and for its stakeholders. This is key because the value of an Internal Audit cannot be fully attributed through the number of audits carried out, number of actions etc. It is vitally important to look at the picture in its entirety, taking into account the various services provided by an Internal Audit such as consultancy work, the provision of advice and the conduct of special audits.

Taxation Service

Service Manager – E Bleddyn Jones

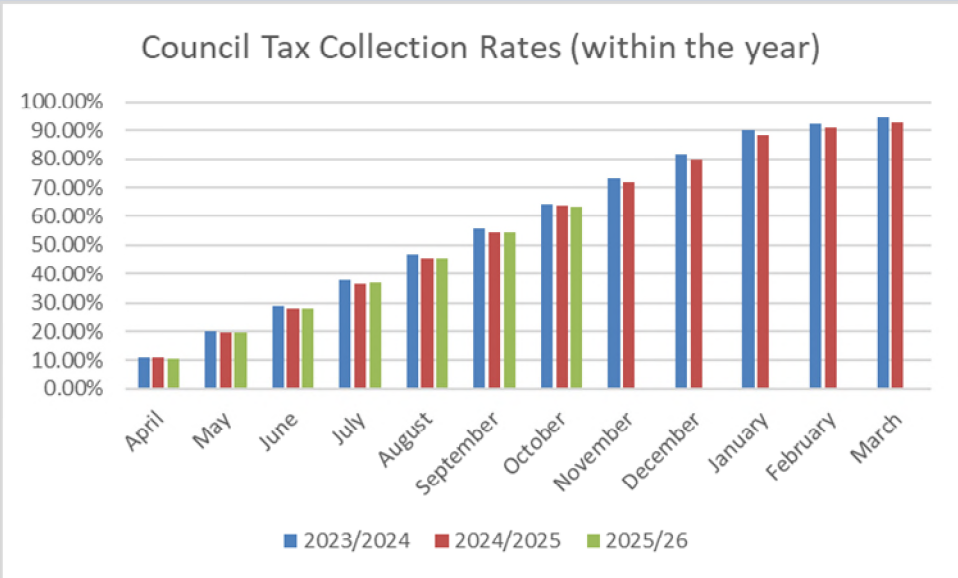
Service purpose: To collect taxes promptly and efficiently, seeking to be flexible and sympathetic to individuals' circumstances.

Overview of performance:

Council Tax

By the end of October 2025, the collection of Council Tax (i.e. in-year collection) was 63.17%, compared to 63.55% in 2024/25 and 66.42% in 2019/20. In addition, we have further analysed the collection rates of 63.17% to find out the effect of premium accounts on the collection rates, which gave rates of 62.28% (accounts including second home premium), 54.03% (accounts including council tax premium) and 63.86% (non-premium accounts). Self-contained units that did not meet the 182-day criteria for inclusion on the non-domestic rates list remain a significant problem, with 395 properties transferred to the Council Tax band since April compared to 134 cases during the same period last year. In 2024/25, 692 properties were transferred, of which 558 were transferred during the second half of the year. A specific report on "Council Tax Collection Rates" was submitted to the Governance and Audit Committee on 13 November 2025. We will continue to work on managerial data with the hope of being able to identify areas that need attention and prioritise them moving forward.

It was reported at the last meeting that although the number of emails had decreased from 3,500 to 900 at one time, 1,600 emails needed to be answered at the end of August due to reminders, summonses and staff absences. We are pleased to be able to report now that the emails are down to 185 with the oldest message awaiting attention being only 10 days old. The table also shows that the number of phone calls has decreased and as a result the percentage of calls answered has increased to 78% compared to 63.9% in the last period. We will continue to research electronic methods with the hope of improving efficiency and the service provided to customers.

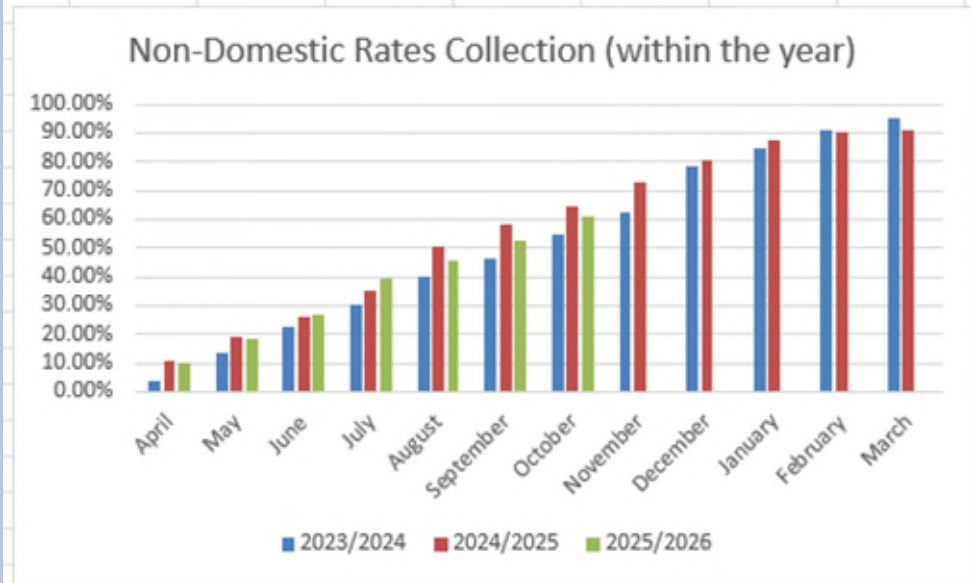


| Period | Number of calls | Number answered | % of calls answered |
|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| 19/08/24 – 18/11/24 | 12,029 | 8,732 | 72.6 |
| 19/11/24 – 18/02/25 | 11,849 | 8,239 | 69.5 |
| 19/02/25 – 13/05/25 | 11,600 | 10,713 | 92.4 |
| 01/07/25 - 16/09/25 | 8,428 | 5,383 | 63.9 |
| 17/09/25 - 11/11/25 | 4,714 | 3,675 | 78.0 |

Taxation Service

Non-domestic Rates

By the end of October 2025, the collection of Non-Domestic Rates (i.e. collection within one year) was 60.84% compared to 64.76% for 2024/25. External agency employees have been temporarily employed to tackle the backlog of work, and a review is underway and action is being put in place to strengthen our recovery arrangements. Reminders have been issued regularly during the year and the first cases are submitted to the Court on 26 November 2025.



Business Improvement Districts

The enforcement company is in the process of collecting historic debts, and during this period too, further summonses have been released to the taxpayers with the intention of submitting them to the Magistrates' Court for liability orders on 26 November 2025.

Finance and Accountancy Service

Assistant Head of Finance – Ffion Madog Evans

Purpose of service: To provide a finance and accounting service, and to assist and support services to be effective and efficient.

Performance Overview:

- The End of August Review position was reported, with an overview of the latest financial position reported to the Leadership Team on 21/10/2025, followed by reports on the revenue, savings, and capital side to the Governance and Audit Committee on 9/10/25 and 13/11/25, and to the Cabinet on 11/11/2025.
- The Final Accounts were successfully completed with an unqualified opinion following audit of the Gwynedd, GwE, and the Harbours accounts for 2024/25 in a timely manner. The accounts were submitted to the Auditors on time before the end of June, and following a thorough audit and regular meetings between the Accountants and Audit Wales, the audits were completed. The accounts subject to audit were presented to the Governance and Audit Committee in May and September, while the final accounts following audit were reported to the Governance and Audit Committee on 13 November 2025.
- The work on completing the 'Whole of Government Accounts' return, based on the final accounts is in the process of being completed.
- The Auditors have been completing detailed work on the 2026/27 budget including salaries, inflation, and savings, as well as coordinating the bids.
- Work has been carried out and is being carried out by the Accountants on the financial side to collaborate with the Heads of Departments and Managers on bids and also on identifying Savings plans for 2026/27.

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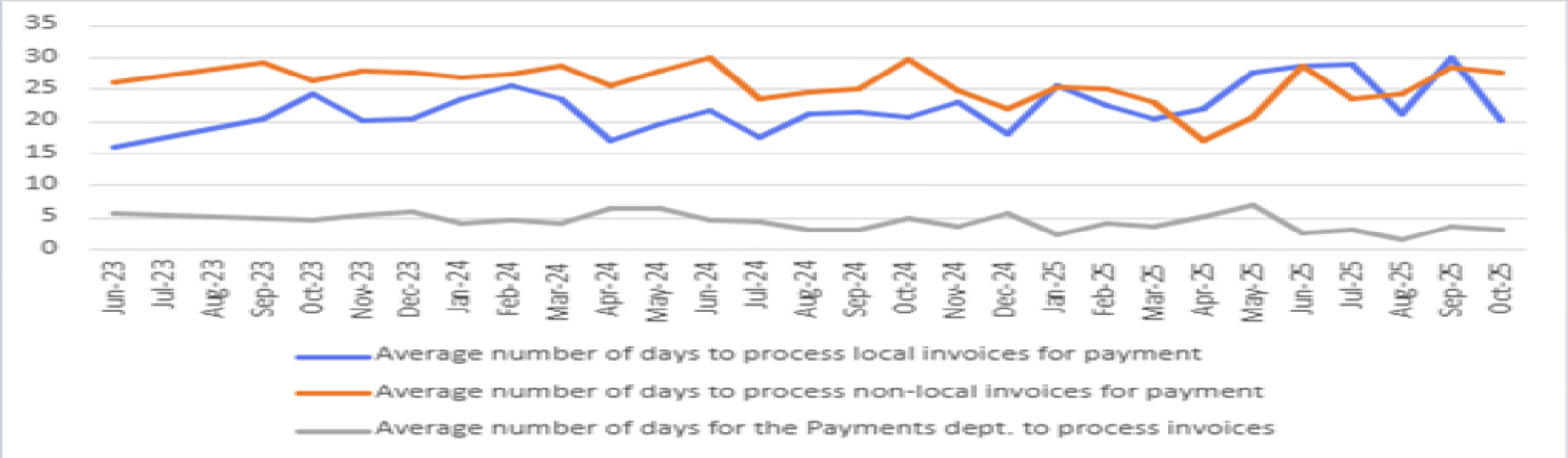
Payments Service

Assistant Head of Finance – Ffion M Evans; Service Manager – Rhodri Shorney

Purpose of service: Paying the Council's creditors accurately and in a timely manner

Overview of Performance:

- In October 25, local invoices were processed for payment in an average of 20 days, while the non-local invoices took 27 days, within these days, the Payments Unit took 3 days to process the invoices, which is an improvement from the 6.5 days on average in 23/24 and earlier. The Payments Unit consists of 7 members of staff.
- 90% of local invoices were paid within 30 days, with the rate for paying the non-local invoices being 87%.
- 100% of payments were paid through BACS in October. The campaign to move more from Cheques to BACS has completed allowing us to move away completely from paying with cheques.
- Work has been underway over the past few months to try to modernise and improve efficiency and promote more departments to drive information electronically in order to reduce duplication, which in turn will mean that those specific invoices can be processed faster.



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