



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, 18TH JUNE, 2026

**(NOTE: A BRIEFING SESSION WILL BE HELD FOR MEMBERS AT 10.00AM AND
A LUNCH BREAK IS PLANNED FOR 12.50PM – 1.50PM)**

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 12/06/26)

EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP (18)

Plaid Cymru (12)

Councillors

Dawn Lynne Jones
Olaf Cai Larsen
Huw Rowlands
Rhys Tudur
Sian Williams

Jina Gwyrfai
Gareth Tudor Jones
Gwynfor Owen
Dyfrig Siencyn
Elin Walker Jones
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

AGENDA

1. ELECT CHAIR

To elect Chair for 2026 / 2027.

2. ELECT VICE CHAIR

To elect Vice Chair for 2026 / 2027.

3. APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

To receive any declarations of personal interest.

5. URGENT BUSINESS

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

6. MINUTES

6 - 50

The Chair shall propose that the minutes of the previous meetings of this committee held on 19 of January 2026 and 12 of February 2026 be signed as a true record.

7. WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR MEMBERS

51 - 61

To consider the whistleblowing policy and procedure for elected members.

8. EDUCATION TRANSPORT POLICY

62 - 165

The present the draft Education Transport Policy following a consultation period on proposals to amend the content of the current policy.

9. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION

166 - 267

For Committee Members to scrutinise performance matters within the Department.

(A lunch break is planned for 12.50pm – 1.50pm)

10. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMY AND COMMUNITY

268
316

For Committee Members to scrutinise performance matters within the Department.

**11. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR 317 –
CORPORATE SERVICES DEPARTMENT AND LEGAL 360
DEPARTMENT**

For Committee Members to scrutinise performance matters within the Department.

EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 19/01/26

Present:

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, Gwynfor Owen, Dawn Lynne Jones, Geraint Parry, Elwyn Jones and Sian Williams.

Co-opted Members: Colette Owen (The Catholic Church), Sharon Roberts (Arfon Parents / Governor Representative), Gweno Glyn Williams (Dwyfor Parents / Governors Representative) and Elise Poulter (NEU).

Officers present: Bethan Adams (Scrutiny Consultant), Iwan Evans (Monitoring Officer) and Jasmine Jones (Democracy Services Officer).

Present for item 4 – Councillor Nia Jeffreys (Leader of the Council), Councillor Menna Trenholme (Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Children and Supporting Families), Councillor Dewi Jones (Cabinet Member for Education), Dafydd Gibbard (Chief Executive), Dylan Owen (Statutory Director of Social Services), Aled Gibbard (Interim Head of Resources, Children's Department), Gwern ap Rhisiart (Head of Education Department), Alison Halliday (Assistant Head of School Support), Llion Williams (Safeguarding and Well-being Quality Leader), Catrin Love (Assistant Head of Corporate Services) and Ffion Mai Jones (Senior Executive Manager).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

None to note.

3. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

4. RESPONSE PLAN TO THE OUR BRAVERY BROUGHT JUSTICE REPORT

The Council Leader presented the report and noted that a sincere apology had already been offered to the victims and all those affected by the heinous offences committed that had led to the Our Bravery Brought Justice report, and it was emphasised that without definitive action any apology was meaningless. It was emphasised that action was key to ensure practical change and provide

assurance that such failures would not happen again. It was noted that children's voices had not been heard before, but that children's experiences and voices were central to the Response Plan in moving forward.

It was noted that scrutiny was an essential part of the democratic process, and that a constructive challenge was essential on such a serious issue. It was confirmed that the meeting was part of a series of scrutiny meetings, and that discussions in the Care Scrutiny Committee and the Governance and Audit Committee had resulted in practical recommendations and specific actions. It was noted that several recommendations had already been implemented immediately by officers to strengthen safeguarding arrangements.

It was stressed that transparency was essential to restore public confidence and staff confidence. It was confirmed that the Response Plan was a live and public document, and the minutes of the Response Plan Programme Board meetings would be published on the Council's website to enable members and the public to see the progress being made.

It was acknowledged that the subject was difficult to discuss and the report had been difficult to read, and the Committee was thanked for scrutinising the matter in a sensitive and professional manner. It was emphasised that safeguarding and protecting children from harm was the Council's most important responsibility. It was noted that it was positive that several members were scrutinising the Plan.

Confidence was expressed in the Response Plan and the cross-departmental work taking place to improve safeguarding arrangements. Professor Sally Holland, Chair of the Response Plan Programme Board, was thanked for her guidance. It was recognised that the Response Plan did not currently include all responses as it was a live document, and as such the input of the scrutiny committees was important.

The Committee was invited to submit constructive comments, suggestions and criticism to strengthen the Response Plan before it was submitted to Cabinet for formal adoption. It was noted that improving safeguarding arrangements depended on information sharing, consistent working with partners and stakeholders, and collaboration across services and political divides, and that this work could not be carried out by one service, one department, one political group or one person alone. It was noted that there was a willingness to return to the Committee in due course to report on the progress of the Response Plan and to conduct the dialogue.

The Chief Executive noted that the meeting was another important step forward on a challenging path to restore confidence and achieve the goal of securing the best possible safeguarding arrangements. It was acknowledged that the topic was a difficult one, but that it was important to be able to discuss the issue openly following a long period of reviews and investigations, which had been frustrating for all. It was noted that the first Response Plan had been published over a year ago, prior to the publication of the child practice review, and there was an acknowledgement from the outset that it would need to be reviewed

and updated following the publication of the report, and that the revised version was being presented to the Committee at this meeting.

It was confirmed that the Plan had already been considered by the Response Plan Programme Board and had been subject to challenge from external organisations. It was noted that the Plan would return to the Programme Board for consideration of the observations of the extraordinary scrutiny meeting and the full council meeting, before being submitted to the Cabinet for adoption, with further scrutiny to follow.

It was noted that there were three specific areas for scrutiny. Firstly, the need for assurance that the Plan was complete and responded appropriately and comprehensively to the Our Bravery Brought Justice report was noted, and it was considered whether there was anything further that should have been included or any issue that may have been overlooked. Secondly, the need for guidance on the priorities of the Plan was noted, recognising that it was not feasible to achieve everything at the same time, consideration should be given to whether some elements needed to be prioritised more than others. Thirdly, the need to consider dependencies between local, regional and national recommendations was identified.

In terms of dependencies, an example of dependencies and the need to prioritise in relation to a low-level concerns procedure was noted. It was noted that such a procedure existed in England but not in Wales, and that there was a national recommendation for the Welsh Government to establish such a procedure. It was noted that this could take time due to the nature of the work across several authorities, and it was stressed that they could not wait for this. It was confirmed that work was already underway to establish an internal procedure by the Council, with the possibility of modifying it later if a different or better national procedure was introduced.

It was noted that the whistle-blowing arrangements had been subject to considerable discussion. It was confirmed that staff arrangements already existed but needed to be updated and improved, and that work had been carried out quickly to enable staff to use them. It was further noted that arrangements for members and governors needed to be improved as the current arrangements were scattered across different documents and were difficult to navigate. It was confirmed that work had already begun to streamline and strengthen these, including the intention to include external expertise and system users in the work of formulating the best possible arrangements.

It was noted that the appendices to the report included the revised Response Plan in narrative form, split into seven themes that aligned with the themes of the Our Bravery Brought Justice report. It was noted that a leader had been appointed for each theme. It was noted that the seven themes were:

- The child's voice and supporting victims – ensuring that children are listened to, believed and taken seriously, strengthening arrangements to give children a voice to keep them safe.

- Managing allegations and concerns about adults working with children – ensuring that safeguarding arrangements were of the highest standard, that concerns were taken seriously and addressed promptly, and that Part 5 arrangements were robust, complete and easy to understand.
- Training and policies – emphasis on ensuring that training was appropriate to roles, that policies were fully adopted and implemented in schools, and that everyone understood the need to think the unthinkable and recognise that events could happen in any setting.
- School governance – ensuring that governors understand and can carry out their roles effectively.
- Use of restrictive practices – only needed to be used when necessary and in an appropriate manner.
- Crisis Planning and Crisis Response.
- Supporting and stabilising Ysgol Friars.

It was noted that the appendices included examples of the type of monitoring reports the Response Plan Programme Board was receiving which set out a time schedule for each recommendation. It was noted that the final appendix contained the detailed action plan, with several actions, stressing that the purpose of its presentation was to demonstrate the level of detail, that leaders were identified for each workstream, that time schedules were clear, and that actions had been broken down to reduce the risk of losing any elements. The intention to ensure a robust and strong Plan was emphasised, and any new suggestions in relation to the content of the Response Plan were welcomed.

During the discussion, the following observations were made:-

Gratitude was expressed for the presentation, and it was noted that it was appropriate to recognise the significant work that had been done to produce the Response Plan. It was questioned whether the Response Plan struck the right balance between procedures and workplace culture, noting that processes could exist but were not necessarily implemented due to culture. In response, it was noted:-

- Changes to policies and procedures were relatively easy to formulate and implement on paper, but that culture change was a more complex process.
- Culture change was more difficult and time-consuming but essential to ensure that people adhere to policies and implement them consistently.
- There was a need to carry out the initial steps now, but that the work on culture change was a crucial element alongside the procedural steps.
- That the response included several layers, namely the practical actions that could be managed internally and implemented quickly, along with the softer elements that required time, including a change of culture within the Council and within schools.

Work Stream 1: The Voice of the Child and Supporting Victims

It was noted that the meeting was the beginning of the scrutiny journey and that restoring the confidence of the people of Gwynedd was likely to take years. It was asked how the workstream would ensure that the Council's arrangements

and procedures would not re-traumatise the children and victims. In response, it was noted:-

- There was concern about how the ongoing discussion and public attention could impact victims, families, the community, staff, elected members and everyone else.
- That there was an awareness of the risk of re-traumatisation, and that any actions or procedures needed to avoid extending this trauma.
- That the processes involving the victims sought to minimise the trauma, with the aim of supporting them through the experience rather than exacerbating it.
- There was a commitment to give further consideration after the meeting to ensure that no element of the proposed work added to the trauma, moving forward.

It was asked how the mechanisms of the Plan had ensured that the child's voice directly influenced specific decisions. In response, it was noted:-

- That the Plan had been developed and formulated based on work streams.
- That children and young people were aware of the Plan, and that discussions had taken place in the Children and Young People's Forum.
- That care needed to be taken not to ask children too much about the same topic repeatedly, recognising that a balance needed to be struck between inclusion and protection from overloading.
- That there was a specific workstream on the voice of the child, with a commitment to strengthening the inclusion of the voices of children and young people in moving forward to ensure that lessons were learnt and that children's voices were heard in a more meaningful manner.
- That specific attention needed to be paid to the voice of the victims in a very careful way to avoid causing a recurrence of trauma.
- That the matter be considered in detail as part of the Response Board's work.

It was asked whether it would be possible to keep a record of the occasions where the voice of the child was considered or where a distinction was made, to enable future scrutiny. In response, it was noted:-

- That it was intended to ensure that the voice of the child had a real influence on decisions, and not just to make high-profile statements without ensuring practical impact.
- That the Young People's Forum had been re-established, with a dedicated officer working on its development.
- That there was a desire to develop the Council into one that was more child-friendly, with the possibility over time for the Young People's Forum to become a robust part of the democratic process.
- That wider work was underway to develop the County as a child-friendly county, and that the comments fed into that work.

It was emphasised that children were not a uniform group, and it was asked how the work would ensure that the voices of all children were heard, including the most vulnerable or those whose background or behaviour may mean they were taken less seriously. Concern was expressed about unconscious bias and how this could influence how some children were listened to, and it was noted that a similar theme appeared in the Our Bravery Brought Justice report, with the risk of offenders targeting children who were thought to be less likely to be believed. In response, it was noted that the voices of some cohorts were at risk of being heard more than others, and that this needed to be avoided so as not to under-represent those who were less prominent. It was emphasised that, going forward, the intention was to ensure that the voices of children from less prominent cohorts were heard, including looked after children, children open to children's services, and other relevant groups, to ensure wider representation in the work. It was confirmed that arrangements were already in place within children's services to listen to the voice of the child in all cases, although there were practical challenges associated with the work, and the Council was seeking to strengthen the approach because of the report.

It asked whether specific work was being done to address unconscious bias through training, including reminding those working with children of the risk of making assumptions and the need to recognise vulnerability at an early stage. In response, it was noted:-

- That specific work on unconscious bias within the education services had not yet been developed.
- There was a recognition that staff perceptions may be influenced by a child's profile.
- That the point was a valid one, and the matter would be further considered to respond positively.
- That the principle of reaching beyond the usual voices applied across the Council's areas of work, and that engagement needed to be ensured and that it reached a wider range of children, young people and communities.
- That social workers received training on unconscious bias as part of their qualifications, with additional training available on the subject.
- That the work of the Youth Justice Service continued to ensure that the voices of children and young people who received a service were heard, and that a financial bid was underway to try and appoint an additional officer to focus on this.
- Training requirements were becoming more complex, with employees expected to follow several courses because of the report. There was a need to prioritise and consider combining elements where practicable.
- That the input of scrutiny committees was relevant to the discussion on prioritising training and ensuring that it was realistic and effective.
- That elected members had already received training on unconscious bias, but it was intended to provide an opportunity for those who had failed or who wished to complete the training again.

It was asked whether it could be ensured that the door would be open for victims to receive support from the Council for years to come as trauma could affect individuals years later and, often, throughout their lives, recognising that

not all victims wished to accept the offer at this time. In response, it was fully agreed with the point raised, noting that trauma could affect people for decades. It was stressed that the door needed to be kept open for the victims in the long term and that the point was one that should be made clear in the Response Plan to avoid any doubt about the continuation of the offer.

Concern was noted that Gwynedd Schools' Safeguarding Children Policy was a complex and comprehensive document, and that the Chair of the School Council was expected to sign it on behalf of pupils. It was noted that the document was not child-friendly or easy to understand for primary or secondary pupils, and it was asked why an accessible or easy-to-read version was not already available for children, stating that children should be able to view the policy and discuss it intelligently. In response, it was noted that the policy contained several elements and reflected national requirements to ensure that arrangements were clear and complete. It was elaborated that there was an intention to work with the Children and Young People's Forum on an abridged version, and to ensure that a children's version was available the next time the policy was submitted so that pupils could read, discuss, and sign it to show understanding, with the full document available to those who wished to read it.

The importance of ensuring that the contact details of the external member of the governing body for reporting concerns outside the school were visible and easily accessible to all. It was noted that it should be ensured that the details were on school websites and in other prominent places. Concern was noted about potential assumptions regarding who might be victims, stressing the need to ensure that the arrangements did not exclude boys and that the information should be clear to all children and parents. The importance of being able to connect quickly and easily when there was concern was noted.

It was asked whether pastoral care now existed in schools. In response, it was noted that pastoral care existed across the schools, and that pastoral support formed a significant part of the day-to-day work of education staff. It was emphasised that many teachers went the extra mile to support children and young people, and their families, alongside their teaching duties.

Work Stream 2: Managing Allegations and Concerns About Adults Working With Children

It was asked how the arrangements for managing allegations and concerns about adults had changed in practice. In response, it was noted:-

- Some changes had already been implemented, with further work to tighten up the systems.
- Arrangements had been added to ensure that all referrals were properly recorded, and that there was clear confirmation that previous referrals had been checked and considered.
- That the relevant information had been collected and analysed to ensure that decisions were made based on a full picture of what had happened.

- There was an intention to ensure that a social worker saw and spoke to all children involved in any type of allegation, noting that this had already begun, with more work to be embedded consistently.
- Practical challenges had arisen with some parents not satisfied with the approach, especially when the child, in their opinion, was not central to the allegation. The intention to continue with the principle was noted.
- That the work of talking to the child should always be done by a qualified social worker, rather than any other practitioner, to ensure a consistent professional standard.
- That this approach led to resource challenges for the department, and it was noted that a significant financial bid had been presented to strengthen capacity and increase the number of social workers, in the hope that the Cabinet and Council would support it.
- It had to be ensured that decisions on thresholds and criteria were not made by a single officer, and that the intention was to ensure joint discussion and decision-making.
- That it was intended to strengthen the multi-agency element, noting that arrangements were currently taking place in a more ad hoc manner and on an open access basis with the police.
- Discussions were continuing with the police on the best approach, noting that the police favoured open access, but that the Council was considering whether the arrangements could be formalised through more regular and structured meetings because of the report.
- That the action plan consisted of over 200 lines and a significant number were relevant to this area.

It was asked what evidence was there that this system was likely to prevent failures such as those seen in the past, rather than merely administrative changes. In response, it was noted:-

- That the term evidence was challenging in this context as it was too early to provide robust and measurable evidence that the changes to date had resulted in a more effective or more robust system.
- That several sources had provided recommendations over a recent period, including the child practice review, and those pointed to the same direction in identifying what was considered to be good practice.
- That the recommendations fitted and reinforced each other, and that all recommendations were implemented on them and were followed up.
- That some aspects of good practice were developing nationally, and that this may mean that national guidance would need to evolve over time, but it was noted that this was not a reason for local delays.
- That the recommendations applied to all authorities in Wales, but that the ability to implement some elements was resource dependent. Additional investment and resources were required to deliver some steps in practice.
- A specific example, which was to ensure a visit by a qualified social worker with all children involved in an allegation, required funding and recruitment, and it was noted that this was being driven forward locally through the submission of a financial bid and workforce planning.

- There were wider implications at a national level in terms of how authorities were funded and supported to fully implement the new expectations.

It was noted that improvements had taken place in terms of systems, but that there was concern that the cultural element had not been fully resolved. It was noted that the objectives of the Response Plan included establishing all the facts of the case and learning all the lessons, and it was noted that the Our Bravery Brought Justice report highlighted missed opportunities in a significant number of cases. It was noted that background information had been brought to the Council's attention at the time, and it was unclear why those matters had not been taken further. It was noted that legal counsel had been commissioned but had not been published, and it was noted that it would be useful to see work that could explain the reasons for the missed opportunities. It was noted that if the barrister's report could not be published for valid legal reasons, it should be ensured that other work in the same vein was commissioned so that it could be published.

It was asked what assurance was there that concerns were appropriately escalated when the risk was high. It was asked what the role of the second appointed safeguarding officer was, whether referrals would go to more than one safeguarding officer from now on, and how this would happen in practice. In response, it was noted:-

- That the Local Authority Appointed Officer (LADO) was already in discussion with other officers, and that this was part of the current procedure.
- That the Our Bravery Brought Justice report sets specific requirements in terms of ensuring specific training and supervision for the LADO.
- That supervision already existed, but the arrangements were now being tightened in the wake of the report.
- That threshold and criteria decisions were made by more than one individual, and that further work continued to refine some of those arrangements.

The need to keep capacity and appropriate funding central within the local authority to carry out safeguarding functions was emphasised. It was noted that there was confidence the Council could lead at a national level through this response, and it was noted that other authorities were looking at the work to learn from it.

It was noted that there was no price on child safeguarding, and that any request for additional resources should not be rejected based on cost alone. In response, it was noted that there had been a clear direction from the outset that the aim was to ensure the best possible arrangements, and that there would be a cost attached to that. It was noted that there were a significant number of requests for resources in this field, which was noted to be appropriate given the nature and scale of the work. It was elaborated that a formal decision on additional resources would be made at the Cabinet meeting on 10 February 2026, and it was noted that currently there was no higher priority than this.

Enquiries were made on an update on the scrutiny investigation into safeguarding arrangements in schools. In response, it was noted that there had been delays, mainly due to the need to ensure that the voice of the child was central to the investigation. It was noted that there had been difficulties in trying to appoint a suitable provider to carry out specific work on hearing pupils' voices, and that this had been added to the timetable. It was elaborated that additional discussions needed to take place before a draft report was produced. It was confirmed that work was ongoing and progressing, but that a firm date could not be given to when the draft report would be submitted to the Committee as it depended on several factors.

Further information was requested about piloting new processes under Section 47 and Part 5 arrangements, including joint work with North Wales Police. In response, it was noted that the child practice review required assurances that decisions were made in collaboration with the police, and that those discussions needed to be formalised further. It was noted that discussions were ongoing regarding an arrangement whereby a daily conversation about cases could be held virtually, but it was noted that the police were not as keen to move to a more formal system as they favoured the current arrangement of open access. It was noted that the discussion on the formalisation of arrangements was ongoing, but it was confirmed that very close cooperation was already taking place with the police.

Questions were asked about suitability to work with children and, in particular, about transferable risk, where inappropriate behaviour by an adult towards another adult in a work setting such as a school may raise the question of whether that should be considered as a risk to children and therefore as an issue under Part 5 processes. In response, it was noted:-

- That the answer depended on the specific circumstances of each case, and that Part 5 applied to vulnerable adults and adults without capacity as well as children.
- That an arrangement to keep a record of all allegations under Part 5 strengthened the ability to see patterns and link information if further concerns arose in the future.
- Those specific situations, such as harm to a vulnerable adult, were Part 5 issues and raised questions about fitness to work.
- Some other scenarios were more complex and may fall mainly within disciplinary processes and human resource processes.
- That the term 'suitability' was being used more often in the discussions now, suggesting a shift in culture and focus when considering concerns.

It was suggested that there should be clearer mechanisms to ensure that issues arising through the Council's school disciplinary or human resources processes trigger Part 5 consideration where appropriate, to avoid a situation where only cases that reach social services are considered through a safeguarding lens. In response, it was noted that this was a complex area and that the question raised wider issues in terms of national guidelines. A willingness to go back and take a closer look at the arrangements was expressed with colleagues across departments.

A question was asked about the audit carried out on a two-year period to identify any concerns about persons in positions of trust, and it was asked whether the period was sufficient, and to what extent it could be certain that persons who should not be, were working with children. In response, it was noted:-

- That the investigation focused on referrals received over the given period, and that all referrals within that period had been cross-referenced against historical records to see if previous concerns existed, up to as far back as the records allowed.
- That the work therefore looked well beyond two years in terms of the history of persons where a referral had occurred, although the sample was based on the selected period of referrals.
- That the investigation could be extended further in terms of referrals if recommended by the Committee, but that would involve additional work.
- That the work had responded to the practical challenge in the report regarding the need to consider multiple referrals together in decision-making.

It was noted that an appropriate balance needed to be maintained, bearing in mind that teachers were people with lives outside of work. A particular concern was identified about culture in a school where bullying, 'misogynistic' language or unprofessional language could continue unchallenged. The importance of training for staff to call out unacceptable behaviour was emphasised.

It was asked whether hierarchy and job titles could lead to differences in how concerns were dealt with. In response, it was noted that the issue of hierarchy and power was a theme highlighted in the Our Bravery Brought Justice report, and that culture and power structures could facilitate the ability of strong individuals to control and defend their position, noting that processes, training and policies, as well as culture change, needed to work together to prevent this.

It was emphasised that the human resources procedure was the same for teachers, assistants, office staff and carers. It was noted that a practical difference arose in the case of headteachers as the chair of the school governors was their line manager. It was noted that this was a major responsibility, and concern was expressed that not all chairs of governors, when stepping into the role, may be fully aware of the wider responsibilities, including disciplinary matters, supporting the headteacher, and dealing with sickness absence. It was noted that taking on a voluntary role to take on such complex responsibilities was a significant challenge. It was explained that the Welsh Government was considering school governance guidance with the intention that support would be stronger in the future.

Concern was expressed about governors at Ysgol Friars breaching the code of conduct, and members asked whether any action had been taken as a result, noting that it was difficult to have confidence in governance arrangements if there were no consequences. In response, it was noted that Ysgol Friars was now in a very different position to what it was two years ago, with a new governing body, a new chair, significant changes to the Senior Management

Team, and a different culture. There was recognition of the hard work done recently, including the role of the interim headteacher.

Enquiries were made about the arrangements with the police, noting that complaints had been made but clearly at the time this had not led to action. Views were expressed that North Wales Police should review their arrangements in the same way as the Council. In response, it was noted that co-operation with the police had been excellent over the past two years, with concerns being addressed quickly, and it was noted that the co-operation was continuing. It was noted that the recommendations of Our Bravery Brought Justice report applied to several bodies, and the expectation was noted that the report would be considered by the police in the same way as the Council. It was confirmed that discussions had already taken place with relevant officers.

It was emphasised that several public bodies needed to review their arrangements, including the Welsh Government, the Regional Safeguarding Board, North Wales Police, the Council and the Health Service. In response, it was noted that there were specific recommendations for Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, with the understanding that work was underway to be implemented and that the Regional Board was monitoring progress.

It was emphasised that one of the biggest lessons was the need to think the unthinkable, and not to believe that this could not happen locally, making it clear that this had happened and that the current work aimed to ensure that it would not happen again. Concerns were raised about the role of power and influence within school structures, noting that staff tended to follow protocols but that concerns could hit a wall. The importance of professionals knowing when to escalate or take concerns further if they were blocked was noted.

It was noted that a review of school governance arrangements was underway and that this was welcomed. It was noted that work was underway to review the role of regional safeguarding boards and that this would likely consider the relationship between the Regional Safeguarding Board, local authorities, health services and the police. It was noted that both reviews were due to report in the spring, and it was noted that it would be important for elected representatives to lobby the next government to put these issues at the top of the agenda, and while they may not be politically attractive, they were essential. It was elaborated that many of the recommendations related to national changes, and that there was a need to ensure that financial pressures and staffing resources were reflected in the way local authorities were funded.

Work Stream 3: Training and Policies

It was asked what kind of training a designated child safeguarding officer would have received in the period when the issues in question had been happening, and it was asked whether that would be consistent with the training of equivalent officers across the country. In response, it was noted that there was a network of designated officers across the country, with national contact arrangements and training opportunities, and it was noted that relevant training

opportunities would have been available. It was emphasised that any individual appointed to a role was expected to be competent and skilled to fulfil it.

It was noted that the quality of recording concerns and records was key to ensuring that the voice of the child was heard. It was asked whether procedures were in place to ensure that safeguarding records were maintained to a standard, and who was monitoring this. It was further asked who would be responsible for providing training on minute-keeping, and for how long minutes would be kept. In response, it was noted:-

- That monitoring and quality assurance arrangements for minutes already existed, and that further work was being undertaken because of the child practice review to strengthen and consolidate those arrangements.
- The work included the development of one clear policy within children's services which specified what the monitoring and quality assurance processes were, with a view to submitting a draft to the Response Board soon.
- That an agreement had been signed to pilot the 'Magic Notes' system, with the intention of integrating it into the systems and using it across child and adult services.
- Further training for all social workers on record-keeping was to be provided to ensure standards were met, as well as work to clarify what should be recorded and what the national guidelines were.
- That there was an intention to provide specific mandatory training on the recording of allegations, but that a practical challenge arose as Social Care Wales was the owner of the e-learning platform. Discussions were underway about adding content or developing local content.
- That records of Part 5 allegations and child case files in the context of child protection matters should be retained for 75 years.

It was suggested that a role should be assigned to a designated officer to check and monitor the quality of records relating to child safeguarding. Concern was expressed about cases that had not been properly recorded in the past, and it was asked to what extent it was made clear that failure to properly record in safeguarding situations could lead to serious disciplinary consequences. In response, it was noted that the comment about setting a clear responsibility was accepted, and it was noted that a financial bid already existed to appoint a role that would partially respond to the concern, with a willingness to go back to include that specific function more clearly within the bid. It was noted that professional expectations were clear in terms of reporting to a standard within social service roles. It was explained that the relevant standards were set by Social Care Wales.

Enquiries were made about training on grooming, noting that patterns had been highlighted in the Our Bravery Brought Justice report and that it was difficult to understand why these had not been identified at the time. It was asked how such training would be included for school staff, Council staff and elected members. In response, it was noted that:-

- Work had begun to identify what was already available in terms of training, noting that specific training on grooming had not been consistently available for schools and the education workforce to date.
- Work was taking place in conjunction with children's services to determine appropriate training as well as a timetable for it to be delivered as soon as possible.
- There was a practical challenge in schools in terms of time and capacity to complete the increasing number of mandatory training sessions.
- A response had been submitted to the Welsh Government's consultation on INSET training, with the suggestion that at least one day of INSET training should focus on safeguarding issues. It was noted that training on the signs of grooming would be an integral part of this.
- The matter was being taken seriously, and the intention was to move quickly to secure the training.
- There had been no clear indication so far that the Welsh Government would provide a specific national training package on this for schools.

It was emphasised that anyone who comes into contact with children needed to be able to recognise the early signs and red flags when it came to grooming. In response, they noted that they fully agreed with this, and that information about grooming had already been included in the safeguarding modules for staff as an initial step. It was elaborated that this would not be a one-off exercise but long-term work to change culture and mindset.

It was asked whether something could be done to help families recognise signs that children may be being groomed. It was suggested that communication resources could be used to raise awareness among families and should be considered as a potential topic to discuss on the 'Mam, Dad a Magu' Podcast. In response, it was noted that the suggestion would be considered further.

The Cabinet Member for Education noted that the discussion had highlighted that where the powers lie in terms of demanding training was a key issue. It was emphasised that the education authority's ability to demand specific training was limited under the current arrangements, and that it would be easier and clearer if an education authority had more power to set requirements and timetables, and be able to monitor this.

The importance of governing bodies challenging appropriately was emphasised, noting that their role was to be a critical friend, and there was a need to challenge appropriately when there was concern about a leadership approach or a culture of power where decisions were not questioned.

It was asked how, through training, the confidence and ability to challenge could be included. It was noted that there were two risks in the Our Bravery Brought Justice report, namely the risk of harm to children, and the risk that professionals around them were unable to recognise what was happening or if they dismissed concerns. It was noted that there was a need to equip people to raise concerns not only about potentially harmful individuals, but also about professionals or colleagues who were not responding as they should, recognising that it was sometimes difficult to challenge colleagues or senior

persons in the employment chain. The importance of fostering a culture where people in positions of power welcomed being challenged was emphasised.

In response, it was noted that this was a central theme in the report and a complex area, without a single definitive answer. It was noted that it would develop over time through a combination of training and culture change, with an emphasis on leadership, whistle-blowing arrangements, and ensuring that concerns and referrals were handled appropriately to build confidence in the process. It was confirmed that the discussion about safeguarding now took place daily across departments, with a higher level of awareness.

The Education Department was thanked for the work on the Response Plan and for the ongoing work. It was asked whether education policies could be accessed in one central place on the web for the benefit of scrutiny and for staff to be able to find them more easily. In response, it was noted that there were already specific sections on the website for policies. It was noted that new web pages had been created for the Response Plan, with the intention of including relevant documents there, as well as the minutes of Response Board meetings. It was elaborated that a package of model policies was provided every year to school governing bodies, but they were adopted by the individual school. It was emphasised that governors could encourage schools to place key policies online.

It was asked how the effectiveness of the policies and training would be tested over time, and how this would be measured. In response, it was noted that this was a challenging area, noting that the focus so far had been on putting the arrangements in place, and the next step was to develop measures to show what differences had been made over time. It was noted that quantitative measures were easier, such as the number of staff who had completed specific training, but that measuring qualitative impact on children's culture and experience was more difficult. It was noted that further work needed to be done on this, with significant input from the Chair of the Response Board. It was explained that further workshops would take place to consider suitable measures.

It was asked whether there were examples of cases where training or the new arrangements had led to a decision being challenged or to people feeling more confident to challenge. In response, it was confirmed that there was a higher level of awareness around safeguarding, and that discussions and challenges around safeguarding take place regularly across the Council.

The Cabinet Member for Education noted concern about the sustainability of the awareness over a longer period. It was suggested that there could be a role for the Scrutiny Committees to monitor progress in coming years, including the possibility of conducting a scrutiny investigation or a task and finish group to look at how the arrangements were embedded over time. Hope was expressed that Our Bravery Brought Justice report would have influence nationally. It was emphasised that there was a need to monitor the implementation of national recommendations over time.

Work Stream 4: School Governance

It was noted that the role of governors was a difficult one and this was voluntary, and there was concern about the shortage of governors. It was noted that a full understanding of responsibilities could lead to fewer people being willing to take on the role, noting that the demands on governing bodies were enormous. It was noted that this tied into the debate about resources, noting that keeping some resources centrally enabled the Education Department to support governors. It was emphasised that the burden on governors had increased over decades as more responsibilities shifted to schools and governing bodies, away from local authorities and education departments. It was noted that more training and understanding was needed if the power was to remain with governing bodies, and it was noted that this was a wider issue that extended beyond Gwynedd.

In response, governors across the county were thanked for their work, and it was noted that additional training and support would be offered without waiting for national changes. It was stressed that further work needed to be done to strengthen governance in schools. It was noted that effective clerking was essential to governance, and that some schools were finding it difficult to recruit clerks, but that work was underway to rectify the situation. It was noted that the training of chairpersons needed to be reviewed and strengthened, and that there was an intention to strengthen the support for governors and chairpersons by expanding the support team to two officers so that they could respond quicker when advice and support was needed.

It was asked what assurance there was that governing bodies were effectively challenging during meetings rather than just receiving information, and how this could be measured. In response, the importance of the role of governors to provide an appropriate level of challenge on work programmes and on the work of headteachers was noted, stressing the principle of being a critical friend and the need to strike the right balance. It was noted that the quality of clerking and the consistency of minutes were part of how elements of challenge and discussion could be identified and highlighted within meetings.

It was asked how the current governance system would have reacted differently to the Friars case. In response, it was noted that procedures and policies had generally been strengthened. It was noted that the Education Safeguarding Team visited schools to check the content of school policies and procedures, to ensure that they were consistent across the county's schools. It was noted that quality check visits were carried out to test the understanding of children, young people and staff of the policies, and to make the department more aware of the culture within the school as a whole.

The Cabinet Member for Education suggested that Estyn inspections needed to scrutinise the work of school governing bodies in greater detail, and that it was an issue that the Welsh Government should investigate further. The need to look further into the role of governors and to consider whether there was too

much of a burden on them, and whether the role should be voluntary, was emphasised.

It was asked how school governance arrangements identified risk patterns over time and across cases. In response, it was noted that the members of the governing body could change from year to year and therefore record keeping was crucial to identify long-term patterns. It was stressed that the authority retained a copy of the records of any allegations and therefore this fed into the governance process. It was noted that while there was no specific procedure for looking at persons over a period of time within schools, that child safeguarding and human resources arrangements existed, and that the school and governing body were expected to have agreed policies and procedures in place to support them, and to ensure that the arrangements were fully appropriate.

The Head of Education's professional views were sought, in relation to a specific procedure for governing bodies to recognise risk patterns among school staff over time. In response, a view was expressed that such a procedure should not exist within the current system as governors were laypersons, and therefore this would ask too much of them. Views were expressed that some form of arrangement should exist, but that there was a need to wait for the results of the Welsh Government's consultation on School Governance arrangements before voicing further opinion.

It was noted that more general information would be provided to governing bodies in the future, as it was a recommendation within the child practice review report, to enable them to make decisions and have more meaningful discussions in relation to exclusions and attendance. Uncertainty was expressed as to whether this information would include information regarding referrals, as many schools in the county were relatively small, and it would be possible to identify children from the data.

It was confirmed that the procedure regarding concerns that did not meet the threshold of future support would contribute to the identification of risk patterns. It was stressed that there were limits in terms of what the authority could do under the current system until national changes happened. Hope was expressed that the national review into school governance arrangements would be an opportunity for the Government to use the findings of the Our Bravery Brought Justice report to make national changes.

It was noted that the Council had looked at creating a low-level concerns policy but that achieving this would be very challenging as it conflicted with national safeguarding guidance. The need for such a low-level concerns policy to be created nationally was emphasised.

It was asked whether it was possible to ensure that all governors within the county's schools received appropriate training before taking up the role. In response, it was noted that all Designated Safeguarding Governors received appropriate training every two years, and that it was a requirement for all

governing bodies to provide a basic level of safeguarding training to the body as a whole.

Views were expressed that the level of safeguarding training available to the chairs of governing bodies was inadequate and should be higher. It was noted that governors had received a request to complete 'Prevent' training. In response, it was noted that the training was mandatory and separate to the basic safeguarding course that governors were required to undertake. It was emphasised that the level of training provided was determined nationally. A comment was received regarding the level of safeguarding training for chairpersons, stating that it was likely that higher training would be of benefit. It was stressed that these decisions were not made by the Education Department and the department did not have the power to change them.

Work Stream 5: Restrictive Practices

It was asked how the Council clearly defined when the use of restrictive practices was appropriate to prevent a child from doing something that posed a risk. In response, it was noted that a model policy on the use of restrictive practices was provided to schools, and that it was the responsibility of each governing body to carefully consider the policy. It was noted that the model policy contained specific points about when the use of restrictive practice could be justified, but it was noted that the term 'restrictive' posed the main challenge as the interpretation could vary between individuals. It was noted that an external company had been commissioned to review the policy and guidance to assess whether they were as robust as possible and to look specifically at the clarity of the use of the 'restrictive' term, with a view to implement any recommendations immediately. It was elaborated that schools usually adopted what was provided, but that schools had the right to amend the policy if they wished to do so.

It was asked how the plan ensured that staff were confident and prepared to intervene when necessary to use restrictive practices to protect a child. In response, it was noted that:-

- Training on the use of restrictive practices was targeted to staff where it was deemed necessary, rather than providing it to all.
- Cases were referred to a specific forum to consider whether a member of staff needed training, often in the context of supporting children with additional learning needs or challenging behaviour.
- Not providing training to everyone was deliberate as it was thought that this could increase the risk of misinterpretation regarding when and how to intervene.
- That the term 'restrictive' continued to create an element of uncertainty, and that was part of the work under review.

It was noted that there was a need for transparency about historical weaknesses, noting that training methods on the use of restrictive practices had differed between education and social services, and this had been challenging. It was noted that these differences were being identified, and that work was

underway to understand which system was most appropriate and to move towards a single training system in the future.

Concern was noted about organisational constraints, emphasising that the Council could provide a policy to a school, but it was up to the school to decide whether to adopt or change this. The need to push the issue forward at a national level was emphasised, with the suggestion of strengthening the statutory expectations in this area.

In response, it was noted that the authority had a role to supervise and monitor the use of restrictive practices in schools. It was noted that schools were expected to notify the authority each time restrictive practices were used, and that the information was analysed with the health and safety team to consider whether the methods were appropriate, whether the reporting arrangements were being followed, and what attention was being paid to the voice of the child. It was confirmed that parents were notified of such incidents. It was confirmed that a quality control procedure was in place, with the arrangements verifying whether restrictive practices had been used in each case within the county's schools and, if so, whether the system had been followed correctly; and if a record was not seen through the system, it was noted that the procedure could not be considered to have been properly followed, leading to follow-up action to ensure compliance.

It was asked whether schools were required to notify the Education Department if they amended policies. In response, it was noted that the approach had become more robust than in the past, with a message for schools not to change the policy, and, if a change were to occur, to notify the authority. It was noted that policies were checked, although it would not be practical to check every word in every policy in every school every year. It was noted, however, that the work was focused on verifying key policies to ensure they were in line with the guidance provided.

An opinion was expressed that schools should adopt the model policies in full, or, if any adjustments were made, that they should draw the authority's attention so that the amendments could be considered and agreed. Councillors were asked whether a message could be sent about the importance of the role of governors in ensuring schools adhered to the policies provided by the authority. In response, it was confirmed that a message would be shared with councillors.

It was asked what support was available to members of staff following the use of restrictive practice, noting that this may cause concern for staff about whether they had crossed a boundary in a situation under pressure. In response, it was noted that a specific arrangement had not been established to offer this type of support, but that schools could obtain advice from specialist staff who support children with specific needs, and that this was often the driving force for training. It was noted that when an event involved a teacher, the headteacher would likely offer support and guidance, and, when this involved the headteacher, it could be referred to the chair of governors, echoing the concern about whether chairs had the skills to give support in complex

circumstances. It was noted that health and safety officers could be involved in the matter when appropriate, and that contact would be made with the school if it became apparent that the incident had been particularly difficult. It was noted that the point was good and further consideration would be given to questioning whether the current arrangements provided sufficient support for staff who had to operate in difficult situations, particularly in special schools where the situation may arise more frequently.

Work Stream 6: Crisis Planning and Crisis Response

It was asked how crisis planning arrangements had been updated based on the lessons learnt from the Ysgol Friars case. In response, it was noted that work was underway to put a new crisis plan in place, and that a full understanding of what happened at Ysgol Friars was a core element of that work. It was noted that this was not based solely on reading reports, but that discussions had taken place with police officers to understand their experience, and it was noted that discussions would take place with staff who remained at the school to understand their experiences on the day.

It was asked what evidence there was that the response to a crisis was now faster and more decisive. In response, it was noted that awareness had risen across the county, but that work was currently ongoing to implement the new arrangements. It was noted that the challenge would be to put appropriate measures in place to demonstrate what would be different.

The importance of a quick and clear response in a crisis was emphasised, noting that delays in the Friars' case had added to the trauma. A view was expressed that the arrangements should be robust in terms of suspension while an investigation was ongoing, although it was recognised that this could create practical staffing challenges.

It was asked to what extent the work would involve guiding staff through potential scenarios to understand the course of action when a disclosure or concern arose, who should contact whom and when, and clarity around responsibilities. In response, it was noted that this would be the precise nature of the work once a robust plan had been drawn up and submitted to the relevant boards for approval. It was noted that there was a need to ensure that information reached everyone in the school, not just leaders, and that work was underway to map out the arrangements and include such scenarios in the plan and the associated training.

It was noted that some practical messages had already been given to staff in relation to prompt action, and that improvements had begun with arrangements. It was noted that this stream of work was likely to develop over time. The importance of training in this area was emphasised so that staff could practice and go through the different scenarios.

It was asked why training would be needed to call 999 when a child was at risk, stating that the principle should be the same as in any other situation. In response, it was confirmed that this was clear, but it was noted that responding

to a safeguarding crisis included additional steps beyond the emergency call, including looking after the child, securing evidence, and considering on-site arrangements. It was noted that practical training, through scenarios and discussion, was an essential part of ensuring that people could function appropriately under pressure.

It was emphasised that staff and the school community needed to be able to talk about their experiences after an incident to build a full picture and aid recovery. Concern was expressed about situations where it was felt that concerns could not be discussed openly.

Work Stream 7: Supporting and Stabilising Ysgol Friars

Enquiries were made about the issue of the pension of the offender, expressing concern about the possibility of the person continuing to receive a pension, and it was asked who was responsible for this. An opinion was expressed that the fact that this individual was still in receipt of his pension was unacceptable and immoral, but it was confirmed that Cyngor Gwynedd did not have the power to suspend a teacher's pension under the relevant arrangements. It was noted that the issue had been raised at a national level by the Member of Parliament, Liz Saville Roberts. It was noted that the matter had been brought to the attention of the relevant department, and the hope was expressed that the case would be considered as part of more extensive work on similar cases.

Attention was noted regarding the publicity of safeguarding arrangements, noting that the Ysgol Friars website included a prominent heading on safeguarding on the front page, while that was not consistent with other schools' websites. It was suggested that other schools should be encouraged to do the same. In response, it was noted that schools could be encouraged to do this, but that it was the responsibility of the governing body and the school to take practical action. It was further noted that governors should use their influence to ensure that safeguarding information could be easily found. It was noted that there should be a clear list on the Council's website of the relevant safeguarding details for each school.

It was asked what was being done to help children recognise and understand when grooming was happening to them. It was asked how educational provision, specifically at Ysgol Friars, including relationships and sexuality education, could be adapted to ensure that all children, including those who do not present as needing support, were given the knowledge and skills to recognise signs and raise concerns at an early stage. In response, it was noted that a national recommendation existed to strengthen the provision in the curriculum, and it was noted that the Council intended to move swifter and not wait for national changes. It was noted that Ysgol Friars was developing the pastoral curriculum, and that work was underway to strengthen the foundations, including the development of pastoral support and support spaces within the school. It was emphasised that work was underway to identify suitable providers and programmes to recommend to schools, with a view to building provision that developed year after year, starting early in an age-appropriate manner, so that children developed the skills to recognise harmful behaviour

and to disclose concerns. It was stressed that the provision should be sustainable and not a one-off intervention.

A member expressed an opinion that education on grooming should be provided to children from a younger age, starting at the age of three.

It was asked whether individuals who failed to act appropriately, or who failed to share information in the case of Ysgol Friars, should be referred to the Education Workforce Council. In response, it was noted that discussions had already taken place with the Education Workforce Council, and that a meeting would be held the following week with the Chief Executive to discuss the report.

It was asked how the support for Ysgol Friars contributed to long-term stability rather than a temporary solution. In response, it was noted that the approach focused on laying solid foundations, starting with the governing body and then the school leadership. It was noted that a permanent headteacher had not yet been appointed, but that the post was being advertised. It was noted that discussions with the governors and senior management team had been constructive and were moving in the right direction, but that it would take time. In particular, it was noted that the staff at Ysgol Friars had been through an exceptionally difficult time, and their experience needed to be recognised, noting that they had continued to provide quality education to pupils throughout, without standards slipping, and they deserved credit for this. It was noted that the support was ongoing, with regular contact, discussions with union representatives, and there was an intention to visit the school to give people the opportunity to share their views. It was noted that staff raised issues at an early stage, and the relationship between the authority and the school was strong, with a willingness to support and respond to requests.

It was asked what evidence there was that pupils' safety and well-being had measurably improved at Ysgol Friars. In response, it was noted that the demand for support had increased and the number of referrals had increased, and that this reflected a higher level of awareness and impact of the ongoing discussion among staff and pupils. It was noted that the school had appointed an additional member to the safeguarding team to increase capacity, enabling the deputy headteacher to focus on safeguarding alongside other responsibilities, recognising that safeguarding and inclusion often put significant pressure on the role of deputy headteachers in schools. It was emphasised that significant work still needed to be done to achieve a culture change across a large body of staff, pupils and the community, and this was a long-term journey.

It was asked to what extent they could be confident that more staff had been aware of the inappropriate behaviour that had taken place at Ysgol Friars, but who had chosen to ignore it. In response, it was noted that this type of theorising was unlikely to lead to a definitive answer, stressing that the case had been the subject of a police investigation and a child practice review, and that legal and procedural arrangements were available to respond to any misconduct or new evidence. It was emphasised that the Council took that responsibility seriously and followed the relevant arrangements. It was

confirmed that further investigations by police were ongoing, but details of their scope and outcomes could not be given.

Questions were asked about the school's current ethos, and to what extent pupils were happy. In response, it was noted that this was a very challenging question, but it was noted that, based on the experiences of visits and discussions with the governing body and management team, pupils appeared polite, confident and positive. It was elaborated that a change in leadership and leadership style was inevitable after the departure of such an individual, and that this was a challenge for the school community, governors and staff, including ensuring support for staff to respond to challenging behaviour. Nevertheless, views were expressed that the school continued to thrive academically and pupils, on the whole, were happy despite what had happened, and the work of the staff and governors was recognised.

General Questions

Concern was raised that there was no acknowledgement in the Response Plan regarding the shortcomings of the Estyn report to the Council's education department, noting that the report had misled the Committee in giving the impression that the authority's safeguarding arrangements were sound when they were not. It was suggested that observations should be submitted to Estyn on the matter in order to receive a formal response from them, emphasising the reliance of committees on assurances from external bodies. In response, the intention to contact Estyn to request formal comments was confirmed.

It was asked who had decided not to include the Council-commissioned barrister's report among the appendices submitted before this Committee, and the legal grounds for not doing so. It was asked whether the document or a summary could be provided. In response, it was noted that external legal advice had been obtained, that the document related to human resources processes and, as an employer, it was not appropriate to share it at this time. It was noted that the recommendations had been shared, and that content like that discussed was reflected through the Child Practice Review report, but that the publication of the full document or a summary at this time was a step too far. It was noted that the position would be reviewed as things progressed, subject to legal advice.

It was asked whether a single senior officer had an overview of the Response Plan, and who was the clear point of contact for the public, parents, staff, members or the press to offer input or seek an update on progress. In response, it was noted that this had not been clearly stated in the Response Plan, and the member was thanked for raising the point. It was noted that the Chief Executive had overall operational responsibility, but that the magnitude of the Plan and the number of actions meant that supervision by a single person was challenging, and that additional supervision would be important. It was noted that the Response Board was involved in the arrangements, and that the Chair reported to the Cabinet regularly through public reports, with an expectation that the Chair would clearly highlight issues if progress was inadequate.

The need for clear accountability and oversight was emphasised to ensure that the county's safeguarding arrangements were robust.

It was noted that there had been a delay of approximately 13 months before independent internal investigations had begun, following Neil Foden's arrest. It was asked what lessons had been learnt from that period and whether the same decision to delay would be made again. In response, it was noted that it was unlikely that everything had been done perfectly in an unprecedented situation, with several things happening at the same time, and the ongoing police investigation. It was noted that there had been a clear message at the time to avoid action that could undermine the criminal process. It was noted that the child practice review was expected to be published within six months, but that process had slipped.

It was asked how certain they could be that a child had not been harmed during the 13 months before an independent check was carried out of the county's safeguarding processes. In response, it was noted that a piece of work regarding referrals during that period had come to conclusions regarding this.

It was asked how and when the actions taken so far, and those in place, would be communicated to parents. In response, it was noted that the communication of the work was challenging, and that work was underway to simplify and summarise the Response Plan as it was too complex to communicate effectively to the public without losing the necessary detail. It was noted that an easy-read version of the Our Bravery Brought Justice report had been useful and widely read, and that an accessible version of the Response Plan would also be a practical step to improve transparency and understanding.

Concern was expressed about when more information would be available regarding the barrister's conclusions and internal arrangements, noting that delays were worrying, undermined confidence, and could increase the cost to the public purse. In response, it was noted that a timetable could not be given at this time, due to the complexity of ongoing processes, and that dates that could not be guaranteed should not be given. It was noted, however, that learning and change was already taking place through the detailed Response Plan, but it was recognised that frustration persisted until the processes could be formally closed and more information shared.

General concern was raised about the pressure of the work on officers and Cabinet members, and it was suggested that such extensive response work could lead to slippage in other areas, including other safeguarding areas. In response, it was acknowledged that the work placed pressure on individuals. It was noted that individuals choose to focus on the work as it was a key priority, and that risk assessments were kept up to date to ensure appropriate prioritisation. It was noted that this could mean that some other things would move at a slower pace for the time being, noting that this was the reality of the situation.

The Chair noted comments, before concluding the discussion, emphasising that the Response Plan clearly indicated that Cyngor Gwynedd had learnt from the

language of the Child Practice Review, but the key challenge now was to ensure that learning was embedded through clear accountability, operational challenge and continuous learning to ensure a real change in practice and culture, not just on paper. The importance of making different decisions when there was a risk was difficult, ensuring a concrete expectation for staff and Councillors to challenge concerns, and ensuring that this was actively supported by leaders at all levels. It was noted that there was a need for a system that made accountability visible, that welcomed professional and independent challenge, and that treated failures as opportunities to learn and improve rather than to hide them. It was emphasised that reinforcing and measuring these behaviours over time was essential to demonstrate that the lessons of the Child Practice Review had been truly internalised, leading to better provision for child safeguarding and a lasting change in the organisation's culture and day-to-day decisions.

RESOLVED

- 1. To accept and note the report and work programme and request an update in 6 months.**
- 2. To recommend to the Cabinet:**

Work Stream 1: The Voice of the Child and Supporting Victims

- Measurable arrangements should be established that clearly show how the voice of the child and victims' experience directly influence decisions and outcomes;**
- Long-term support for victims needs to be ensured without causing further trauma;**
- Children facing challenges need to be given appropriate attention and unconscious bias should be avoided;**
- It should be ensured that relevant information is easy to read and accessible to children.**

Work Stream 2: Managing Allegations and Concerns about Adults Working with Children

- The arrangements for managing allegations and concerns should ensure that any doubt about the suitability of adults to work with children and vulnerable adults is assessed at an early stage, is appropriately escalated, and independently challenged, regardless of the status of the practitioner;**
- Clear safeguards are needed for individuals who raise concerns;**
- Incidents that do not directly relate to children need to be examined;**
- Evidence should be gathered to show that change is taking place and to enable future scrutiny;**
- Consideration should be given to extending the time period for the audit of Part 5 of the Wales Safeguarding Procedures allegations, by more than two years;**
- Checks should be made that there is a mechanism in place to ensure, if necessary, that there is a transition from human resources processes to Part 5 procedures.**

Work Stream 3: Training and Policies

- Policies and training should be rigorous and reviewed to support professional judgement and challenge;
- The need to evidence that training changes behaviour and decisions in practice, and is not solely a matter of attendance;
- Safeguarding records should be regularly reviewed and supervised by a specific officer to ensure that they are in accordance with the requirements;
- Grooming should be specifically identified in the training arrangements and given timely attention.

Work Stream 4: School Governance

- School governance arrangements should be strengthened to identify patterns of risk over time, ensure clear escalation pathways, and include an element of independent challenge or assurance;
- Appropriate support should be offered to equip governors to appropriately challenge and identify patterns;
- Consideration should be given to the training provided for Chairs and Designated Safeguarding Governors.

Work Stream 5: Restrictive Practices

- It should be ensured that staff understand when the use of restrictive practices is appropriate, and that they feel confident and supported to take action to protect children;
- It should be ensured that the reviews focus on learning lessons rather than apportioning blame.

Work Stream 6: Crisis Planning and Crisis Response

- Crisis planning and response should be treated as a live process that was part of the safeguarding process and should be tested regularly;
- Clarity was required in relation to roles;
- Effective communication with staff should be ensured;
- Arrangements need to be continually reviewed to ensure that lessons learned from Ysgol Friars remain operational over time.

Work Stream 7: Supporting and Stabilising Ysgol Friars

- Supporting and stabilising Ysgol Friars should be used as a basis for whole-system learning, proving that stability has led to sustainable improvement in safeguarding and cultural change across schools;
- Schools should be requested to:
 - include information about their safeguarding arrangements prominently on their websites;
 - consider adapting their relationships education curriculum content to reflect what happened at Ysgol Friars.

General

- There was a need to ensure that there was an overview of the work streams in their entirety;

- **To consider putting arrangements in place to ensure that the Council responds immediately and checks its systems when a significant concern arises which may be systemic in nature;**
- **Attention should be given to the arrangements for communicating information with parents and families to ensure effective communication;**
- **Consideration should be given to releasing as much information as possible to ensure transparency;**
- **The 2023 Estyn Inspection Report of the Council's Education Department should not be quoted or referenced in the Response Plan.**

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

Chair

EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
12/02/26

Present:

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

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

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

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

Present for item 5 - Councillor Nia Jeffreys (Council Leader), Hedd Vaughan-Evans (Head of Operations, Ambition North Wales), Eiliw Hughes (Growth Deal Programme Manager, Ambition North Wales) and Sioned Williams (Head of Economy and Community).

Present for item 6 - Councillor Medwyn Hughes (Cabinet Member for Economy and Community), Sioned Williams (Head of Economy and Community Department), Roland Evans (Assistant Head of Culture) and Sian Jones (Tourism, Marketing and Events Manager).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Richard Glyn Roberts and Colette Owen (The Catholic Church).

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

None to note.

3. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

4. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 11 December 2025 as a true record.

5. BENEFIT OF THE GROWTH DEAL FOR GWYNEDD

The Leader of the Council presented the report noting that, following concerns raised at the Committee's June meeting when scrutinising the Cabinet Member for Economy and Community's performance report, it was intended to provide the Committee with an overview of the work of the Growth Deal and the benefit it would bring to Gwynedd. It was explained that the Growth Deal is a significant regional investment designed to

strengthen the north Wales economy, create jobs, develop skills and support businesses.

It was noted that the programme included several projects across areas such as innovation, energy, digital, tourism and workforce development. It was elaborated that the report before them summarised the progress made with the relevant projects along with the highlights of quarter two, namely the period from June to September 2025. It was confirmed that an update would be given on the plans for the development of the Trawsfynydd site.

It was pointed out that this meeting was timely as the Cabinet had supported an outline business plan for the establishment of a science park in Trawsfynydd and the development of an innovation, skills and business centre there. The Committee was invited to consider the information, scrutinise progress and arrangements and make comments or recommendations to help ensure that the Growth Deal delivers the maximum benefits to the communities and people of Gwynedd.

The Head of Operations at Ambition North Wales, then took over and he thanked the member for the opportunity to present the work of the Growth Deal. A presentation was given on the main highlights during the year, including some of the latest developments since sharing the quarter two report.

It was noted that the aim of Ambition North Wales was to develop the region's economy in a sustainable way to create opportunities for people, communities and businesses. It was explained that the Growth Deal was a regional investment programme, with £240 million Government funding and a target of achieving over £1 billion investment in the region by 2036, along with the creation of up to 4,200 new jobs. It was noted that the Growth Plan was being implemented across five programmes, namely innovation in high value manufacturing, digital connectivity, agri-food and tourism, land and property and low carbon energy.

An overview of the main highlights thus far was given, namely:

- The Growth Plan and portfolio management team had been transferred to the Corporate Joint Committee on 1 April 2025.
- That a reserve list had been created for 17 new projects in May, and the Clean Energy Fund was launched in July.
- The Parc Bryn Cegin Joint Venture Agreement with the Welsh Government was completed in August.
- That the Economic Well-being Sub-Committee approved business cases for the Prince Project, the Manufacturing and Business Capability Project 5.0, North Anglesey Sites and Freeport at the October meeting.
- In November, the CanfodAu building was officially opened along with the launch of the Academi Croeso project.
- That the Sub-Committee approved business cases for the Port of Mostyn, Albert Gubay Business School and the Padeswood Rail Improvement Project at the December meeting.
- Two Non-Executive Consultants were appointed to the Corporate Joint Committee in January.

It was noted that good progress had been made so far over the year. The latest situation at the end of quarter three was referred to, noting that the quarter three report had just been approved by the sub-committee. It was explained that six projects were now operational, another ten had been approved but were not yet operational, and

seven were developing business cases, with six of these having already received outline approval from the sub-committee. It was noted that one project was still under review, the hydrogen hub in Holyhead, and that fifteen projects on the reserve list were competing for approximately £62 million of unallocated funding to date.

In terms of the benefits seen so far, it was noted that 49 new jobs had been created along with an additional 49 construction jobs. It was acknowledged that these numbers were low, but it was explained that the Growth Deal had faced significant delays and challenges at its start-up, including Covid, cost increases, planning problems and changes in Welsh and UK Government policies, which had had an impact on the original portfolio. It was emphasised, however, that there had been a significant increase over the last year in the number of projects approved, and that over the next few years this would translate to an increase in the number of jobs created. It was further noted that by the end of quarter three, just over £29 million would have been invested in the region, of which £26 million would be direct investment from the Growth Deal.

Responding to the Committee's particular interest in local benefits for Gwynedd, it was explained that Ambition North Wales considered each project within the Growth Deal as a regional project that contributes to the regional vision and overall targets. It was recognised, however, that there was a full understanding of Members' interest in local benefits. It was noted that the Growth Deal projects create local benefits in four main ways, namely through direct investment, through local and regional job creation, through supply chain opportunities, and through social and community benefits delivered through the projects and specifically through the procurement process.

An overview was given of the 7 projects in Gwynedd that had either received outline approval or final approval. It was noted that these included:

- The Digital Signal Processing Centre (£3 million) and the Centre for Environmental Biotechnology (£2 million) at Bangor University,
- Albert Gubay Business School Project (£7.3 million),
- Responsible Adventures Project (£5.6 million),
- Academi Croeso Cymru - Tourism Talent Network (£2 million),
- Glynllifon Rural Economy Hub (£11.8 million) with Grŵp Llandrillo Menai, and
- Parc Bryn Cegin Project (£5.9 million).

It was explained that these projects represent a total investment of £38.5 million of Growth Deal funding in Gwynedd, with a total investment of almost £72 million when including other funding sources. It was noted that £5.5 million of that funding had already been invested in the Digital Signal Processing Centre, the Centre for Environmental Biotechnology and in Portmeirion through the Academi Croeso project. It was noted that these projects aim to create 700 jobs over the next ten years in the region, with the majority of these likely to be in Gwynedd.

It was explained that there were four other projects or regional funds in the energy and digital areas, that were either live now or about to go live, which were seeking investment of over £51 million across the region, and they would work with businesses and communities in Gwynedd to try and secure investment as part of these funds.

It was noted that four projects within Gwynedd on the reserve list were competing for the funding that had not yet been earmarked, namely phase two of the Parc Bryn Cegin project with the Welsh Government, the Trawsfynydd Centre for Innovation, Business and Skills, Bangor Health Hub and the 'Quarry Battery' project.

It was confirmed that some of the projects on the reserve list, such as the Trawsfynydd scheme, could be subject to a separate report for closer scrutiny in due course as the details mature and move through the North Wales Ambition processes.

During the discussion, the following observations were made: -

The arrangements for prioritising projects were questioned and what process was in place to decide which projects were prioritised over others. In response, it was noted: -

- That several processes had been carried out over the years to appoint projects for the Growth Deal, including a process earlier in the year to appoint projects on the reserve list.
- That a thorough process of analysing project information was being carried out.
- The three main factors underpinning the decisions included the contribution of the projects towards the targets in terms of creating jobs and securing investment for the region, the wider benefits that the projects could offer to the region, and the level of maturity and readiness of the projects to move forward to deliver.
- The last factor was particularly important given the delays that had occurred during the first five years of the Growth Deal, and the challenges faced with some projects.
- The implementation period was originally 15 years, but 10 years was now available to deliver the projects and secure the benefits of the Growth Deal.

The long-term vision of the Growth Deal was questioned. In response, it was noted that there was a clear vision to grow the economy in a sustainable manner and create opportunities across the region and sectors. It was emphasised that the Growth Deal was only one source of funding within a more complex funding system now, and that it would be important to ensure that diverse funding streams work together rather than compete against each other. It was emphasised that there was a significant opportunity in north Wales over the coming years to take advantage of the Growth Deal, the Free Port project, the Flintshire and Wrexham Investment Zone, the Artificial Intelligence Growth Zones, and potential developments at Wylfa. It was noted that the important role of Ambition North Wales as a regional body was to ensure that these investments together add value and deliver across the region.

The amount of money contributed by the Council towards the realisation of the Growth Deal was questioned. In response, the Head of Economy and Community noted that specific figures were not to hand but could be provided following the meeting. It was explained that all councils and partners within Ambition North Wales, including the universities and colleges, contribute annually to the running costs of the programme, which are the resources and staff within Ambition North Wales working on the Growth Deal. It was elaborated that partners were also contributing towards future borrowing costs, as borrowing would be needed in the short term to enable projects to move forward before the funding from both Governments is received for the period.

The Leader of the Council noted that an underspend had been identified at a recent meeting of the Ambition North Wales Board. Disappointment was expressed about this, particularly at a time when councils and other departments were facing overspending and significant pressures on local government budgets. A personal disappointment was expressed, and on behalf of Gwynedd Councillors and members of the Committee, that the Trawsfynydd scheme had slipped onto the reserve list. The view was expressed that that project should be a priority for Gwynedd, specifically for south Meirionnydd.

In response, it was noted that only capital funding was available through the Growth Deal, and there was no funding available for the implementation and running of the schemes. It was elaborated that this was why the partners needed to invest in setting up the programme office in the first place to be able to develop the schemes. It was confirmed that further details would be shared with Committee members in due course regarding Trawsfynydd.

Comments were made by a member based on experience of being part of the North Wales Ambition Board, noting that the Board was a partnership between the six counties, colleges and the private sector, and that it was set up years ago to take advantage of the UK Government's scheme with subsequent Welsh Government contribution. It was noted that the Growth Deal had been on a long and challenging journey, and that sustaining such partnerships was a significant challenge, particularly given the need to maintain a partnership between the two Governments.

Attention was drawn to the fact that both Governments had submitted plans that overlapped with the Ambition Board's plans, such as the Flintshire and Wrexham Investment Zone and the Wylfa developments, which did not exist at the start of the journey. The view was expressed that this confused the picture and made it difficult for the Board to establish itself as a body capable of acting for the benefit of all counties in north Wales.

It was noted that it was a matter for Councillors and politicians to consider the future vision, especially in view of the Senedd elections. Reference was made to discussions about the creation of an economic development body like the former Welsh Development Agency across north Wales and the possibility of establishing some sort of body to boost the rural economy. The view was expressed that it was important to consider what messages should be conveyed to a new Government in Cardiff, whoever would be in power.

It was noted that these external interventions posed the greatest challenge to the work of the Ambition Board, and that natural tension existed as everyone was trying to get the best for their own county. The view was expressed that some counties, due to the external interventions, had received a good proportion of the benefits to date, and that Gwynedd would need to be prepared to get the most out of the partnership. It was noted that this was an important partnership, and the view was expressed that the North Wales Ambition partnership should have a budget from both Governments without any restraint, so that it could make its own decisions for the region and devolve power to the region.

A member expressed disappointment at the long time it took for the projects to become operational and bear fruit. Specific reference was made to plans for Gwynedd, noting that there was nothing at all for the south of Gwynedd. It was requested that Trawsfynydd be given due attention. Disappointment was noted that the scheme was on the reserve list and its importance in securing benefits for south Gwynedd was emphasised. They were asked about the very low number of jobs created to date, asking how many of those had been created within Ambition North Wales and its own management team. In response, it was noted: -

- That the disappointment about the development speed of some projects was acknowledged.
- There was a feeling that the situation had turned a corner in the last 12 months, and it was hoped that the picture would be more positive the next time a report was presented.

- Of the 49 jobs created, only seven of those were within Ambition North Wales, as only permanent jobs were included in the official figures.
- That there were more jobs within Ambition North Wales, but that many of those were temporary posts as the Corporate Joint Committee did not have a central budget from the Welsh Government.

The Leader of the Council noted that she had raised issues relating to jobs at the Board meetings, and that this had received attention. The view was expressed that the job figure needed to be further refined, asking whether they were full-time jobs, permanent jobs, and at what salary level they were. It was noted that, in relation to Trawsfynydd, support for the work there was very valuable, and it was expressed that the Cabinet's decision was a positive step. The view was expressed that the Council's investment in that area was innovative and an opportunity for Gwynedd to take matters into its own hands rather than waiting for the UK Government to decide on matters for the region. It was noted that the Committee's support helped to shift the focus away from the A55 corridor and to secure benefits for south Gwynedd.

Appreciation was expressed for the comments made by the Leader of the Council in relation to efforts to fight for Gwynedd, but dissatisfaction was noted with the responses given regarding prioritisation, stressing that this was not a personal fault but rather a reflection of the terms of reference the Government had set. It was pointed out that prioritising projects based on job creation meant that projects in the south of the county were at a disadvantage, as it would never be realistic for them to create hundreds or thousands of jobs.

The view was expressed that 10 or 15 jobs in rural wards such as Harlech, Llanbedr or other areas could be equally valuable to the local economy and proportionate to thousands of jobs in Wrexham. It was therefore noted that it was difficult to see a direct benefit to those areas from hearing about major investments along the A55 corridor or in Flintshire and Wrexham. Reference was made to other significant investments by the Welsh Government in an improved transport system in the east, and the view was expressed that the same kind of consideration would be due to transport lines between Wrexham, Harlech and Tywyn.

Disappointment was expressed that Trawsfynydd was now on the reserve list. It was noted that there was no reference in the report to investment in Meirionnydd other than Trawsfynydd, and Llanbedr airfield was mentioned as a key site for future investment. Reference was made to the significant investments already made by the Government in Llanbedr, and disappointment was noted that Ambition North Wales had not highlighted the importance of the Llanbedr bypass to the region's economy.

The view was expressed that the region was so large that the phrase "what's best for the region" did not mean much to areas such as south Meirionnydd, as it was that area that was losing young people in their hundreds to look for work elsewhere. It was noted that this was leading to an influx of older people and increasing pressure on services, and it was therefore emphasised that investment in south Meirionnydd and rural areas of Gwynedd was crucial. The view was expressed that jobs in the east or in Bangor served areas where a population already lived, but that the greatest need for jobs was in the rural areas of the region. In response, it was noted: -

- There had been significant challenges in bringing projects forward in more rural areas compared to more industrialised areas, particularly in terms of meeting targets around job creation and the size of investment.

- Discussions were underway with both Governments to see if greater flexibility could be achieved within the region to invest in projects that looked at inclusive growth.
- That ambition North Wales are looking in to commissioning a piece of work to create evidence to underline the exact point made about the value of creating fewer jobs in rural areas compared to urban and industrial areas.
- That one way was to try to simplify the process and make it easier for communities and businesses across north Wales to benefit from Growth Deal funding through the digital and energy funds, without having to meet the same level of targets in terms of investment and jobs.

Regarding Trawsfynydd, it was explained that there had been a significant change in what was being offered there since the Growth Deal was first established, and this was the main reason for the delay. It was emphasised that Ambition North Wales was very supportive of the proposal developed by Gwynedd for the centre in Trawsfynydd, and that the site was of strategic importance not only for Gwynedd, but for the whole of north Wales. It was noted that the Trawsfynydd site was an opportunity to change the narrative from being a decommissioned site that was closing to a growth site, with the potential to attract several future investments.

The fact that the Gwynedd Cabinet had approved the Trawsfynydd business case was welcomed. It was noted that there was a further process to be followed to assess whether the business case stood up, and if so, it would be submitted to the sub-committee for a decision. In relation to transport issues and the Llanbedr bypass, it was noted that officers were looking at these issues and in discussions with the Government. It was stressed that it was important that these points were regularly raised by the Leader of the Council in committee meetings and with Government officers.

In relation to transport, reference was made to the fact that the Growth Deal had contributed to a transport scheme in the Flintshire area. It was asked if pressure could be impressed on the Growth Deal to contribute to the Llanbedr bypass. It was noted that Ken Skates MP, Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales at the time, had indicated that the bypass would cost around £55 million and that he expected the Corporate Joint Committee to contribute that amount. The view was expressed that this would be very difficult, but that attracting funding from different sources could help to reach the total, and a contribution from the Growth Deal would be a significant help.

In response, the Council Leader noted that those points were consistently made at Ambition Board meetings. It was highlighted that the Cambrian Railway line, as well as the main railway line along the coast, was vital to the area and to north Wales. Support was expressed for the points regarding Llanbedr, and it was noted that she had already invited the other five council leaders to visit Llanbedr. It was stressed that nothing made the case stronger than seeing the situation locally, and the economic difference the plan could make. It was confirmed that an invitation had already been extended to the Ambition Board and the Corporate Joint Committee to visit Llanbedr.

It was asked how much money Gwynedd would receive from all north Wales funding. It was further asked how much attention had been given to the poorer areas, such as Blaenau Ffestiniog, when making decisions. It was highlighted that the area was among the three poorest areas in north Wales, and it was asked what kind of investment was being made in the area and why more consideration had not been given to the situation there.

The view was expressed that Blaenau Ffestiniog and other areas of Gwynedd were being hit hard by a lack of investment, and that a lack of work meant that young people were leaving, and the Welsh language was declining as a result. The view was expressed that if the targets of the Growth Deal involved improving the economy for people, more emphasis should be given to the poorest areas. It was emphasised that there was a lack of equity within the current priorities of the Growth Deal. It was further noted that there was no clear timetable in the programme but only references to quarters. The view was expressed that a full plan was needed to manage projects correctly and avoid delays to projects as had been seen. In response, it was noted: -

- It was agreed that investing in poorer and more deprived areas was crucial.
- The fact that a project comes from a more deprived area or near such an area was one of the wider factors that would be considered when assessing the benefit and impact of the project.
- That the role of Ambition North Wales involved funding projects, not developing projects from scratch.
- That the door was always open to any projects from any area of north Wales, and Ambition North Wales would work together to see if they could be funded through the Growth Deal or, if not, help identify other available sources of funding.
- There were challenges for such areas to bring forward projects that would fit within the framework set for the Growth Deal.
- That the sub-committee and officers must operate within the framework agreed with the Welsh Government and the UK Government, as it was their funding that was being invested.

Reference was made to the Glynllifon Rural Economy Hub and the sheep's milk scheme, asking whether this was now complete and, if so, whether an update on its benefit to the community could be obtained at a meeting later in the year. A question was also asked about low carbon performance. Reference was made to a recent open meeting with Professor Prysor Williams of Bangor University, and the view was expressed that Gwynedd could have missed an opportunity by not looking at this field more broadly. In response, it was noted: -

- That the sheep dairy element has been approved within the Glynllifon project.
- Further elements were part of the project, including a cattle dairy.
- That a north Wales company, OBR, has been appointed to carry out the sheep dairy work.
- An initial event to launch the work was scheduled for the following week.
- That a report to the Committee could be tailored in due course to provide a full update on the dairy and what this would mean for the industry.
- That this was an exciting development for north Wales, and something new for the agricultural sector.
- The aim was to share information with farmers in north Wales about various ideas to diversify, providing them with new options for alternative sources of income in challenging times.

It was asked whether data or figures were available regarding Gwynedd's position with the benefits that the Growth Deal brings to the area, and whether there were targets to be improved to realise the ambition for the county. In response, it was noted that targets had not been set for individual councils as the Growth Deal targets were on a regional basis. It was emphasised that the Growth Deal was a regional investment programme, and this was what was being reported back to the sub-committee and both Governments.

It was elaborated that 24 of the 49 jobs created to date had been created in Gwynedd, as the first two projects were to be implemented within the county. It was explained that the level of analysis currently available for sharing was limited due to where the projects were in their development. It was noted that six projects were now being implemented, with most of them under construction, and that they would start creating jobs once they were operational. It was emphasised that the data and information available over the next few years would increase and allow for a more detailed analysis, something to which continued attention was being given at sub-committee level.

The Leader of the Council acknowledged that Ambition North Wales works within a framework set by the UK and Welsh Governments, with targets being set at a regional level. Nevertheless, it was emphasised that this was not really government money but public money, and therefore it must be ensured that the benefits were spread across the whole of Gwynedd. In response, it was noted: -

- Quarterly information was released based on outputs.
- That information could be shared so that Committee members could see how the data was changing over time.
- The team could be asked to provide more specific information, for example how many of those jobs were in Gwynedd, so that the information was available to members.
- That programmes were available to support businesses to look at carbon conversion, and the details could be shared.

It was asked what difference the election in Wales would make to Ambition North Wales. It was further asked whether there was any collaboration between north and mid Wales, noting that residents of Meirionnydd often felt that they were closer to mid Wales than north Wales, and therefore did not receive any benefit from the northern partnership. Frustration was expressed that everything seemed to be heading towards the A55 and Caernarfon, and it was asked if there was any co-operation between south and mid Wales in the Growth Deal. Concerns were raised about the emigration of young people from Gwynedd, the decline in the number of pupils in schools and the threat to the Welsh language as a result. It was emphasised that it would not be possible to maintain the Welsh language without securing employment for the young people of the county.

Concern was expressed about the net zero agenda, expressing views that it did more harm than good to businesses. The view was expressed that there were already enough wind turbines in the area and the member did not want to see more in case the area was over-industrialised. The view was expressed that the planning and economy departments did not work well enough together, with economy supporting one thing and then planning opposing the same development.

The Leader of the Council noted that she constantly raised points about south Gwynedd. It was explained that the picture of an economic ecosystem with prosperity in the eastern areas bringing benefits to areas in the west through jobs that can be reached via a public transport network was unfair and impractical for areas such as Pen Llŷn and Meirionnydd. It was stressed that there was a need to be pragmatic and try to get the best out of the current Growth Deal. Reference was made to the Welsh Government's Arfor scheme, expressing the view that this framework could be better suited to rural and Welsh-speaking areas. It was noted that the scheme would be likely to receive more attention in the future. In response, it was noted: -

- That Ambition North Wales was ready to work with any new Government.
- That there had been no change to the Growth Deal agreed in 2020, despite the changes that had already taken place in the UK Government since then.
- That Ambition North Wales works very closely with the Mid Wales Growth Deal, and that many of the challenges they faced were like those faced in rural areas of north Wales.
- That collaboration had taken place between the two bodies to secure 'Innovate UK' funding for the 'Launchpad' project.
- There were opportunities within the net zero agenda to create high-value skills and jobs that could keep young people in the region.
- That work was underway with partners such as the North Wales Skills Partnership, not only to create jobs but also to train young people and to ensure that young people were aware of the opportunities available in the region's economy.
- That young people were likely to leave for new experiences, whether abroad or across the border, but attracting them back was important.

Regarding the 'Launchpad' project, it was noted that the project was a collaboration with Tyfu Canolbarth Cymru, Aberystwyth University and M-SParc. It was explained that the aim was to foster innovation within the agri-food and technology cluster in north and mid Wales, and to enable small companies in both regions to develop, nurture ideas and strengthen to enable them to attract more funding from sources from organisations such as UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). It was confirmed that the project had been running for over a year and remained strong, with an event scheduled in Aberystwyth at the start of March.

It was emphasised that the Trawsfynydd project should be removed from the reserve list. Further explanation was sought regarding the new jobs figures within the report and protected jobs. It was asked whether comments could be included by an external review by both Governments in the quarterly reports. It was further questioned whether comparative data on the number of jobs created in other regions of Wales could be included to put the situation in context. In response, it was noted:-

- Only permanent jobs were counted within the Government's targets, i.e. 49 jobs.
- That the construction jobs were in addition to the permanent jobs identified, and they were important jobs but were not part of the official targets.
- Protected jobs were also an area of interest but were not part of the Government's targets.
- That the UK Government had a very tight definition of what exactly 'protected jobs' were, namely that a job would have to be at risk of disappearing within 12 months to be counted.
- That technical reasons made it difficult for businesses or bodies such as universities to formally confirm this.
- A detailed vetting process would be required even if a project would report that jobs had been protected, to ensure that it fits the UK Government's definition.
- That there were four growth plans in Wales, and that they all report regularly to their own boards, with the information publicly available on their websites.
- Links to those websites could be shared, but it was noted that it would not be appropriate for Ambition North Wales to repeat or interpret that data in its own reports.

Reference was made to an inconsistency within the report relating to the 'Responsible Adventures' project, requesting confirmation as to whether the e-bus element remained an element of the project. In response, it was confirmed that the e-bus

element was no longer part of the scheme and that the documents would be corrected to show this in due course.

It was questioned that, from a commitment to high quality jobs, how many of the jobs would be on zero-hour contracts within the 'Responsible Adventures' project. In response, it was noted: -

- The information would be refined in more detail once a full business case was presented to the Board.
- A detailed overview of the nature of the jobs, including the contracting arrangements, would be sought at that time.
- This was the basis for the sub-committee to decide whether the investment should go ahead.
- That the intention of the project included extending the tourist season and creating more jobs throughout the year.
- That 'Zip World' was committed to the Academi Croeso project, which would create more apprenticeship opportunities.
- That work had been underway with local communities to provide more opportunities through employment sharing, further academy and collaboration with local schools.
- All these details would be included in the business cases to assess the quality of the jobs that would be created.

It was noted by the member that she understood that the percentage of zero-hour contracts was perhaps as high as 80%. In response, it was noted that information derived from the outline business case suggested that around 50% of the jobs created were likely to be zero-hour contract jobs.

RESOLVED

- 1. To accept the report and note the wide range of observations made, expressing dissatisfaction that some of the schemes were slow to mature, and regarding the balance between rural and urban investment.**
- 2. That the Committee receives a report on the Trawsfynydd Science Centre and Glynllifon Rural Economy Hub projects as soon as possible.**
- 3. Request an outline of the Growth Deal's cost to Cyngor Gwynedd and the outcomes for Gwynedd in terms of high-quality jobs, particularly in deprived areas.**
- 4. Request that future progress reports include more detail in relation to the jobs created specifically in Gwynedd and include the type of contracts.**

6. VISITOR LEVY

The Cabinet Member for Economy and Community presented the report noting that tourism and the visitor economy was a very important industry in Gwynedd. It was explained, for context, that several models and presumptions were used to measure the visitor economy, but that ensuring reliable data at the Gwynedd level had been extremely challenging as data did not exist in the way they would have desired.

It was noted that the frequently used STEAM model, the Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor, highlighted the following recent statistics for Gwynedd: economic impact of £1.78 billion; 7.75 million visitors; 24.9 million visit days; total employment of 17,600; nearly 4 million overnight visitors; and nearly 20-million-day stays. It was emphasised that this was a very significant contribution to the economy,

but it was also recognised that visitors create challenges in some parts of the county, resulting in additional pressures on Council services, the environment, language and culture, and communities.

It was explained that this was the reason for adopting the 2035 Gwynedd and Eryri Sustainable Visitor Economy Plan, to ensure that the visitor economy was sustainable in the area. It was noted that data from the International Passenger Survey and the Great Britain Tourism Survey, which were based on a smaller sample of people than STEAM, showed a much lower value to the visitor sector than that shown by STEAM.

It was noted that the Council had been considering the possibility of introducing a levy for several years, with research on the benefits of tourism completed in 2018 highlighting the levy as a source that could generate significant income for reinvestment in the visitor economy. It was noted that the Cabinet had in the past expressed support for introducing legislation to establish a visitor levy in Wales. It was clearly emphasised, however, that no decision had been made to date regarding the introduction of a levy in Gwynedd, and that the discussion before them only represented the first step in the process.

It was noted that the Council was working closely with Conwy and Anglesey on the research into the impact assessments and in considering the introduction of a levy. It was explained that the economic impact assessment highlighted that the impact on jobs could, in the worst-case scenario, mean the loss of 50 jobs, or, in the best-case scenario, the creation of 21 jobs. It was further noted that the introduction of a levy could generate between £2.4 million and £2.8 million of annual revenue for Gwynedd. It was elaborated that if STEAM data was used instead, the figures would be around four times higher, with a greater impact on jobs and the potential to raise up to £12 million through the levy. It was expressed that the amount raised was likely to be higher than the conservative figure of £2.5 million noted.

It was explained that if there was support from the Full Council to proceed with a consultation, the procedure set out in the Act would be clear, and that the principles of public consultation would have to be followed. It was noted that the evidence gathered would inform the final impact assessments submitted to the Full Council.

It was noted that the Act clearly outlined the areas in which the levy income could be invested, together with the arrangements for leading thereon. It was explained that a Levy Partnership Forum would need to be established at local authority level, and that the draft proposal suggested that the income should be invested in projects and activities that would be consistent with the principles of the Gwynedd and Eryri Sustainable Visitor Economy. Reference was made to possible examples of investments, including cultural use, the Welsh language, environmental protection and promotion, local infrastructure and facilities, support for businesses and communities, marketing and communication campaigns. It was noted that these areas were examples of the type of investment that could result from the levy, but it would be the Levy Partnership Forum that would recommend priorities for subsequent consideration by the Cabinet.

It was emphasised that the current discussion regarding the visitor levy was the start of the journey. Given the economic climate, the endless cuts, and the importance of ensuring a sustainable visitor economy, it was noted that this needed to be considered as one possible future option.

During the discussion, the following observations were made: -

Concern was expressed that the term 'visitor levy' was not entirely appropriate, as Gwynedd residents would be likely to be affected if they chose to go on holiday or camp within the county. The need to avoid sending a negative message to visitors that could encourage them to go to other areas was highlighted. They questioned how the scheme would be managed in practice, who would be responsible for ensuring full compliance by businesses, and how the true cost and hidden loss of imposing an additional tax on the tourism sector could be measured. Specific reference was made to the possibility that more people could turn to wild camping or stay in campervans rather than using registered accommodation. There was concern that the levy could lead to an increase in the number of visitors deciding to stay for the day rather than staying overnight, and therefore this would have a negative impact on the sector. The administrative costs of the arrangements for small businesses were further questioned. In response, it was noted: -

- That the national administrative arrangements were the responsibility of the Welsh Revenue Authority, and that it would administer the statutory registration system for accommodation providers across Wales.
- That all accommodation businesses must register from September onwards, whether there was a levy or not, with fines for those who did not register.
- That the Welsh Revenue Authority had already commenced communication and engagement work across Wales to raise awareness among businesses about the new register.
- That some businesses in Gwynedd were already trialling the registration system on behalf of the Welsh Revenue Authority, with the aim of refining the system before it was formally implemented.
- There was a real risk that some visitors might turn to wild camping, choose to stay in neighbouring areas or opt for day visits rather than staying overnight, and there was a need to be open to monitoring that situation should the levy be introduced.
- Schemes such as Arosfan were already part of the response to the pressures of motorhomes in some locations.
- That the regulatory and enforcement system in relation to wild camping already took place through the Environment Department.
- That the Welsh Revenue Authority sought to make the procedure as simple as possible for businesses, including working with platforms such as Airbnb and Booking.com to integrate the system and reduce the administrative burden.
- Businesses could report to the Welsh Revenue Authority either quarterly or annually.
- That Gwynedd was working with Conwy and Anglesey to try to ensure a consistent procedure for businesses in the three counties.

The practicality of policing camping sites and caravans was questioned. Uncertainty was expressed as to how full compliance could be achieved in a more dispersed market.

It was questioned what safeguards were in place to ensure that the same procedural difficulties that arose in relation to Article 4, would not arise again. It was questioned which other counties in Wales were already ahead of the game or were planning to proceed with the levy. It was further questioned whether categories of businesses could be excluded or show the differences between categories of businesses, raising particular concern about very small businesses that could face a disproportionate administrative burden compared to large premises. The principle and objective of the levy was emphasised to ensure that any income was used to address the side effects of tourism rather than using it to expand the problem. In response, it was noted: -

- That the Council was working closely with Conwy and Anglesey and followed Welsh Government guidance in detail in the preparation of this work.
- That economic impact assessment work had already been commissioned to ensure that the evidence base was as robust as possible before moving forward.
- That Cardiff Council had already decided to proceed to the consultation phase and was therefore the first county in Wales to do so.
- That Gwynedd was in the second phase with Conwy and Ynys Môn and hoped to submit reports to their full councils to seek permission to consult.
- Some other counties had indicated that they did not intend to proceed for the time being, while others were waiting to learn lessons from what would happen in the first counties.
- Regular discussions were taking place with other county officers in Wales who were considering the matter.
- That the Act itself clearly defined what types of accommodation and stays fall within the scope of the levy, and that there was little room to create additional local exemptions based on the size of the business.
- All paid stays in visitor accommodation fall within the system unless it was one of the specific exceptions set out in the legislation.
- That the Welsh Revenue Authority had been consulting with large and small businesses to try to ensure a system that was as simple as possible.
- Workshops had already taken place, including a session in Llandudno before Christmas, to provide further clarification for businesses.
- That a toolkit and further guidance were about to be issued to support businesses.
- That any change of this kind created additional work for businesses in the transition period and the Council, if it wishes to move forward in the future, needed to consider how local businesses could be supported to understand the arrangements and make the best use of the new systems.

It was questioned when and in what way a clear policy on the use of the income would be formulated. It was questioned whether further details on spending priorities would be available before or after the implementation of any levy. In response, it was noted: -

- That Welsh Government guidance required that a report be produced before going out to consultation, and that the report would have to outline an initial proposal for the use of the income.
- That an initial draft of that proposal had already been prepared and shared as a basis for the discussion.
- That draft was likely to change and evolve over time because of further engagement and the results of the consultation.
- That a Levy Partnership Forum would need to be established if the levy was to be introduced, and that it would be responsible for recommending spending priorities to the Cabinet.
- That the income must be allocated to the areas permitted by the Act, namely the management and improvement of destinations, including mitigating the impact of visitors, promoting the Welsh language, supporting sustainable economic growth, and providing or improving relevant infrastructure and services.
- Further work to set the more specific priorities was part of the consultation and the next steps.

It was questioned whether Council Members would be adequately informed about legislation and its implications before the matter reached the Full Council, highlighting the fact that Value Added Tax (VAT) applied to the levy and that the legislation had

powers for the Welsh Government to change the rates of the levy and allow local authorities to charge a premium on the levy. In response, it was noted:-

- That it was intended to arrange a briefing for Members prior to the meeting of the Full Council to clarify the background and implications of the Act.
- That discussions had taken place between the Welsh Government and the UK Government Treasury regarding VAT, with a clear argument from the Welsh Government that the levy should not be subject to VAT.
- That the Treasury's current position was clear, namely that the payment was subject to VAT.
- That further discussions were still ongoing between the Welsh Government, the Scottish Government and the Treasury on this matter.
- That the legislation allowed the imposition of a local premium, but that the system had now changed so that this cannot be implemented without consultation with the Welsh Government.

Concerns were raised about motorhomes waiting in inappropriate places, with specific reference to local situations where vehicles had been staying in front of houses and on beaches such as Morfa Bychan. It was asked whether these implications had been considered, and whether any work was underway to strengthen the powers or management arrangements in this field. In response, it was noted that this was a clear example of the kind of local pressure that could be prioritised and financed through levy income. It was emphasised that many of these problems cannot be adequately addressed within the Council's existing resources, and that having a specific source of income would provide an opportunity to target the tensions that arise in communities and areas where tourism creates additional pressure. It was further noted that the coast would be likely to be among the main areas that would need attention if the levy was to be introduced.

The need to have the facts clear before proceeding to a public consultation was emphasised, specifically how much income the levy would generate, who exactly would have to pay, and how clarity about the impact of the scheme could be achieved. A particular concern was raised about Airbnb accommodation, asking who would keep an eye on them and how compliance could be checked. Wild camping and motorhomes were highlighted, noting that these problems were particularly pronounced in some places, especially near lakes. Concern was expressed about vans waiting overnight in lay-bys, and who would be responsible for control and enforcement in these situations was questioned. It was asked how much the levy administration cost would be to businesses, and how much of the income would then be returned for the benefit of the tourism sector. The view was expressed that any income should be earmarked for tourism only, to improve facilities for visitors and to advertise tourism in the area. Objection was expressed to the need to pay VAT on the levy. Concerns were raised about the possibility that Powys would not charge a levy, and that visitors could choose to stay there and then visit south Meirionnydd as day visitors, leaving Gwynedd facing the same pressure but without the corresponding income. In response, it was noted: -

- That the economic impact assessment represented the best data currently available, although it was recognised that it was very difficult to obtain robust data at a Gwynedd level.
- That the consultation process was likely to help further strengthen the evidence, as a survey would be carried out among residents, businesses and visitors to Gwynedd.

- That the Act was clear about who had to pay and who was exempt, and that the number of exemptions was relatively small.
- That the national proposal was to make the procedure as simple as possible so that businesses would not have to challenge individuals or ask for evidence as people arrive to stay.
- That children under the age of 18 were exempt if they stay in hostels or in a camping sites but would have to pay at hotels.
- That the national registration system would make it mandatory for all visitor accommodation providers to register, which included Airbnb's.
- That this arrangement was an attempt to address the current lack of information regarding the location and number of Airbnbs in Gwynedd and Wales.
- It was therefore expected that it would be easier to know where the Airbnbs were and if they had registered, and that they would then administer the levy through the Airbnb app or website if the levy came into effect.
- There was a risk that some visitors may choose to stay in Powys rather than in Gwynedd to avoid the levy, but personally the levy was not a factor to discourage people from staying in an area. It was noted that the situation would need to be monitored very carefully.

It was noted that the point about wild camping and the use of lay-bys was fair, and that this area would need to be carefully monitored if the levy were to be introduced in Gwynedd. Reference was made to the Arosfan pilot scheme which was already managing to help tackle this problem. It was suggested that further discussions could be held with the Environment Department to obtain more figures on the use of lay-bys and the number of enforcement cases within the county's lay-bys.

It was questioned, from the perspective of the Eryri National Park, who would receive the levy if someone stayed within the Park area, and how it would be possible to ensure that the Park received a fair share of the income. It was emphasised that the National Park was the area where a great deal of the pressure from tourism was taking place, and it was asked how it could be ensured that it would receive what was appropriate. In response, it was stated that Cyngor Gwynedd would be the responsible authority in this case, and therefore the Council would receive the income. It was clarified that prioritising the use of the income would be a matter for the Levy Partnership Forum, which would include representation from the National Park. It was therefore confirmed that it would have a voice around the table, and that the Levy Partnership Forum would seek to identify the main challenges for Gwynedd and Eryri and seek to work to prioritise those areas. It was noted that it was likely that a significant proportion of the income would have to be spent in areas within the National Park and along the coast.

Support was expressed for the principle of the levy, noting that it was common in other parts of Europe and did not seem excessive given the cost of a holiday in general. It was noted that loopholes exist within all schemes and there was a need to focus on the levy principle. Attention was drawn to the possibility of using the income to improve the lives of Gwynedd residents, strengthen the Welsh language, and better manage the effects of tourism. It was emphasised that the levy was a positive step forward in ensuring that the tourism industry benefits Gwynedd and its residents. It was asked whether the timetable for the public consultation could be moved as the summer season was the hospitality industry's busiest period.

In response, it was noted that the Welsh Government's statutory guidance in terms of the duration and principles of the consultation must be followed. It was explained that the intention was to hold as many face-to-face sessions as possible before the start of

the summer holidays, to reduce the burden on businesses in their busiest period. It was noted that an online questionnaire and a range of other methods of engagement would be part of the process, but that the Council was keenly aware of the importance of timing the work sensitively.

Questions were asked about commissioning Quod, an external company from outside Wales, to carry out equality and language assessments. Disappointment was expressed that a local or Welsh company was not used instead. It asked what evidence was available of the impact of similar schemes elsewhere. In response, it was noted: -

- That the work was commissioned through a partnership arrangement with Conwy and Anglesey and that the Anglesey procurement process was used in this case to progress in a timely manner with the assessments.
- That the Quod company had been used as a basis for that arrangement, but that they were not carrying out the specific assessment on the Welsh language.
- That the Welsh language elements had been drawn up in collaboration with Cyngor Gwynedd's language officers, drawing on the Welsh Government's internal work and language impact work.
- A resident survey was conducted online last October, with nearly 1,000 responses.
- That survey included questions about the impact of tourism locally, schemes such as Arosfan, and views on the levy.
- A business survey had also been conducted recently.
- That prioritisation workshops with the Gwynedd and Eryri partners had contributed to shaping the local picture.
- All this information would add to the data obtained through any future formal consultation.
- Research by Bangor University looked at the implementation of levies in seven international areas, including the Balearics, Catalonia, Gunnison, Iceland, Jackson Hole, Orange County and Italy.
- That the research looked at how income was raised, what was spent, and its impact.
- There was no formal levy yet in any other part of the UK, but that Edinburgh would introduce one this year, which would be an important experience to monitor.
- That the arrangements in Manchester and Liverpool were similar in principle but based on business improvement districts fee rather than on a formal levy.

The need to prioritise local companies in the procurement process, whether it was a partnership with another county or not, was emphasised.

Questions were asked about how the exemptions and refunds would operate in practice, particularly in relation to disabled people or individuals fleeing domestic violence. Specific concern was expressed about the sensitive information that would have to be shared in some cases, and it was questioned whether there was confidence that the safeguarding systems and communication mechanisms were robust enough. In response, it was noted that the criteria for exemption and refund have been set nationally through the Act by the Welsh Government and the Welsh Revenue Authority. It was explained that the repayment arrangements would be administered by the Welsh Revenue Authority, and the specific question would have to be raised regarding individuals fleeing domestic violence but not being accommodated through a charity or local authority. It was clearly recognised that the information in such situations was extremely sensitive, and it was emphasised that very secure

arrangements would be required if the levy were to be introduced. It was noted that the Council would have to work closely with the Welsh Revenue Authority on communication and on ensuring that the messages about exemptions and refunds reached the relevant groups.

It was suggested that Members should be given regular updates to keep them informed of developments. It was questioned whether the costs of running and administering the scheme had already been included in the financial estimates. In response, it was noted:-

- That it was possible to share regular updates through a members' bulletin.
- A dedicated page had already been created on the Council's website under the business section to provide information about the levy.
- Businesses were already receiving updates through the business bulletin.
- The Welsh Government provided a budget for the establishment of systems, communications, marketing and administration.
- That the Welsh Government was committed to ensuring that the costs of administering the system did not exceed 10% of the income collected in any area.

It was asked whether the levy could only be raised during certain seasons, referring to overseas examples where there was a difference between the peak season and the quiet season. In response, it was noted that the current legislation did not allow seasonal differences. It was explained that if a local authority adopted the levy, it would have to be implemented throughout the year. It was confirmed that 12 months' notice could be given to revoke the levy if a local authority wished to do so in the future.

RESOLVED

- 1. To accept the report and note the observations.**
- 2. Recommend to the Cabinet Member for Economy and Community:**
 - **To ensure that full consideration is given to all the complexities involved in introducing this new levy.**
 - **If the Council decides to introduce a Visitor Levy:**
 - **That there is a specific commitment on how the money raised would be spent, giving priority to areas relating to tourism and the community.**
 - **That thorough consultation takes place across the county and with relevant partners to identify community priorities.**
 - **There needs to be transparency with those who pay the levy regarding how the money will be spent.**
 - **That communication about exceptions is effective and sensitive as necessary.**

The meeting commenced at 10:30am and concluded at 2:35pm

Chair

MEETING	Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee
DATE	18 June 2026
TITLE	Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure for Members
AUTHORS	Catrin Thomas – Corporate Director Iwan Evans – Monitoring Officer
CABINET MEMBER	Cllr Llio Owen

1. Why it needs scrutiny?

In order to ensure that the Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure for Elected Members is considered thoroughly and is placed on firm grounds before it is adopted at a Council meeting as an addition to the constitution.

2. What exactly needs scrutiny?

The Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure for Elected Members.

3. Background/ Context of introducing the new Policy and Procedure

3.1 On 20th January 2026 the Cabinet adopted a new Whistleblowing Policy for Staff. As an amendment to the Constitution the Policy was reported on the Full Council on 5 March 2026. That policy is specific for the Council's employed staff and others in employment/ volunteering positions and derives from the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and consequently does not apply to Elected Members.

3.2 Therefore, it was acknowledged at the time that there was a need to consider a policy enabling Elected Members to also present, in confidence, concerns of the same nature as to what is included in a normal Whistleblowing Policy, i.e., matters that could be criminal, significant malpractice or gross inappropriate conduct, whether from a Member or an officer. However, it must also be highlighted that the Whistleblowing procedure for staff is based on employment legislation. It creates a framework of rights, protection and legal outcomes that are not reflected in the relationship between elected members and the Council.

3.3 When drawing up this type of Policy, it must be acknowledged that members come into contact with the Council for many reasons. This could be raising concerns on behalf of constituents, complaining about a Department or service's arrangements, or expressing discontent about the quality of the work of a specific team. This is a part of the Council's daily work, and it is dealt with under a range of arrangements and Protocols. These are matters that would not be a routine part of the dealings of staff and their employer or contractors. They are dealt with through the Council's routine arrangements. This is not what is covered here, but rather matters that are the cause of a more serious and grave concern.

3.4 There is also a need to outline what is in the Members' Code of Conduct and the requirements on members to report on specific matters. Therefore, it is a requirement under the Code for members to report to the Monitoring Officer if they are of the opinion that a member has breached the Code of Conduct. This is not optional and a member may be required to refer the matter to the Ombudsman. In addition, further provision within the Code of Conduct places a legal requirement on members who discover criminal behaviour in the Council's work to either report to the Council by means of a confidential reporting procedure or relevant enforcement agency. It is also emphasised that criminal behaviour within the scope of this may include a range of matters that could be criminal. For example, dishonesty, health and safety offences and matters such as attacks. Safeguarding matters are exempt as there is a specific procedure for reporting on such matters that would address the duty under the Code.

However, beyond this, there are instances where it is appropriate for Members to obtain assurance of confidentiality when highlighting specific gross misconduct.

3.5 Adopting this policy is an essential step to strengthen the culture of transparency and accountability, and it has been noted consistently as a high priority following the publication of the Child Practice Review Report: Our Bravery Brought Justice. Support from the Response Board is also to be adopted, reflecting a strong consensus across the organisation regarding its purpose and value.

4. Other arrangements for different types of concerns

4.1 As well as this Expressing Concerns (Whistleblowing) Policy and Procedure, several other clear pathways already exist by the Council for reporting on different types of concerns (e.g. safeguarding, fraud, or Member and Officer code of conduct issues). However, in some circumstances, it is essential to be able to protect the confidentiality of those making the allegations, in particular to encourage confidence to raise concerns, and ensure that sensitive information is handled appropriately.

4.2 In order to support Members and to ensure consistency, Appendix 2 provides a useful overview of different paths for enquiries, complaints or disclosing concerns. This brief overview is an attempt to include all different pathways in one useful place for Members, and it will be included in the Members' Handbook in the future. It will also be the basis of the induction training for new Members following the Local Government Election 2027.

4.3 Also see below a link to the full document of each of the processes highlighted on the overview in Appendix 2:

Type of 'Concern / Enquiry'	Relevant document:
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Disclosing Serious Concerns / Behaviour	The Constitution (to be reviewed after the Council meeting on 02/07/2026)
Safeguarding	Polisi-Diogelu-Ionawr-2025-Cymraeg.pdf
Complaint about another Member's conduct	Adran-18---Cod-ymddygiad-aelodau.pdf
Fraud	Anti-fraud Strategy: Atodiad 1 - Strategaeth.pdf
Complaints about an Officer / Chief Officer	Member / Officers Relations Protocol Adran-21---Protocol-ar-gyfer-cysylltiadau-aelodau-a-swyddogion.pdf
Complaint about a Service on behalf of electors	Complaints Policy: Cyngor Gwynedd Concerns and Complaints Policy
Service request on behalf of electors	Member / Officers Relations Protocol Adran-21---Protocol-ar-gyfer-cysylltiadau-aelodau-a-swyddogion.pdf
General enquiry / request for information about Council services	Galw Gwynedd or direct contact with the service or information on the website Adran-21---Protocol-ar-gyfer-cysylltiadau-aelodau-a-swyddogion.pdf

5. Engagement

- 5.1 When drawing up the policy, discussions were held and input sought by the Member Enquiries Task Group, which had already discussed this procedure when looking at the general relations between Members and Officers. Engagement was also undertaken with all Members **and a single response was received noting that ; "clear and self explanatory".**
- 5.2 In addition, consultation was also undertaken with the Protect Organisation, which is a charitable body specialising in whistleblowing matters under the act to identify opportunities to take advantage of their support. On the whole positive feedback was received for the Policy but with suggestions for adapting and strengthening some

aspects. These changes are noted and underlined in the appendix. The only aspect where an amendment was not incorporated was in relation to the list of possible sources of behaviours that would be relevant to the Policy. This list has been included partly due to the specific requirements of the Code of Conduct and also to give context. However, the suggestion to extend the list to include behaviours by the public and businesses as the source of concerns was incorporated in the draft. In addition, the wording has been amended to provide better clarity as to the purpose of the list.

The views of the Standards Committee were sought on the 8th of June, and they confirmed their support for the Policy.

6. Next Steps

After receiving the comments of the Scrutiny Committee, there will be a request for the Full Council to support adding the Policy to the Council's Constitution, on 2 July 2026.

Background Information

Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee 19 January 2026 [Agenda for Communities Scrutiny Committee on Thursday, 19 January 2026, 10:30am](#)

[Agenda for The Cabinet on Tuesday, 20th January, 2026, 1.00 pm](#)

Full Council 5 February 2026 [Agenda for The Council on Thursday, 5 February 2026, 1.30pm](#)

Full Council 5 March 2026 [Agenda for The Council on Thursday, 5 March 2026, 1.30pm](#)

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Elected Members' Whistleblowing Policy (draft)

Appendix 2 – Overview of the Members' Pathway for Reporting Concerns

Confidential Reporting (“Whistle Blowing”) Policy for Members

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Gwynedd Council as an organisation, the Elected Members and the Officers serving the Council, are committed to the highest standards of honesty, propriety and accountability in all aspects of the Council's functions.
- 1.2 The Council has adopted a Code of Conduct for Members and a Code of Conduct for Staff and is committed to upholding these behaviours in all aspects of its work.(In this document reference to "Member" or "Members" means anyone who is bound to the Code of Conduct for Members or other individuals co-opted by the Council to any committee or body)
- 1.3 The Council has adopted a Policy for staff in accordance with the provision of the Public Interest Disclosures Act 1998.
- 1.4 This document builds on the Council's confidential reporting procedure to provide a clear pathway for Members to be able to report on matters that may constitute criminal, serious malpractice or serious inappropriate behaviour. It is designed to provide clear guidance to any Members who may have concerns. Whistleblowing helps to protect staff and service-users, and we want to hear about any concerns you may have so action can be taken to resolve them.
- 1.5 Paragraph 18.3.6(B) of the Code of Conduct for Members provides that they must:

“.....report, whether through your authority’s confidential reporting procedure or direct to the proper authority, any conduct by another member or anyone who works for, or on behalf of, your authority which you reasonably believe involves or is likely to involve criminal behaviour (which for the purposes of this paragraph does not include offences or behaviour capable of punishment by way of a fixed penalty).”
- 1.6 The purpose of this procedure is to provide the confidential reporting procedure referred to above and to provide clarity to Members on the process for raising such concerns within the Council.

2 Scope of this Procedure

- 2.1 This procedure is relevant to all Members.
- 2.2 This procedure applies to concerns about the conduct of (list not exhaustive):-
 - (i) Members of the Council
 - (ii) Council Staff;
 - (iii) Agency workers, consultants and contractors engaged by the Council;

- (iv) Volunteers who participate in the provision of services by the Council.
- (v) Members of the public and businesses in their engagement with the Council.

2.3 The Council has several other pathway processes that enable Members to submit day-to-day concerns about performance, policy, decisions etc and this procedure is not intended to replace these processes. To avoid any ambiguity this Procedure applies to :

- (i) Matters which may be of a criminal nature
- (ii) Significant malpractice
- (iii) Serious inappropriate behaviours
- (iv) Illegal activities

3 Matters to which this Procedure does not apply

3.1 This procedure will generally not apply in the following cases as they are already being or have been investigated or there are other procedures in place to raise concerns : -

- (i) Matters subject to a current or closed investigation (either internally or externally);
- (ii) Complaints arising out of a breach of the Protocol on Member/Officer Relations.
- (iii) Allegations that a member has breached the Councils Code of Conduct for Members
- (iv) Concerns about the safety and/or well-being of a person (child or adult) which should be referred in accordance with the Councils Corporate Safeguarding Policy

4 Confidentiality

4.1 Reports or referrals made under this procedure are treated by the Council as made in confidence and will not be made public (or communicated to other Members or officers) unless: required by law, required by procedures on investigating allegations, or in circumstances where this is necessary such as providing evidence or making a complaint to the appropriate investigating authority. This will be discussed with members on all occasions.

4.2 A Member who makes a report under this procedure will be expected to keep their report confidential and will ensure that any investigation is not impeded by disclosure of the report or complaint they have made.

5 Reporting Concerns

5.1 Conduct to which this procedure applies should be reported to the Council's Monitoring Officer who will decide how to take the matter further and conclude whether the matter in question is appropriate for this procedure or for another recognised process or procedure.

Appendix 1

- 5.2 If the concern relates to fraud or corruption then the Monitoring Officer will refer the matter to the Internal Audit Manager in the first instance.
- 5.3 Reports may be made orally or in writing. Written reports must be clearly marked as CONFIDENTIAL. You may use your Council e-mail or a personal e-mail to raise a concern.
- 5.4 In the event of a conflict of interest by the Monitoring Officer the matter should be referred to the Chief Executive
- 5.5 If there is a conflict of interest between the Chief Executive and the Monitoring Officer, then the matter should be referred to the Head of Corporate Services.
- 5.6 In an exceptional case where the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Executive and the Head of Corporate services have an interest, the matter may be brought to the attention of the Wales Audit Office in the first instance.
- 5.7 Depending on the circumstances of the case at hand, the Monitoring Officer (or in the case of 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6 the relevant officer) may arrange for an investigation to take place internally or refer the matter to an independent body or investigator in accordance with the normal propriety requirements. He or she may also advise a Member in relevant cases to refer the matter externally e.g. to the attention of the Police or the Public Services Ombudsman.
- 5.8 It is recognised that raising concerns about serious misconduct can be a difficult step for Members, and anyone using this policy will have access to independent support and advice through the Medra* and Protect** services, before, during, or after making a disclosure.

6 Action Following a Member's Report

- 6.1 Once the Monitoring Officer or other officer has received a report from a Member under this procedure, he will consider the matter and determine what, if any, further action is required. This may involve an investigation by an appropriate officer such as the Councils Audit Team or Health and Safety Team. They will acknowledge receipt and make initial contact with the Member within no later than 7 working days following the referral.
- 6.2 Alternatively, the Monitoring Officer may decide that the matter requires the involvement of the Police or Public Services Ombudsman for Wales or another body, regulator or law enforcement agency and may report the matter or direct the member to report the matter.
- 6.3 The Monitoring Officer may advise the reporting Member of the outcome of the investigation. However, this may not be possible in all cases. Depending on the nature of the matter giving rise to the concern, it might be necessary for further details of the investigation to remain confidential and as such to be withheld from the reporting Member. Or it may be in the hands of a separate

enforcement or regulatory body. In so far as appropriate this will be explained to the member.

7. Victimisation

7.1 If any Member feels they have been treated poorly by a member of staff because of making a disclosure, please inform the Monitoring Officer or any other of the listed officers .This can include negative treatment such as negative comments, ignoring or removing work, and refusing to co-operate with a Member because they have raised a concern. Such conduct is not acceptable and although the statutory protections do not apply to Members it is important that such conduct is brought to light and addressed.

Contacts

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<u>Monitoring Officer</u>	<u>Iwan Evans</u>	<u>iwangdevans@gwynedd.llyw.cymru</u>	<u>07435741322</u>
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TO BE COMPLETED

Audit Wales

*Medra

Angen cadarnhau sut i gael mynediad

**Protect

"Protect runs a free, confidential legal advice line for those who have whistleblowing concerns."

Appendix 2: Overview of the Members' Enquiries and Reporting Pathways

Type of 'Concern / Enquiry'	e.g.	Reporting Procedure
Disclosing Serious/Criminal Behaviours or Concerns	Criminal behaviour disclosure in accordance with the requirement in the Code of Conduct; including corruption, fraud and offences such as health and safety	<p>New procedure to be submitted to the Full Council on 2 July 2026</p> <p>The Constitution</p> <p>(to be reviewed after the Council meeting on 02/07/2026)</p> <p>In accordance with the Members' Whistleblowing Policy (NEW)</p> <p>Report to the Monitoring Officer or in accordance with part 5.4-5.7 of the Procedure</p>
Safeguarding	<p>Physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial abuse</p> <p>Physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial neglect</p>	<p>In accordance with the Safeguarding-Policy-January-2025-English.pdf</p> <p>namely</p> <p>Contact the Police (999) if a child or adult is at risk</p> <p>Contact Cyngor Gwynedd Social Services</p> <p>Safeguarding-Policy-January-2025-English.pdf</p>
Complaint about another Member's conduct	Bringing the post and the authority into disrepute, disrespect, abuse of position, misuse of the Authority's resources, breach of confidentiality, not drawing attention to breaches of the code.	<p>In accordance with:</p> <p>Section-18---Members-code-of-conduct.pdf</p> <p>Report to the Monitoring Officer</p>
Fraud	False representation; intentional failure to disclose information or fraud through abuse of position	<p>In accordance with the Code of Conduct and the Anti-fraud Strategy: Appendix 1 - Strategy.pdf</p>

		Report to the Audit Manager
Complaint about an Officer / Chief Officer	Being disrespectful towards a member, ignoring correspondence, breach of confidentiality, or acting contrary to the Members and Officers Protocol.	In accordance with Section-21---Protocol-on-member-and-officer-relations.pdf Report to the officer's line manager; arrangements for escalating to the Head of Department / Director if it is not resolved.
Complaint about the Chief Executive / Monitoring Officer	Conduct that is contrary to the Members and Officers Protocol, or breach of the Members' Code of Conduct.	In accordance with Section-21---Protocol-on-member-and-officer-relations.pdf
Complaint about a Service on behalf of electors	Waste collections regularly missed in an area, delay	In accordance with the Cyngor Gwynedd Concerns and Complaints Policy Informal Resolution by reporting to the relevant Manager / Head of Department. Submission of a Formal Complaint through the central complaints point of contact - Galw Gwynedd, website or complaints e-mail.
Service request on behalf of electors	Request for a new bin, request to replace a street lamp, reporting a pothole	Direct request through any medium of the members' choice, e.g., e-mail / phone the service directly, through Galw Gwynedd; through the public website; through the members' Self-service.
General enquiry / request for information about Council services	Asking what day the bin is being collected, advice on a planning application, Council tax requests	Contact via Galw Gwynedd or direct contact with the service or information on the website.

Agenda Item 8

MEETING	Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee
DATE	18 June 2026
TITLE	Draft Education Transport Policy Consultation
REASON TO SCRUTINISE	The Education Transport Policy has been identified at the annual workshop for scrutiny in 2026-27.
AUTHOR	Debbie Anne Williams Jones (Assistant Head of Education Services)
CABINET MEMBER	Dewi Jones (Cabinet Member for Education)

1. Why it needs scrutiny?

- 1.1 In accordance with the request of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee, we are presenting a draft Education Transport Policy following a consultation period on proposals to amend the content of the current policy. See a copy of the Draft Education Transport Policy in Appendix 1.
- 1.2 The guidance of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee on the proposals to amend the policy, together with the committee's response to the comments received from the consultees will enable us to further consider the proposals for the Education Transport Policy, before reporting back to the Cabinet on the outcome of the consultation, asking them to finally adopt the Education Transport Policy.

2. What exactly needs scrutiny?

- 2.1 The introduction of the draft Education Transport Policy following a consultation period provides the Committee with an opportunity to consider the proposals to amend the policy, as well as to consider the comments that have been received from consultees to those proposals. An updated version of the Impact Assessment on Equality, the Welsh Language and Social Economic Characteristics is also submitted following consideration of comments received during the consultation.
- 2.2 The Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee's comments and feedback are sought on the following proposals:
 - Empty Seats Scheme
 - Faith Schools
 - Dual Residency
 - Post-16
- 2.3 The Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee's comments and feedback are also sought on the comments received from the consultees as well as the Council's response to those observations.

2.4 The Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee's comments and feedback are also sought on the content of the Impact Assessment on Equality, the Welsh Language and Social Economic characteristics.

3. Summary of the Key Matters

3.1 The main proposals for the Draft Education Transport Policy are in the following areas:

- Empty Seats Scheme
- Faith Schools
- Dual Residency
- Post-16

3.2 Appendices 3 and 4 provide a full summary of the responses received from the consultees together with the Council's response to those observations.

3.3 Appendix 5 contains an updated Impact Assessment on Equality, Welsh Language and Social Economic Characteristics, after consideration of all the comments received in response to the consultation.

3.4 The Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee's comments and feedback on the proposals and responses to the consultation, together with the Impact Assessments, will be invited for further consideration in due course by the Education Department, and the Cabinet.

4. Background / Context

4.1 The current Education Transport Policy was adopted in 2009, and while there is no change to the statutory requirements relating to the provision of transport for learners, it is timely to review the policy due to the need to:

- Ensure we are meeting current statutory requirements and guidance:
 - The need for consultation at least 12 months before introducing a change to some or all the discretionary elements of the policy
- Ensure clarity on the discretionary elements for fairness for children, young people and their families:
 - There is inconsistency in the content of the policy across all areas, and it is also inconsistent with the transport policies of some other counties.
- Ensure that the Policy is fit for purpose in terms of the reasonableness of operating within the available resources:
 - The Policy has dated, which means that elements of it can no longer be implemented due to statutory requirements and guidance.
 - The Policy is vague which hampers the Authority's ability to make clear and balanced decisions, leaving us open to challenge and complaints.

4.2 The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 (the Measure) sets out the legal framework that specifically applies to travel and transport provisions for learners travelling from home to

school in Wales; with 'Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance' (The Guidance) published in 2014.

4.3 The Measure states that local authorities must:

- Assess the travel needs of learners in their authority area;
- Provide free home-to-school transport for learners of compulsory school age attending a primary school who live two miles away from the nearest suitable school;
- Provide free home-to-school transport for school-age learners attending a secondary school who live three miles away from the nearest suitable school;
- Assess and meet the needs of 'looked-after' children in their authority area;
- Promote access to Welsh-medium education and faith schools;
- Promote sustainable modes of transport.

4.4 The Local Authority has a statutory duty to provide transport from the home to school in accordance with the requirements of the Measure. At the same time, within the Measure, the Local Authority may make discretionary arrangements under part 6 of the Measure, based on the Authority's choice and discretion.

4.5 In accordance with the Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009, Local Authorities are required to publish information about their policies for providing discretionary transport within their Education Transport Policy, and if an Authority makes use of Part 6 powers to provide discretionary transport, the Authority also has the right to revoke the provision at a later date. To do this, under the 2014 statutory guidelines, the Authority is required to:

- Conduct a consultation before revoking or modifying a discretionary provision; and
- Publish the arrangements by 1 October the previous year.

4.6 The main changes proposed to the Education Transport Policy (Draft) for the purpose of consultation relate to the Authority's discretionary transport provision in the following areas:

- Empty Seats Scheme
- Faith Schools
- Dual Residency
- Post-16

4.7 Empty Seats Scheme

4.8 At present, learners who are not entitled to free transport are offered a vacant seat if there is a seat available on transport and are charged for that seat. Taking advantage of the scheme is subject to:

- Empty seats being available;
- Not requiring the vehicle to divert from its normal journey;
- No additional costs to Cyngor Gwynedd;
- Paying the current fee for an empty seat.

4.9 The scheme is not available on public transport contracts, and there is no assurance that the vacant seat will be available throughout the academic year. We try to provide at least one week's notice should the arrangement have to end.

4.10 Due to the statutory requirements to consult and announce any changes before 1 October of the previous year, it is not possible to implement the Empty Seats Scheme as intended without committing to offering an empty seat throughout the whole academic year. This contradicts the essence of the scheme of a flexible arrangement i.e. being able to offer an empty seat without committing to providing the seat for a fixed period, as that could lead to additional costs for the Authority. As a result, the Empty Seats Scheme as a heading has been revoked as an offer from the Education Transport Policy (Draft).

4.11 Faith Schools

4.12 There is no reference to faith schools in the current Education Transport Policy although transport is currently provided to learners who choose to attend faith schools in accordance with the statutory requirement. Gwynedd has two faith schools (voluntary aided schools), and the schools themselves are the admission authorities rather than the Council, therefore there are no specific catchment area boundaries for them as with the rest of the county's schools.

4.13 The authority is required to promote access to faith schools, therefore the offer of transport to faith schools has been added to the Education Transport Policy (Draft). The proposal sets out the intention to provide free transport for learners in accordance with the statutory requirement, and for learners living no more than five miles from the nearest suitable (faith) school, reflecting the fact that a faith school serves a wider area than a school's normal catchment area, which offers clarity within the policy on the right to transport.

4.14 Dual Residency

4.15 Where parents share responsibility for a child and the child resides in two households, which are the homes of both separated parents, the Authority will provide transport from the main address, which is the address at which the learner usually resides, with at least one of those residences being in Gwynedd. This is on the condition that the school attended is the nearest suitable school from the main residence, or it is agreed that it is the most suitable considering the locations of the two residences.

4.16 The Education Transport Policy (Draft) provides further clarity, namely that transport will be provided in accordance with the statutory requirement, but that transport will not be provided from either residence if more than 5 miles from the nearest suitable school.

4.17 Post-16 Transport

4.18 At present, the Council provides discretionary transport for full-time post-16 learners to the following educational establishments:

- Secondary schools catering for Years 12 & 13.

- Special schools catering for Years 12, 13 & 14.
- Grŵp Llandrillo Menai – sites at Dolgellau, Pwllheli, Glynllifon, Parc Menai Site - Bangor, Llangefni and Caernarfon sites.

4.19 The Education Transport Policy (Draft) proposes that the authority provides discretionary transport beyond statutory school age where eligible learners living in Gwynedd live 3 miles or more from the nearest suitable post-16 school or college that provides the course.

4.20 The proposal to provide post-16 transport to the nearest catchment area/suitable school, as well as to the nearest college site that provides the course:

- is consistent with the rest of the Education Transport Policy for learners of statutory education age.
- means that the transport provision supports post-16 provision across the county and contributes to ensuring the viability of provisions across the county, in Arfon, Dwyfor and Meirion when transporting learners to the nearest sites that provide the course.
- means that Bangor University students will not be eligible for post-16 transport as the proposal relates to transport to secondary schools or Grŵp Llandrillo Menai sites only
- means an age restriction of being younger than 19 years old on 1 September in the academic year in which the course was taken. This is consistent with the transportation policies of other counties.

4.21 It is noted that learners have the right to choose any site for their post-16 education, but if a learner does not choose the nearest school/college site providing the course then they would lose their right to free transport, in the same way as the Education Transport Policy for learners of statutory education age.

4.22 Further Clarity

4.23 There are also other areas within the Education Transport Policy where we have added detail and clarity to the policy, but those additions do not result in any change to the commitment to provide transport in accordance with the current Transport Policy. Those areas include:

- Measuring the Travelling Distance
- Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Medical Conditions
- Looked after Children
- Schools Reorganisation
- Expectations on parents/guardians - Transport charges

5. Consultation

5.1 A report was submitted to Cabinet on 20 January 2026 requesting permission to hold a consultation on the draft Education Transport Policy. Following receipt of Cabinet consent, the consultation ran for a period of 6 weeks between 9 February and 20 March 2026.

5.2 An on-line consultation pack was published together with a bespoke response form, and a total of 31 written responses to the consultation were received through this method. A

copy of the response form can be found in Appendix 2. This figure does not include the feedback from learners during the consultation sessions that took place.

5.3 The Consultation Report (Appendix 3) contains a full summary of all the issues raised by the consultees via the on-line response form, together with the Council's response to those issues. The main themes raised by the consultees are listed below, and a more detailed consideration of each of these issues can be found in Appendix 3.

- Empty Seats Scheme
- Faith Schools
- Dual Residency
- Post-16 provision
- ALN and Independent Travel
- Active Travel
- General
- Welsh Language Standards

5.4 To ensure the voice of children and young people in this consultation, several specific consultation sessions were held with approximately 104 students in the following settings:

- Grŵp Llandrillo Menai – Coleg Menai site, Bangor
- Grŵp Llandrillo Menai – Pencraig Site, Llangefni
- Grŵp Llandrillo Menai – Meirion-Dwyfor Site, Dolgellau
- Grŵp Llandrillo Menai – Meirion-Dwyfor Site, Pwllheli
- Grŵp Llandrillo Menai – Meirion-Dwyfor Site, Glynllifon

In addition, a specific session on the proposals of the Draft Education Transport Policy was held with the County Children and Young People's Forum.

5.5 The main themes raised by the young people in the consultation sessions are listed below, and a more detailed consideration of each of these issues can be found in the Consultation Report. (Appendix 4).

- Course Location
- Transportation costs
- Age restriction
- Learners with ALN
- Public Transport
- Transport Timetables
- Calculating Travel Distance

5.6 School Headteachers

5.7 A presentation on the content of the Draft Education Transport Policy was given to secondary headteachers on 11 February and primary headteachers on 25 February 2026. This outlined the main changes and raised awareness of the on-line questionnaire, inviting them to submit any comments as part of the consultation. The representations received during the session related to the possibility of phasing out the Empty Seats Scheme, as well

as the suitability and standard of training provided to those providing education transport on behalf of the Council.

5.8 Governors' Forum

5.9 A presentation was also given to the Governors' Forum on the Draft Education Transport Policy on 26 February 2026, where the main policy proposals were highlighted and awareness was raised of the on-line questionnaire, giving them the opportunity to ask questions or comment during the session. The representations received during the session related to the Empty Seats Scheme in terms of the potential for its phase-out and subsequent impact on small rural communities and schools.

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

An assessment of the impact of the proposals to modify the Education Transport Policy on Equality, the Welsh Language, the Socio-Economic Duty, and the relevant considerations was undertaken in the context of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015, and the assessment was published as part of the Education Transport Policy consultation package. Following the consultation, the assessment was reviewed. The full Assessment can be found in Appendix 4.

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

7.1 An assessment of the impact of the proposals to modify the Education Transport Policy on Equality, the Welsh Language, and the Socio-Economic Duty was undertaken, and the assessment was published as part of the consultation package on the Education Transport Policy. Following the consultation, the assessment was reviewed. The full Assessment can be found in Appendix 4.

7.2 Compliance with Welsh Language Standards (Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011)

It is confirmed that the consultation on the Education Transport Policy has been carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards 88-93 under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. In accordance with Standards 88, 89 and 90, conscientious consideration was given to the potential effects that the policy decision could have on opportunities to use the Welsh language and on not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English, including consideration of the potential positive and adverse effects, how the proposal could be formulated or modified to ensure more positive effects, and how any potential adverse effects could be minimised.

In addition, in accordance with Standards 91, 92, and 93, views were considered and sought throughout the statutory consultation process regarding these linguistic effects, including views on how the proposal could be formulated or modified in order to increase

positive effects or reduce adverse effects on the Welsh language. These requirements have been supported by undertaking an Impact Assessment on the Characteristics of Equality, the Welsh language and the Socio-Economic Duty, and these assessments have been reviewed and updated following consideration of the responses received during the consultation on the Education Transport Policy.

8. Next Steps

8.1 Following consideration of comments made by members of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee, it is proposed to submit a report to Cabinet asking them to adopt the revised Education Transport Policy. The final Education Transport Policy will have considered all the comments received as part of the consultation process, together with the comments of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee. The policy will need to be adopted before 1 October 2026 to become effective from 1 September 2027 onwards.

9. Appendices

Appendix 1 Draft Education Transport Policy

Appendix 2 Response Form

Appendix 3 Public Consultation Report

Appendix 4 Learner Consultation Report

Appendix 5 Impact Assessment on Equality, Welsh Language and Socio-Economic Characteristics

Appendix 6 Update on the Work Programme and Financial Position.

Appendix 7 Case Study

EDUCATION TRANSPORT POLICY

CYNGOR GWYNEDD



DRAFT POLICY
(January 2026)



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Cyngor Gwynedd has a duty to provide transport to school in accordance with the *Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008* and *Learner Travel: Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance 2014*. This Learner Transport Policy outlines how the Authority provides transport to school learners and Grŵp Llandrillo Menai learners who reside in Gwynedd, and the eligibility criteria.
- 1.2 To meet this requirement, the Authority will consider the following when making arrangements for learners residing in Gwynedd:
- The learner's age
 - The distance from their home to school
 - The nature of the journey from home to school
 - Requests for faith education
 - The needs of learners with disabilities or additional learning needs
 - The needs of learners who are looked after by the Local Authority
 - The needs of learners with dual residency.
- 1.3 The Measure allows the Local Authority to use discretion in relation to the services provided under some circumstances. These discretionary elements are outlined in Part 3 of this policy.
- 1.4 Transport is provided to post-16 learners under the policy as a discretionary arrangement. See Part 3.3.
- 1.5 It is a requirement for the Authority to provide free transport from home to school under some circumstances. These are outlined in Part 2. The duty to provide that transport is only relevant if the child resides in the Authority area.
- 1.6 The Local Authority will continuously strive to provide safe, affordable, efficient and cost-effective transport to those learners who are eligible under this policy.
- 1.7 Transport is provided from home to school to eligible learners between their home addresses or designated pick-up point and the nearest suitable school where they are registered. Free transport is not provided to or from the addresses of other family members or friends, the parents' work addresses or any type of childcare facilities.
- 1.8 The Policy will come into effect from 1 September 2027 onwards. The transport arrangements assessed and provided under the Local Authority's previous policy will

continue but there will be a material change in circumstances requiring making a new application, e.g. moving home or school / post-16 school or college.

2. TRANSPORT FROM HOME TO SCHOOL

2.1 Eligible schools

2.1.1 Cyngor Gwynedd will provide free transport to learners who meet the criteria for transport set in this policy. The policy refers to transport to and from eligible schools in the following categories:

- Community, foundation, controlled or voluntary assisted schools
- Non-maintained special schools
- Pupil referral units
- Independent schools named in an Individual Development Plan.

2.2 Distance Criteria

2.2.1 The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 stipulates that free transport will only be provided for mandatory school age learners, if the distance from home to their nearest suitable school is at least:

- a) 2 miles for Primary School learners
- b) 3 miles for Secondary School learners

2.3 The nearest suitable/catchment School

2.3.1 A learner's catchment school is defined by specific catchment areas and based on the location of the learner's home. The nearest suitable school for transport purposes would be the school under Cyngor Gwynedd's care that is nearest to the learner's home. Further information about the nearest suitable/catchment school is available by visiting the 'Where I live' link on Cyngor Gwynedd's website: [Search for an address](#)

2.3.2 If the nearest suitable / catchment school is full, the availability of the next available nearest suitable school is assessed to accept the learner. The same distance criteria will be relevant.

2.3.3 Transport is provided from home to school for eligible learners between their home addresses or designated pick-up point and the nearest suitable school where they are registered. Free transport is not provided to or from the addresses of other family members or friends, the parents' work addresses or any type of childcare facilities.

2.4 Measuring the Travelling Distance

- 2.4.1 For assessments under the distance criteria in Part 2.2, the work of calculating the distance from home to school adheres to the guidance provided in the *Learner Travel: Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance 2014*.
- 2.4.2 Where learners are reasonably expected to walk to school, the distance is measured according to the shortest route available that the child, whether independently or with a chaperone, could walk, reasonably safe along it; considering the child's needs and age.
- 2.4.3 The suitability of the travel route is assessed in terms of the safety of the learner when walking along it, and thorough risk assessments are conducted by officers of the Integrated Transport Unit (Cyngor Gwynedd) at the likely time of day where the learner would use it.
- 2.4.4 Having undertaken a risk assessment of the learner's travel route (whether walking independently or with a responsible adult), if it is deemed that the travel route from home to school is dangerous, the learner cannot be expected to walk to school, although the distance from home to school is shorter than the statutory distance noted in 2.2 above. In these circumstances, the learner has a right to free transport provision.
- 2.4.5 The definition of a dangerous road is where the nature of the road, including public footpaths, means that it is not reasonable to expect learners to walk relatively safely. In assessing the comparable safety of a road, the Authority will assess the dangers that the learners could face; these could include rivers, ditches, traffic speed along the road, the data of past accidents, trees and branches, as well as other features that could impair drivers of vehicles from being able to see pedestrians on the road.
- 2.4.6 For assessments over the distance criteria noted in 2.2, the distance of the route to school is measured from the home's boundary to the nearest entrance available to the school, and it could include public footpaths, bridleways and other paths, as well as adopted roads. It does not have to represent the shortest distance on the road. The distance is measured by a digital mapping system (GIS).

NOTE: Parents/Guardians should also refer to Part 5.5 for information about sustainable modes of transport to school.

2.5 Primary and Secondary School Transport

- 2.5.1 The Authority will provide free transport to the nearest suitable/catchment school in accordance with the criteria of this policy for Primary and Secondary Schools. Discretionary provision could be relevant, by virtue of the criteria shown in Part 3.

2.6 The Parents / Guardians' Choice of School

- 2.6.1 Parents / guardians have a right to choose any school for their child's admission subject to the availability of spaces. Should the request be accepted, the parent / carer will lose their right to free transport if this is not their nearest suitable school / catchment school, or if it is not the designated Secondary school for the feeder primary school that they attended.
- 2.6.2 This is consistent with and meets the requirements outlined in the *Learner Travel: Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance (June 2014)*.

IMPORTANT: Parents / carers are advised to consider the implications of school transport before declaring their choice for space in a school. See Part 2.3 on the nearest suitable/catchment school, as well as Part 4.4 on the impact of transport.

2.7 School Admission

- 2.7.1 If parents / carers are unable to secure a place for their child in their nearest suitable/catchment school, or if their designated Secondary school (from the appropriate feeder primary school) is full, then free transport will be provided to their next nearest suitable school, on the condition that the distance criteria is met in Part 2.2.

2.8 Pick-up and Drop-off Sites

- 2.8.1 For learners eligible for transport, there will be an expectation that they start from a pre-determined pick-up point, unless noted otherwise when the application is processed. The Authority will strive to locate pick-up points reasonably close to the learners' home and not further than the statutory distances outlined in Part 2.2. Any distance measured will follow the principles outlined in Part 2.4. The assessment will also consider dangerous paths, following the principles noted in Part 2.8.
- 2.8.2 It is the responsibility of the parent / guardian to ensure that their child reaches the pick-up point in a timely manner and gets in the vehicle safely. They must also ensure

- that a responsible adult is there to meet the child on the return journey, if the child's age or needs require a chaperone provision.
- 2.8.3 If there is no responsible adult there to meet the child who requires a chaperone provision in terms of age or needs, then additional costs will be payable by the parent/guardian, as Officers may have to seek guidance from the Children Services and, if required, arrange to take the child to a safe place by Cyngor Gwynedd.
- 2.8.4 Nothing in this Policy creates the expectation that every child should walk to the pick-up points, as this would be unsuitable in some cases. The Authority keeps a register of the known dangerous paths, and this forms part of the consideration given when assessing transport requests. However, if a parent / guardian believes that the use of the pick-up point is unsuitable for their child, they should express their concerns to the Authority, who will look into the circumstances to decide whether additional or alternative transport arrangements are required for that child; to ensure that the requirements of *the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008* are met. However, parents / guardians are expected to make arrangements for the first two miles to meet any transport provided by the Authority.
- 2.8.5 The Authority has the right to review the pick-up points to ensure that a safe path is continuously maintained and subject to ensuring that the most cost-effective provision is in place.
- 2.8.6 Once eligibility for school transport is confirmed, the Integrated Transport Unit will inform the school with a request for the school to share the relevant information with the parents / carers.
- 2.8.7 Where transport is used to take learners to pick-up points, the learners must stay with the taxi until the vehicle to transport them onwards arrives. Drivers are expected to report to the Integrated Transport Unit about any learner who does not comply with this expectation.
- 2.8.8 Contractors who provide these services have been instructed to wait with learners to ensure that they go into the vehicle that provides their onwards transport. Parents / guardians are also encouraged to report to the Integrated Transport Unit about any cases where drivers do not do this.
- 2.9 Dangerous Paths**
- 2.9.1 For learners who live under the statutory eligibility distance shown in Part 2.2, the Authority will provide transport to the school if it is considered that the path is dangerous. Dangerous paths are assessed by the Integrated Transport Unit, following

the guidelines provided in the *Learner Travel: Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance 2014*.

- 2.9.2 Where pick-up points are used, the Local Authority will also consider whether there are dangerous paths that could reasonably prevent learners from walking to these locations, accompanied by a chaperone as required. In those cases, the Local Authority, after assessing, will provide free transport from the home to the pick-up point, or refer to the school (whichever is most effective).

NOTE: Where parents / carers have exercised their right to choose a school according to their wishes (see Part 2.6), then it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to arrange transport from home to school.

- 2.9.3 If a parent / guardian believes that a specific path is dangerous, they should express their concerns to the Authority, who will investigate to confirm whether any additional or alternative transport arrangements are required.

2.10 ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS (ALN) AND MEDICAL CONDITIONS

- 2.10.1 The Authority will consider the learner's medical conditions, disability and additional learning needs when assessing the learners' travel needs in the area. If a learner has an Individual Development Plan (IDP), transport for the learner will be provided in accordance with the IDP – this may also include pre-school children. If the IDP is reviewed and the transport element amended, any transport arrangements will reflect the revised IDP.
- 2.10.2 The Authority can provide free transport from home to school for learners of a mandatory school age, if they do not have an IDP, when transport is sought for medical reasons or the learner's additional learning needs (ALN) or disability. This provision will be considered when an application form regarding transport on a medical basis is completed, as well as evidence from an adviser or a person of a similar status (not a GP, Nurse or Practitioner). Transport for learners with medical difficulties/ALN will depend on their individual circumstances and the path that is required for the learner to travel. These transport arrangements are reviewed annually.
- 2.10.3 The Authority is committed to support learners to travel independently where practically possible. The annual review of the travel arrangements will consider the type of transport provided to the learner and, if a personal travel assistant is provided,

whether or not there is a need to continue with that arrangement. Cyngor Gwynedd can make changes to transport arrangements following the review.

2.11 Looked-after Children

- 2.11.1 Looked-after children is the term used in the Children Act 1989 to describe children under 18 years old who receive care and accommodation from the Children and Supporting Families Department, Cyngor Gwynedd, often with foster carers.
- 2.11.2 Looked-after children (according to the Children Act 1989 definition) have the same right to receive transport as children who are not looked after; however, there are no requirements for them to attend the nearest suitable school to their home or the placement's address.
- 2.11.3 If a looked-after child attends a school that is closer than the required distance shown in Part 2.2, free transport will not be provided. Exceptions by virtue of the criteria shown in Part 3 may also apply.

2.12 Dual Residency

- 2.12.1 When parents share responsibility for a child and the child resides in two households, which are the homes of both parents, the Authority will provide transport from the main address, which is the address where the learners usually reside, with at least one of those residences being in Gwynedd. This is on the condition that the school attended is the nearest suitable school from the main residence, or it is agreed that it is the most suitable considering the locations of the two residences. Transport will not be provided from any of the two residences if they are more than five miles from the nearest suitable school.
- 2.12.2 Parents must provide evidence if they believe that the time between both addresses is equal and meets the eligibility criteria.

NOTE: The Local Authority also retains the right to prove the reasonableness of the transport requested under this condition, considering distance, safe and accessible paths, the length of the journey, cost, as well as proximity to other suitable education settings.

3. DISCRETIONARY SCHOOL TRANSPORT

3.1 Within *the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008*, discretionary arrangements can be made under part 6 of the Measure. In some cases, there can be a charge for the cost of those arrangements to the responsible parent / guardian.

3.2 Faith Schools

3.2.1 For faith schools, Cyngor Gwynedd will provide free transport to learners who attend their nearest faith school on a discretionary basis if this is the choice of the parents / guardians for learners who live up to 5 miles from the nearest suitable (faith) school. The statutory distance criteria in Part 2.2 are used to check that the learner is eligible, but with faith schools, the application is also reviewed against the faith school's admission criteria. Evidence of proof can include examples such as a christening certificate, a proof certificate of faith or a letter from a faith leader. If the learner does not meet the faith requirements, then the application is reviewed in relation to the requirements of the nearest school or nearest catchment area.

3.3 Post-16 Transport

3.3.1 Part 2 of *The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008* requires Local Authorities to assess the travel needs of all learners under the age of 19, (learners must be studying a full-time course and be under the age of 19 on 1 September of the academic year when the course is followed).

3.3.2 The Local Authority provides discretionary transport beyond the statutory school age to eligible learners living in Gwynedd. Transport will be provided to the nearest suitable / catchment Secondary school allocated by the Authority to serve the learners' home address only, or in the case of full-time courses at Grŵp Llandrillo Menai, to the nearest college site providing the course. Free transport will be available for learners who live 3 miles or more from the school or the nearest suitable college site. The Authority will use the distance measured by them from home to school or eligible college on the system (GIS) to confirm the actual distance.

3.3.3 Learners with additional learning needs will be able to take advantage of the Authority's post-16 transport plan for a period of up to 4 years from the beginning of their first term.

3.3.4 The policy applies to travel to the following education settings:

- Secondary Schools maintained by Cyngor Gwynedd with a provision for Years 12 and 13.

- Special schools maintained by Cyngor Gwynedd with a provision for Years 12, 13 and 14.
- Grŵp Llandrillo Menai - Dolgellau, Pwllheli, Glynllifon sites, Parc Menai Site - Bangor, Llangefni and Caernarfon. The courses available at each of these settings can be seen in their prospectuses, that are available directly from the establishments.

3.3.5 If the course location or learner transfers to another education setting during the academic year, the criteria for post-16 transport in Part 3.3.2 will still apply.

3.3.6 Transport is provided between learning establishments who work in partnership with each other by those partners.

3.3.7 More information about post-16 transport can be found in Appendix 1.

3.4 School Reorganisation

3.4.1 In cases where schools are reorganised, the Local Authority will consider the most appropriate options for school transport. This could include providing free transport for a specific period of time depending on the circumstances. Such arrangements will be provided on a discretionary basis and documented in the reorganisation process; therefore, relevant schools, governing bodies, parents / guardians and any other stakeholders will be aware of the terms of the arrangement.

3.5 Reviewing Catchment Areas

3.5.1 In cases where the Authority reviews the catchment area boundaries (outside of the schools' reorganisation process), the transport criteria in Part 2.2 will apply.

3.6 Moving Homes

3.6.1 In cases where a learner, who has been receiving free transport, moves home in the middle of the academic year, transport provision will come to an end if they no longer attend their nearest suitable/catchment school.

3.6.2 If a learner is in the middle of a GCSE year (school years 10 and 11), the Authority will continue to provide discretionary transport until the academic years are completed, i.e. until the end of year 11.

3.6.3 This commitment is subject to the learner living in the Local Authority area.

NOTE: The Local Authority also retains the right to prove the reasonableness of the transport requested under this condition, considering distance, journey time, and the proximity to other suitable education settings.

3.6.4 Every other eligibility reassessment will follow the same criteria noted in Part 2. This part will not apply where parents / guardians have previously exercised their choice as detailed in 2.6.

3.7 Controlled School Transfers

3.7.1 Where controlled school transfers are supported by the school Headteacher of the new destination and the Education Department, parents / carers will be aware of this action and will be included in these discussions at a school level. School transport under these circumstances can be supported on a discretionary basis where a part of the action and the agreement of every party is formed to change schools for the benefit of the learner.

3.7.2 It is the parent / carer's responsibility to ensure that they fully engage with the Authority and the school when pursuing a controlled transfer. These matters need to be checked, and evidence will be available. This allows the Education Department to make an informed decision based on the evidence that supports the application for transport.

3.7.3 Where evidence is not available and/or where a parent/guardian refuses to engage with the process with the school and Education Department, the request for transport will be refused. This will be based on the lack of evidence available to make an informed decision.

3.8 Medical Conditions

3.8.1 Consideration is given to the need to provide transport to those learners who need temporary school transport because the nature of their medical condition seriously impacts their mobility (e.g. a broken leg). The Authority will consider every case individually, not only for those eligible for transport based on distance. In every case, transport is only provided to the site that the learner attends.

4. OTHER INFORMATION

4.1 Nursery Education

The Authority does not provide transport to children attending nursery or nursery classes at 3 or 4 years old. Transport is provided to eligible children from the start of the school where the child reaches the age of 5 and starts full-time education, normally in the reception class.

4.2 Clubs Outside of School

The Authority will not provide transport to or from after-school clubs (i.e. breakfast club, after-school clubs etc.) or extra-curricular activities that fall outside the statutory curriculum. It is the responsibility of the parent / guardian to ensure that appropriate transport arrangements are in place if they take advantage of these provisions.

4.3 Changes to the Policy

Should this policy need to be amended, the Authority must follow the statutory requirements set in the *Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009*. This requires the Authority to consult, agree and publish changes to the policy before 1 October in the year that pre-dates the academic year when the changes come into force.

4.4 Transport Impact

Parents / guardians must consider the implications of their chosen school on the use of private cars and the impact that could have on traffic and carbon emissions outside their chosen school. The Authority encourages parents / guardians to consider transport and active and sustainable travel to the school of their choice.

4.5 Sustainable Modes of Transport

Parents / carers must consider choices for active travel to school. Information about Active Travel in Gwynedd is available on the Council website, as well as the *Walk Wheel Cycle Trust* website in terms of cycle paths across the county.

5. TRANSPORT PROVISION

5.1 Cyngor Gwynedd Provision

5.1.1 The Authority will try to provide the most appropriate and suitable mode of transport to every eligible learner safely and provide the most cost-effective mode of transport. This could be on a bus, a coach, a minibus, or taxi agreements, or on public transport that already exists. These services and the associated agreements are arranged and managed by the Integrated Transport Unit.

5.2 Transport Payments

5.2.1 In order to meet the statutory requirements, in exceptional circumstances, the Council can offer personal budget for parents to take their children to school/college should that be cheaper than providing transport arranged by the Authority, or where there are no transport arrangements in place.

5.2.2 Monthly payments are made to a parent's bank account after receiving a C1 payment claim form from the Integrated Transport Unit. The application form is checked with information about the learner's attendance in the school/college that they attend. The payment is calculated based on the parent's travel distance from home to school, using the Council's digital mapping software (GIS). The cost is calculated based on the distance of the journey to and from home to school twice. Parents / guardians are not obliged to accept the offer of a repayment; however, it may be considered that this is the most reasonable mode of transport.

5.3 Inclement Weather Arrangements

5.3.1 In circumstances of inclement weather, it is the Headteacher's responsibility to decide whether or not the school should be closed. The Education Department is informed of any decision to close the school. The decision will depend on an assessment of the relevant factors, including the weather forecast, the situation in the area of the school, the situation for staff members in relation to travel etc.

5.3.2 If the provider is unable to provide a bus or taxi in the morning due to inclement weather, then that transport will not be available in the afternoon. Any parents who have decided to take their children to school under such circumstances must be informed that they need to arrange to take their children home in the afternoon as the usual school transport will not be available.

5.3.3 If transport providers inform the school that they are eager to transport some learners home early, the schools must agree to the request as it is the responsibility of the provider to take the learners home safely. When making such a request, the provider

will respond to weather warnings or direct evidence that the situation in terms of weather is worsening. Such a request should not necessarily lead to a decision to send every learner home early.

5.3.4 If it is decided to close the school, the Headteacher will contact the transport providers to inform them. They should also confirm with the providers the arrangements for the following days as soon as any relevant decision is made. If unable to contact the providers, the Integrated Transport Unit must be informed on 01766 771 000. When a decision is made to close a school, the Headteacher must inform the Education Department using the "School Closures" system on the Authority's website: www.gwynedd.gov.uk/cau

5.4 Service Monitoring

5.4.1 The Authority retains the right to randomly inspect Education Transport services to ensure that everyone travelling is eligible.

5.5 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Inspections

5.5.1 The Integrated Transport Unit (Cyngor Gwynedd) manages and arranges all the necessary education transport agreements with the appropriate service providers. This includes receiving evidence and keeping a record of the Disclosure and Barring Service inspections for every driver and travel chaperone by the providers.

NOTE: Travel chaperones are only employed on primary school transport services where it is considered appropriate, or if the child's Additional Learning Needs make this appropriate.

5.6 The Behaviour Code

5.6.1 Cyngor Gwynedd supports the "Travel Behaviour Code" prepared by the Welsh Government. The Code establishes the expectations of individual learners, fellow passengers and transport providers. The Code can be seen on the Council's website [Behaviour Code](#), and in this Policy's appendix.

5.6.2 As learners present a request for education transport, they, or their parents/guardians, must state on the application form that they have understood and are committed to adhering to the Behaviour Code and are aware of the possible results of breaching the Code.

- 5.6.3 An unacceptable action by a learner that is contrary to the Code could lead to:
- recovering the cost of deliberate damage from learners and/or their parents/guardians,
 - cancelling the travel arrangements agreed for learners for a specific period or an unspecified period. It will be the learners' responsibility to make their own transport plans to attend school/college under these circumstances,
 - disciplinary action by the relevant school or college,
 - submitting a report of the incident to the Police.

6. SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

- 6.1 Cyngor Gwynedd is eager to receive feedback and comments from service users that could lead to improving services. Any feedback or comments regarding this Policy must be presented through the Feedback and Complaints Procedure [Formal complaint / Praise](#)

7. FURTHER INFORMATION

- 7.1 The following is available on the Council website: www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru
- A. Timetables and maps of the Network to the relevant establishments
 - B. The Behaviour Code
 - C. Application forms.
 - Ch. Complaints and Comments



Draft Education Transport Policy

Cyngor Gwynedd is engaging with the public on the Draft Education Transport Policy

Background

The Education Transport Policy, which is currently active dates back to 2009, and although there is no change to the statutory requirements associated with providing transport for learners, the policy needs to be reviewed in order to:

Ensure we are meeting the Welsh Government's statutory requirements and guidelines:

The need to consult at least 12 months before introducing a change to some or all the discretionary elements of the policy.

Ensure clarity on the discretionary elements for fairness for children, young people and their families:

There is inconsistency in the content of the current policy across all areas.

Ensure that the policy is fit for purpose and clear and easy to implement within the resources available:

The policy is outdated which means that elements of it can no longer be implemented due to the Welsh Government's statutory requirements and guidelines. The policy is also vague, which makes it difficult for the Authority to make clear and balanced decisions about education transport.

The main changes proposed to the Draft Education Transport Policy are in the following areas:

- Empty Seats Scheme
- Faith Schools
- Dual Residency
- Post-16 Transport

Relevant Documents

- Draft Education Transport Policy
- Impact assessment

Privacy notice

We will only use any personal information provided in responding for the purpose of analysing the questionnaire. The responses will be kept for 5 years after the questionnaire's closing date.

This is done in order to comply with Article 6(e) of the UK GDPR, as we are asking for your opinion about a statutory service.

Closing date: 20 March, 2026

Section A:

A1.

I'm completing this questionnaire as:

Parent / guardian

Governor

Member of school staff

Learner under 16

Post-16 learner

Member of the public

Elected member

Other

Other

Section B: Empty Seats Scheme

What's in the current policy?

If there is an empty seat for learners on a school bus or taxi, learners can apply to purchase the seat each term. The following criteria must be met:

1. There are empty seats available;
2. There is no need for the vehicle to change the route from its usual journey;
3. There will be no additional costs for Cyngor Gwynedd;
4. Pay the current fee for an empty seat.

These learners will receive first refusal:

- Learners with an Individual Development Plan (IDP);
- Learners who live farthest from the school or school site.

What's different in the new policy?

The Empty Seats Scheme will not exist in the new Education Transport Policy.

B1. What is your opinion on not including the empty seats scheme to ensure that there are enough seats available for children to travel free to school?

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

No opinion

B2. Comments

Section C: Faith Schools

What's in the current policy?

There is no reference to faith schools in the current policy, but this is the situation:

Gwynedd has two faith schools; Our Lady's School and St Helen's School. The schools themselves are the admissions authorities rather than the Council, and therefore they do not have specific catchment boundaries, although the areas they serve are likely based on areas of the historic church parishes. At present, transport is provided for learners on the basis of these areas.

What's different in the new policy?

Cyngor Gwynedd will provide free transport for school-aged learners:

- who attend the nearest faith school of the parents' / guardians choice;
- if they live at least 2 miles but no more than 5 miles from the nearest suitable faith school;
- where their parents/guardians provide evidence of proof of faith

C1.

What is your opinion on providing free school transport to learners in faith school catchment areas that live at least 2 miles but no further than 5 miles from the nearest suitable faith school?

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

No opinion

C2. Comments

Section D: Dual Residency

What's in the current policy?

Where parents share responsibility for a child and the child resides in two households, which are the homes of both separate parents, the Authority will provide transport from the main address, which is the address at which the learner usually resides, with at least one of those residences being in Gwynedd. This is on the condition that the school the learner attends is the nearest suitable school from the main residence, or it is agreed that it is the most suitable considering the locations of the two residences.

What's different in the new policy?

The Local Authority will provide transport for learners who may reside in more than one home due to their family circumstances, but only from the main address, with at least one of those homes being in Gwynedd. Transport will not be provided from either residence if it is more than 5 miles from the nearest suitable school.

D1. What is your opinion on only providing free transport from the main address?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- No opinion

D2. What is your opinion on not providing free transport if both homes are further than 5 miles from the closest appropriate school?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- No opinion

D3. Comments

Section E: Post-16 Transportation

What's in the current policy?

The Council provides transport for full-time post-16 learners to the following educational institutions:

- Secondary schools catering for Years 12 & 13.
- Special schools catering for years 12 & 13 & 14.
- Grŵp Llandrillo Menai - Dolgellau, Pwllheli, Glynllifon, Menai Site Parc Menai - Bangor, Llangefni and Caernarfon

What's different in the new policy?

The Local Authority provides discretionary transport beyond statutory school age where eligible learners living in Gwynedd who:

- live 3 miles or more from the nearest suitable school or post-16 college that provides the course
- are studying full-time and are younger than 19 years of age on 1 September in the academic year in which the course is taken

Transport will be provided to the catchment area / nearest suitable secondary school designated by the Authority to serve the learners' home address only, or in the case of Grŵp Llandrillo Menai full-time courses, to the nearest college site providing the course.

E1.

What is your opinion on continuing to provide free transport to post-16 learners?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- No opinion

E2.

What is your opinion on providing free transport only to the catchment / nearest suitable school that offers the course?

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

No opinion

E3.

What is your opinion on only providing free transport to the nearest college offering the course?

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

No opinion

E4. Comments

Section F: Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Medical Conditions

What's in the current policy?

We will provide free transport to learners who have an Individual Development Plan, and sometimes learners who have a medical condition or disability.

What's different in the new policy?

We will continue to provide free transport to learners with an Individual Development Plan, and sometimes learners who have a medical condition or disability, but will:

- review ALN requests each year and explore the possibility of travelling independently as they grow and develop
- promote and work towards independent travel among all ALN learners

F1.

What is your opinion on reviewing ALN applications each year to see if the learners can travel independently as they grow and develop?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- No opinion

F2.

What is your opinion on promoting and working towards independent travel among all learners?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- No opinion

F3. Comments

Section G: Sustainable Travel Modes

What's in the current policy?

There is no reference to sustainable travel modes in the current policy.

What's in the new policy?

The council will promote active travel to school and college, by walking and cycling and other sustainable ways. This will improve health and fitness and reduce damage to the environment and is a green way to travel.

G1.

What is your opinion on promoting and working towards green and healthy travel practices among all learners?

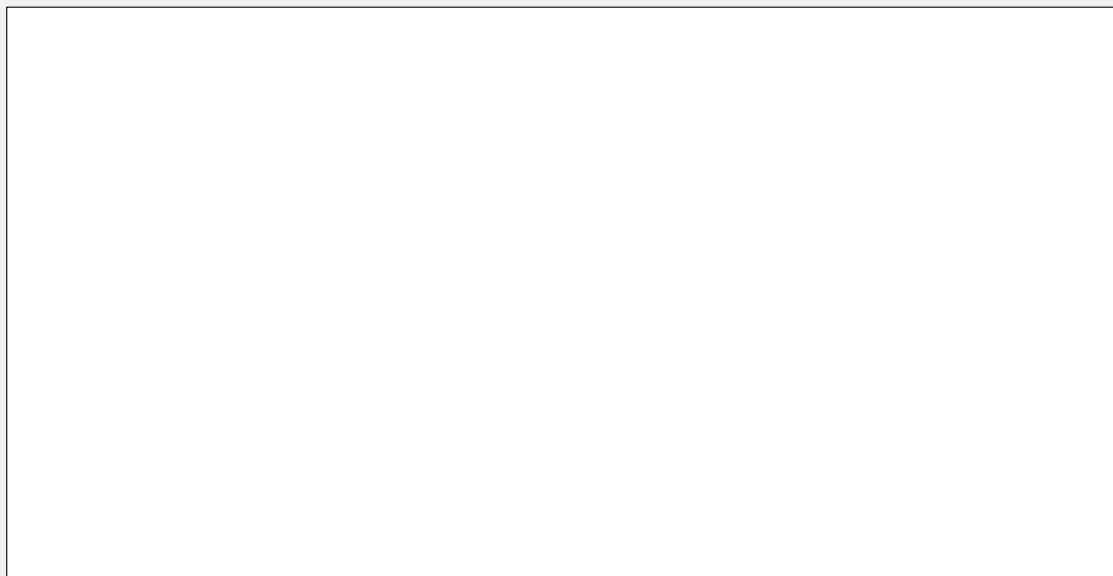
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- No opinion

G2. Comments

Section H: Further comments

H1.

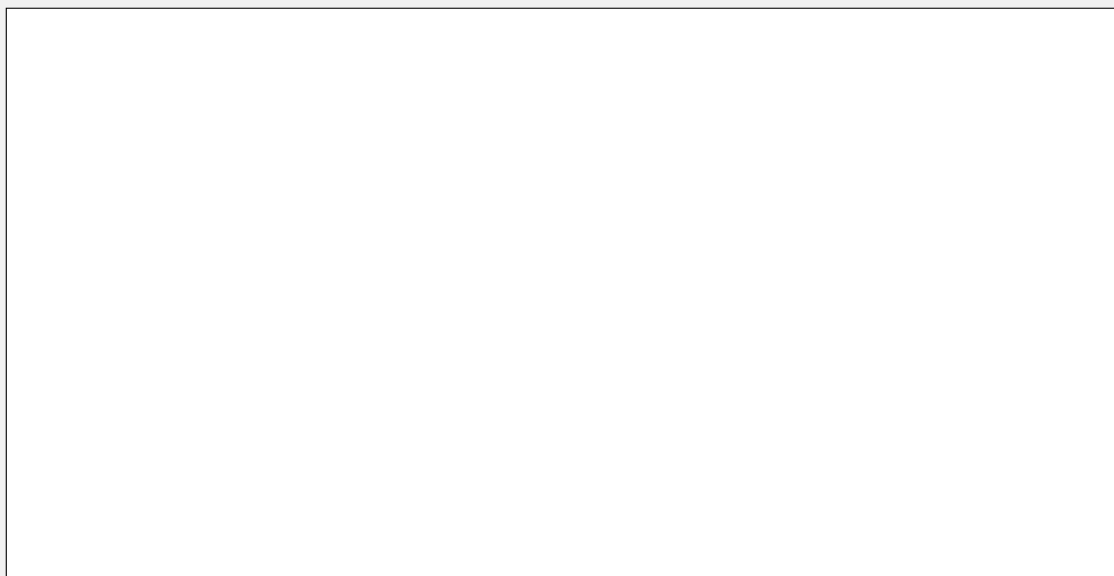
Do you have any comments on the changes to Cyngor Gwynedd's Education Transport Policy?



Section I: Effect on the Welsh Language

In line with the Welsh Language Standards, the Authority is required to consider the effects of policy decisions on the Welsh language.

I1. In your opinion, what effects would this policy have on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English?



I2. In your opinion, how could the policy be created or adapted to ensure that it has positive effects, or more positive effects, on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language, and on ensuring that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than English?

I3. In your opinion, would it be possible to formulate or modify the policy to ensure that it does not have adverse effects, or has less adverse effects on opportunities for people to use Welsh, and on not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English?

Section J: The effect on people facing socio-economic disadvantage

J1.

What effect would this policy have on people facing socio-economic disadvantage?

Socio-economic disadvantage means poverty of any kind - financial poverty, digital poverty, living far from services and so on.

Section K: About you

Answering the following questions will help us ensure we have collected the views of a variety of people and given everyone from all backgrounds a chance to take part. You do not have to answer them.

Any information you provide is strictly confidential. We will not be able to identify you.

The information will only be used for statistical analysis.

If you do not wish to answer the following questions, this is the end of the questionnaire.

K1.

Sex

Man / Male

Woman / Female

I identify in a different way

I prefer not to say

K2.

Note your age group

15 years old or younger

16 - 24 years old

25 - 34 years old

35 - 44 years old

45 - 54 years old

55 - 64 years old

65 - 74 years old

75 - 84 years old

85 + years old

I prefer not to say

K3.

How would you describe your skills in Welsh?

Speak, read and write fluently

Speak, read and write, but not very confidently

Speak, read and write – I'm learning

Speak, but can't read or write

Can't speak or understand Welsh

I prefer not to say

Other

Other

K4.

Nationality or national identity?

Welsh

English

Scottish

Northern Irish

British

I prefer not to say

Other

Other

K5.

What is your race?

- White
- Black / African / Caribbean
- Asian
- Gypsy / Irish Traveller
- Mixed / several ethnic groups
- I prefer not to say
- Other

Other

K6.

What is your religion?

- No religion
- Christian
- Muslim
- Buddhist
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Sikh
- I prefer not to say
- Other

Other

K7.

Which of these best describes you?

(You do not need to answer this question if you are under 16)

Heterosexual / Straight

Gay man

Gay woman / lesbian

Bisexual

I prefer not to say

Other

Other

K8.

Has your gender identification changed from that assigned to you at birth? (for example are you trans or transgender etc)

(You do not need to answer this question if you are under 16 years old)

Yes

No

I prefer not to say

K9.

Section 6 (1) of the Equality Act 2010 states that a person is disabled if:

a. The person has a physical or mental impairment,

b. and the impairment has a substantial and long-term effect on the person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Using this definition, do you consider yourself a disabled person?

Yes

No

I prefer not to say

Thank you for your response

RESPONSE TO COMMENTS FROM THE ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Theme: Vacant Seats Scheme

REF.	COMMENTS	THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE
1.1	"A waste of money having vacant seats."	The Council notes the comment.
1.2	"Children should only get a seat if they live away from school but it should be cheap."	<p>The Council notes the comment.</p> <p>Where learners are eligible for free transport, transport will be provided in accordance with the relevant criteria.</p> <p>The Vacant Seats Scheme cannot be implemented in its current form, as any change to education transport provision is required to be consulted and published before 1 October in the year before the change comes into force. This means that the Council commits to providing a vacant seat for an extended period, without the flexibility to terminate the arrangement if a situation arises where a vacant seat would no longer be available, resulting in higher costs for the Council.</p> <p>If the decision to abolish the Vacant Seats Scheme was implemented, families would be required to make alternative arrangements to transport their children to school from 1 September 2027.</p> <p>An Equality and Well-being Impact Assessment was undertaken, which formed part of the consultation documentation on the Draft Education Transport Policy. Following consideration of the comments received, the assessment has been updated.</p>
1.3	"Some parents like me, who have become incapable of driving, need to take their children to school when they live further away."	<p>The Council notes the comment.</p> <p>Where learners are eligible for free transport, transport will be provided in accordance with the relevant criteria.</p>

1.4	"Our child benefits enormously from the vacant seats scheme. It teaches responsibility and gives our son independence. As parents, it allows us to continue working and avoid care costs or missing work to drop-off to and pick-up from school. It also reduces the compulsion of relying on grandparents for more than just supervision."	The Council notes the comment. Where learners are eligible for free transport, transport will be provided in accordance with the relevant criteria. The Vacant Seats Scheme cannot be implemented in its current form, as any change to education transport provision is required to be consulted and published before 1 October in the year before the change comes into force. This means that the Council commits to providing a vacant seat for an extended period, without the flexibility to terminate the arrangement if a situation arises where a vacant seat would no longer be available, resulting in higher costs for the Council.
1.5	"My daughter, for example, goes to a nearby school (to which all children from the village go), and she has to pay for a vacant seat, on a bus that passes the house. It's completely unacceptable and unjust."	
1.6	"If we get rid of it, we'll be supportive of a gradual process of abolishing it so that pupils who are used to receiving the service don't lose it overnight."	
1.7	"As a parent who lives on the border of the County (in Denbighshire) and has been paying for my children to get a taxi to their school, I'm very disappointed with the decision. Although there is a closer primary school in Denbighshire, the school the children attend is the catchment school for the village and our neighbours (who are on the other side of the border). The village school was closed by the Council so the children of the village now go to the nearest school in Gwynedd."	If the decision to abolish the Vacant Seats Scheme was implemented, families would be required to make alternative arrangements to transport their children to school from 1 September 2027. However, the Council recognises that there are some impacts and barriers involved in ending a scheme. An Equality and Well-being Impact Assessment was undertaken, which formed part of the consultation documentation on the Draft Education Transport Policy. Following consideration of the comments received, the assessment has been updated.
1.8	"Many of our children/families have benefited from the vacant seats scheme but have always given up that seat when free travel was necessary for children who are within the allotted distance. So, we don't entirely agree with removing this from the policy."	
1.9	"Very confusing and I don't understand what is demanded by this; children living outside the area should receive the free taxi due to different aspects that met the criteria."	

1.10	"We're paying for the vacant seats scheme. Our home is 2.7 miles from the nearest secondary school, but the road is not suitable for walking every morning and night."	<p>The Council notes the comment.</p> <p>Where learners are eligible for free transport, transport will be provided in accordance with the relevant criteria.</p> <p>The Vacant Seats Scheme cannot be implemented in its current form, as any change to education transport provision is required to be consulted and published before 1 October in the year before the change comes into force. This means that the Council commits to providing a vacant seat for an extended period, without the flexibility to terminate the arrangement if a situation arises where a vacant seat would no longer be available, resulting in higher costs for the Council.</p> <p>If the decision to abolish the Vacant Seats Scheme was implemented, families would be required to make alternative arrangements to transport their children to school from 1 September 2027.</p> <p>The Education Department could be contacted to discuss unique circumstances, or to obtain clarity on eligibility for transport.</p> <p>The Council recognises that there are some impacts and barriers involved in ending a scheme. An Equality and Well-being Impact Assessment was undertaken, which formed part of the consultation documentation on the Draft Education Transport Policy. Following consideration of the comments received, the assessment has been updated.</p>
1.11	"Lack of clarity over the change and consideration of how it will affect pupils and families. If a seat is available, then isn't it odd that it can't be used?"	<p>The Council notes the comment.</p>
1.12	"It doesn't make sense not to try to fill the vacant seats in the taxi and reduce the need for parents to use vehicles unnecessarily in terms of the impact on the environment."	<p>Where learners are eligible for free transport, transport will be provided in accordance with the relevant criteria.</p>

1.13	"Why not fill the vacant seats? This is a stupid change or has something been missed?"	The Vacant Seats Scheme cannot be implemented in its current form, as any change to education transport provision is required to be consulted and published before 1 October in the year before the change comes into force. This means that the Council commits to providing a vacant seat for an extended period, without the flexibility to terminate the arrangement if a situation arises where a vacant seat would no longer be available, resulting in higher costs for the Council.
1.14	"Why unnecessarily promote more use of cars on the road?"	
1.15	"I don't agree with paying for vacant seats, if the bus passes by half empty then it should be filled - I pay for 3 vacant seats here and the bus passes by anyway - it doesn't make sense."	<p>The Council recognises that abolishing the Vacant Seats Scheme as a result of the requirements to consult and publish any change to the provision of education transport before 1 October in the year preceding the change comes into force may result in the possibility of vacant seats on education transport, but the Council will not be able to offer them for a fee to learners who are not eligible for free transport in accordance with the relevant criteria.</p> <p>If the decision to abolish the Vacant Seats Scheme was implemented, families would be required to make alternative arrangements to transport their children to school from 1 September 2027.</p> <p>However, the Council recognises that there are some impacts and barriers involved in ending a scheme. An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken, which formed part of the consultation documentation on the Draft Education Transport Policy. Following consideration of the comments received, the assessment has been updated.</p>
1.16	"This can affect rural school numbers especially where parents don't have a car to bring nursery pupils to school."	<p>The Council notes the consultee's concerns about potential impacts on the county's rural school numbers.</p> <p>Where learners are eligible for free transport, transport will be provided in accordance with the relevant criteria.</p>

		<p>The Vacant Seats Scheme cannot be implemented in its current form, as any change to education transport provision is required to be consulted and published before 1 October in the year before the change comes into force. This means that the Council commits to providing a vacant seat for an extended period, without the flexibility to terminate the arrangement if a situation arises where a vacant seat would no longer be available, resulting in higher costs for the Council.</p> <p>If the decision to abolish the Vacant Seats Scheme was implemented, families would be required to make alternative arrangements to transport their children to school from 1 September 2027.</p> <p>An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken, which formed part of the consultation documentation on the Draft Education Transport Policy. Following consideration of the comments received, the assessment has been updated.</p>
1.17	<p>"The Education Authority is losing revenue by not letting parents 'buy' vacant seats in buses/taxis.</p> <p>The vacant seats offer can help those without cars who live near the border to avoid paying."</p>	<p>The Council notes the comments.</p> <p>Where learners are eligible for free transport, transport will be provided in accordance with the relevant criteria.</p> <p>The Vacant Seats Scheme cannot be implemented in its current form, as any change to education transport provision is required to be consulted and published before 1 October in the year before the change comes into force. This means that the Council commits to providing a vacant seat for an extended period, without the flexibility to terminate the arrangement if a situation arises where a vacant seat would no longer be available, resulting in higher costs for the Council.</p> <p>In addition, the Council recognises that the end of the Vacant Seats Scheme will result in a slight reduction in revenue income.</p>

		<p>If the decision to abolish the Vacant Seats Scheme was implemented, families would be required to make alternative arrangements to transport their children to school from 1 September 2027.</p> <p>An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken, which formed part of the consultation documentation on the Draft Education Transport Policy. Following consideration of the comments received, the assessment has been updated.</p>
1.18	"Didn't know that this was possible anyway."	The Council notes the comment.
1.19	"Why unnecessarily promote more use of cars on the road?"	<p>The Council notes the comment.</p> <p>Where learners are eligible for free transport, transport will be provided in accordance with the relevant criteria.</p> <p>The Vacant Seats Scheme cannot be implemented in its current form, as any change to education transport provision is required to be consulted and published before 1 October in the year before the change comes into force. This means that the Council commits to providing a vacant seat for an extended period, without the flexibility to terminate the arrangement if a situation arises where a vacant seat would no longer be available, resulting in higher costs for the Council.</p> <p>The Council recognises that abolishing the Vacant Seats Scheme could lead to an increase in the number of vehicles transporting learners to school. However, the numbers taking advantage of the Vacant Seats Scheme are not high, so a significant impact on the number of vehicles travelling to school is not foreseen.</p> <p>An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken, which formed part of the consultation documentation on the Draft Education Transport</p>

		Policy. Following consideration of the comments received, the assessment has been updated.
1.20	"I don't agree with paying for vacant seats, if the bus passes by half empty then it should be filled - I pay for 3 vacant seats here and the bus passes by anyway - it doesn't make sense."	<p>The Council notes the comment.</p> <p>The Vacant Seats Scheme cannot be implemented in its current form, as any change to education transport provision is required to be consulted and published before 1 October in the year before the change comes into force. This means that the Council commits to providing a vacant seat for an extended period, without the flexibility to terminate the arrangement if a situation arises where a vacant seat would no longer be available, resulting in higher costs for the Council.</p> <p>The Council recognises that abolishing the Vacant Seats Scheme as a result of the requirements to consult and publish any change to the provision of education transport before 1 October in the year preceding the change comes into force may result in the possibility of vacant seats on education transport, but the Council will not be able to offer them for a fee to learners who are not eligible for free transport in accordance with the relevant criteria.</p> <p>If the decision to abolish the Vacant Seats Scheme was implemented, families would be required to make alternative arrangements to transport their children to school from 1 September 2027. This means families would get 11 months' notice to enable families to make alternative arrangements to transport their children to school.</p> <p>An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken, which formed part of the consultation documentation on the Draft Education Transport Policy. Following consideration of the comments received, the assessment has been updated.</p>
1.21	"I see no reason to scrap the Vacant Seats Scheme as this is always an ongoing decision and there is no cost to the Council and it does not benefit children who are eligible to	The Council notes the consultee's concerns about potential impacts on the county's rural school numbers.

	<p>travel on a free school bus (as they are always given priority in any way). It supports children who may be outside the selection area (in the case of my family, we are 1.5 km outside the selection area). Of course, it's important to set rules for who can use this and to avoid any misuse – ensuring there is no extra vehicle travel to get to and from near buses for example. But there are families who use this to avoid unnecessary travel into the busy area around the schools in Bangor, and that is the case with my family. At the moment I'm able to drop my daughter off at the bus stop while I drop my son off at his primary school which is right in front of the school and it's a similar arrangement for picking him up - so there is no extra vehicle use and I avoid excessive use of the car within Bangor City. In fact, sometimes we are able to cycle to my child's primary school, weather permitting. I'm also happy to pay the £190 a year for this. I have always understood that this is voluntary – but if there are vacant seats on the bus, the use of these seats is certainly less wasteful and more compatible with the Council's environmental and green transport policies. This reduction in car use is also in line with the Well-being of Future Generations Act, which Cyngor Gwynedd must comply with – it reduces unnecessary car travel, boosts the use of public transport, improves air quality around Bangor's schools. It makes no sense losing this extra income to the Council or reducing green travel options while also worsening air quality, road safety and congestion in Bangor if vacant seats are available, it's important to use them."</p>	<p>Where learners are eligible for free transport, transport will be provided in accordance with the relevant criteria.</p> <p>The Vacant Seats Scheme cannot be implemented in its current form, as any change to education transport provision is required to be consulted and published before 1 October in the year before the change comes into force. This means that the Council commits to providing a vacant seat for an extended period, without the flexibility to terminate the arrangement if a situation arises where a vacant seat would no longer be available, resulting in higher costs for the Council.</p> <p>The Council recognises that abolishing the Vacant Seats Scheme as a result of the requirements to consult and publish any change to the provision of education transport before 1 October in the year preceding the change comes into force may result in the possibility of vacant seats on education transport, but the Council will not be able to offer them for a fee to learners who are not eligible for free transport in accordance with the relevant criteria.</p> <p>However, the need to consult and publish any change to the provision of education transport before 1 October in the year before the change comes into force means that there will be a possibility of vacant seats on education transport, but the Council will not be able to offer them for a fee to learners who are not eligible for free transport in accordance with the relevant criteria.</p> <p>If the decision to abolish the Vacant Seats Scheme was implemented, families would be required to make alternative arrangements to transport their children to school from 1 September 2027. This means families would get 11 months' notice to enable families to make alternative arrangements to transport their children to school.</p>
1.22	<p>"The inclusion of a vacant seats scheme is not a concern, as it could further limit learners' access to education, particularly in rural areas. Many learners in Gwynedd are highly dependent on organised transport due to limited</p>	

<p>public options. Eliminating flexibility in risky transport arrangements, minimal access to favourable or suitable hubs, more complex and longer journeys, can negatively impact attendance, well-being, and consultation.</p> <p>A vacant seats scheme can help to: Use existing capacity effectively Provide practical access for learners who would otherwise have been excluded Support equitable access to education regardless of location</p> <p>Not including such a scheme can unexpectedly limit opportunities, particularly for rural learners and those who need flexibility to access the most suitable provision. The lack of a vacant seats scheme risks reducing accessibility and increasing inequality in access to further education, and should be seen again as part of a more flexible mode of transport."</p>

An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken, which formed part of the consultation documentation on the Draft Education Transport Policy. Following consideration of the comments received, the assessment has been updated.

2. FAITH SCHOOLS

REF.	COMMENTS	THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE
2.1	"No further than 5 miles makes it very challenging I suppose?"	<p>The Council notes the comment.</p> <p>Where learners are eligible for free transport, transport will be provided in accordance with the relevant criteria.</p> <p>It is recognised that faith schools serve a wider area than the usual catchment area of a school, and the provision of transport of up to 5 miles for learners attending faith schools reflects this, compared to</p>
2.2	"...Only if it's consistent with all the other schools. Faith should not give advantage or disadvantage."	
2.3	"I don't agree with faith schools in our secular times. Therefore, Catholics should not be treated differently to any other religion or atheist."	
2.4	"If the new policy changes to a minimum of 2 miles and a maximum of 5 miles, then we potentially have 4 children	

	(maybe more) who live in Bethesda and they may not be eligible for this free transport that they currently have. I think we're the closest Catholic School to Bethesda."	the statutory requirements to provide transport of up to 2 miles for primary schools and 3 miles for secondary schools in general.
2.5	"I agree that children should be given free transport to go to a religious school. There are few schools available in Gwynedd that provide a religious school and it is important to keep that alive as what will happen otherwise is that children will lose their faith and religious values. Now, what I don't agree with is that all children should have the right whether they are more than 5 miles away from the religious school closest to them, and maybe the distance to travel for children who live closer should be increased as 2 miles, as people who live in Bangor, for example, they can be seen going to Our Lady's School without the Council providing free buses, but people living in Bethesda, for example, should be allowed to travel further by bus as well."	An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken, which formed part of the consultation documentation on the Draft Education Transport Policy. Following consideration of the comments received, the assessment has been updated.
2.6	"As a Catholic school, Governors and the Diocese would be very concerned about the 5 mile rule as we and Caernarfon are the closest Catholic faith schools in Gwynedd. The next Catholic school is in Llandudno. The 2 mile rule is fair and it currently works. I know that if the taxi was taken away from my child he could not carry on attending his current school as it's too far from me and my work so I could not drop him off and collect him in time resulting in a loss of his faith during the week and the enrichment of my child's faith. I would have to make the choice of moving him to another school or reducing my working hours as a lone parent, relying more on benefits that I don't want to do as I'm currently working full-time to provide for my children; this would put a strain on us financially and put us further in poverty and cause more people to claim more benefits, so ultimately there would be no savings for	

	the government; yes, they will save the taxi payment that is spent but more benefits will need to be claimed."	
2.7	"Learners, especially in rural areas, are very dependent on organised transport; restrictive traffic policies can restrict access to suitable provision, increase the complexity of journeys and negatively impact participation. The provision of free transport during defined distances (2-5 miles) for religious schools is reasonable in principle, as it supports parental and learner choice and helps to ensure equitable access to selected education settings, however, it should be consistently applied alongside wider traffic policies and other learners (e.g. IT learners or those in rural areas who get access to specialist provision) should not be affected. The principle supports equitable access and choice, but it must be balanced to ensure equity across all groups and learner settings."	<p>The Council notes the consultee's concerns about the eligibility of travel to school.</p> <p>Where learners are eligible for free transport, transport will be provided in accordance with the relevant criteria.</p> <p>It is recognised that faith schools serve a wider area than the usual catchment area of a school, and the provision of transport of up to 5 miles for learners attending faith schools reflects this, compared to the statutory requirements to provide transport of up to 2 miles for primary schools and 3 miles for secondary schools in general.</p> <p>Eligibility for transport is considered through a panel for learners accessing specialist provision such as a Special School, ALN Unit, or Referral Unit.</p> <p>An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken, which formed part of the consultation documentation on the Draft Education Transport Policy. Following consideration of the comments received, the assessment has been updated.</p>

3. DUAL RESIDENCES

REF.	COMMENTS	THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE
3.1	"There are so many secondary schools further than 5 miles from the school. Also, some learners divide their time quite equally between parents - choosing a main address is unfair."	<p>The Council notes the consultee's concerns about learner patterns and the division of their time between two households.</p> <p>Where learners are eligible for free transport, transport will be provided in accordance with the relevant criteria.</p>
	In addition, the policy would benefit from greater clarity in terms of flexibility and discretionary arrangements and	

	<p>consideration of complex family circumstances (e.g. dual residence). Ensure that initiatives such as independent travel and green travel are appropriately and realistically funded.</p>	<p>It is recognised that the proposal to provide transport of up to 5 miles in dual residence situations reflects the Council's desire to facilitate transport for learners who divide their time between households as the proposal goes beyond the statutory requirements to provide transport for eligible learners of up to 2 miles for primary schools and 3 miles for secondary schools in general.</p> <p>An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken, which formed part of the consultation documentation on the Draft Education Transport Policy. Following consideration of the comments received, the assessment has been updated.</p>
3.2	<p>"Again, no excessive advantage should be given to those children/parents over others."</p>	<p>The Council notes the comment.</p>
3.3	<p>"While providing transport from a primary address offers administrative clarity, it does not fully reflect the reality of modern family arrangements. Many families have complex, abnormal living situations, where young people regularly live across two households. This is particularly common in blended parenting arrangements, and both households are an important and prominent part of the learner's life.</p> <p>It can restrict transport to the main address only: Creates practical barriers to attendance on days when the learner is staying at their second home Leads to longer or more complex journeys, especially in rural areas Increases negative impact on attendance, punctuality and well-being Given the importance of ensuring equitable access to education, it is essential that the policy recognises and adapts to these diverse family circumstances.</p>	<p>The Council notes the consultee's concerns about learner patterns and the division of their time between two households.</p> <p>Where learners are eligible for free transport, transport will be provided in accordance with the relevant criteria.</p> <p>It is recognised that the proposal to provide transport of up to 5 miles in dual residence situations reflects the Council's desire to facilitate transport for learners who divide their time between households as the proposal goes beyond the statutory requirements to provide transport for eligible learners of up to 2 miles for primary schools and 3 miles for secondary schools in general.</p> <p>While transport provision can facilitate learners' attendance at school, it is a parent's responsibility to ensure their children's attendance at school.</p>

	In general, while the approach simplifies administration, greater flexibility should be considered to support learners with two residences and to avoid unintended disadvantage."	An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken, which formed part of the consultation documentation on the Draft Education Transport Policy. Following consideration of the comments received, the assessment has been updated.
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4. POST-16 PROVISION

REF.	COMMENTS	THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE
4.1	"Freedom of choice is important for everyone."	<p>The Council notes the consultee's wishes to be able to choose a post-16 course based on subject and location, and the Council is supportive of learners choosing a post-16 course that is suitable for them.</p> <p>Nevertheless, the criteria of the Draft Education Transport Policy note that free transport will be provided to the nearest school or college providing the course, and this is consistent with the criteria for learners of statutory education age.</p> <p>The Welsh Government has the My Travel Pass scheme which facilitates and enables young people aged 16-21 years to travel on several journeys for £1 per day, which could apply to learners who choose an out-of-catchment school or college.</p> <p>An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken, which was part of the consultation documentation on the draft Education Transport Policy. Following consideration of the consultee's comments, the assessment has been updated.</p>
4.2	"As not all schools and sites are able to offer courses or subjects it is important to enable pupils to access that course/subject. We need to ensure that these pupils have the same opportunities as everyone else in Wales and beyond."	
4.3	"Distance should not be a barrier to pursuing the student's course of choice."	
4.4	<p>"While the intention to simplify and target transport provision is understood, these suggestions risk creating unexpected barriers for learners. Access to post-16 education should be based not only on proximity, but also on the suitability of the course, the quality of provision, and the individual needs of the learner.</p> <p>A strict approach of "only the nearest provider" does not reflect the reality of travel in rural areas, where journeys can be longer, less direct, and more complex. It can also limit learner choice, limit opportunities for progress, and affect attendance and well-being.</p>	

	To ensure equitable and inclusive access to education, transport policy should retain some flexibility, enabling learners to attend the most suitable provision rather than just being limited to distance."	
4.5	<p>One key concern is the impact on learners aged 19 and over, who would no longer be eligible for supported transport. For many, especially those in rural areas, access to reliable transport is essential to participate in further education. Removing this support risks excluding learners from education, increasing lack of commitment, and negatively impacting future employment opportunities.</p> <p>More broadly, restricting transport to the nearest provider alone does not reflect the reality of travel in Gwynedd. In practice, the nearest provider is not always more accessible or appropriate, and can lead to: Longer and more complex journeys. An increase in trust on a number of transport links. Negative impact on attendance and mental health.</p> <p>There is also a risk that the policy may limit learner choice and access to the most appropriate provision, especially where courses, support, or specialities vary across campuses. Learners in rural communities are likely to be disproportionately affected, as they rely more on organised transport and have fewer alternatives.</p>	

5. ALN AND INDEPENDENT TRAVEL

REF.	COMMENTS	THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE
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5.1	<p>"Promoting independence is great but not at the expense of well-being and safety and the new policy should not put undue pressure on young people to travel alone when they are unable to do so safely."</p>	<p>The Council notes the consultee's concerns about safe and independent travel.</p> <p>An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken, which was part of the consultation documentation on the draft Education Transport Policy. Following consideration of the consultee's comments, the assessment has been updated.</p>
5.2	<p>"I don't want anyone to use 're-assessment' as an opportunity to end a service for children. I think very strongly that the voices of parents and children should be listened to here."</p>	<p>The Council notes the comment about the importance of listening to the voice of the parent and child.</p> <p>Parents were given the opportunity to respond to the Draft Education Transport Policy by means of an online questionnaire, and a number of consultation sessions were held with children and young people to encourage the child's voice.</p> <p>An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken, which was part of the consultation documentation on the draft Education Transport Policy. Following consideration of the consultee's comments, the assessment has been updated.</p>
5.3	<p>"I hope saving money is not at the heart of this. While I would like to see encouragement to travel independently, there should be no enforcement of this – it's a very big step for anyone with ALN."</p>	<p>The Council notes the comments of the consultee.</p> <p>Appropriate training and support will be provided to facilitate and enable suitable learners to travel independently.</p> <p>An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken, which was part of the consultation documentation on the draft Education Transport Policy. Following consideration of the consultee's comments, the assessment has been updated.</p>
5.4	<p>"Depending on the child's condition and the risks involved and who will be expected to do this, it's likely to be parents who need to work will have additional pressure on working-class families."</p>	<p>The Council notes the comments.</p>

5.5	<p>"Both approaches are strongly supported as they promote independence, personal development, and better longer-term outcomes for learners. However, this must be supported by proper funding, planning, and specialist support to ensure that it is safe and achievable for all individuals.</p> <p>Independent travel should be offered with support, not an expectation set too quickly. Learners with ALN in particular may need tailored programmes, travel training, and ongoing support to build confidence and ability over time.</p> <p>Without adequate investment, there is a risk that learners can be expected to travel independently before they are ready, which could affect their safety, well-being, and ability to participate in education. Therefore, a balanced approach is essential, one that promotes independence while ensuring learners are fully supported through the process."</p>	<p>The Council notes the consultee's concerns about the costs of safe and independent travel.</p> <p>Appropriate training and support will be provided to facilitate and enable suitable learners to travel independently.</p> <p>Parents were given the opportunity to respond to the Draft Education Transport Policy by means of an online questionnaire, and a number of consultation sessions were held with children and young people to encourage the child's voice.</p> <p>An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken, which was part of the consultation documentation on the draft Education Transport Policy. Following consideration of the consultee's comments, the assessment has been updated.</p>
5.6	<p>"Too many of them get a CPD – do all of these need this extra care from the Council?"</p>	<p>The Council notes the comment.</p>

6. ACTIVE TRAVEL

REF.	COMMENTS	THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE
6.1	"Very often, it's necessary to transport large equipment and files back and forth, also the North Wales area is very broad and it's not practical in terms of weather and distance to expect people to use a bike/walk. Another point is that public transport is not always reliable."	<p>The Council notes the consultee's comments about the reliability of public transport and concerns about the geographical nature and weather of the rural area.</p> <p>Should the proposal be implemented, an assessment of the education transport and public transport provision would have to be carried out to ensure that transport timetables are suitable to enable learners to arrive at the location in the morning, and return in the afternoon.</p>
6.2	"A blanket policy should not be adopted. Some roads are unsafe to walk/cycle on."	<p>The Council notes the concerns of the consultee about the safety of some roads in relation to walking and cycling.</p> <p>The Council assesses the safety and suitability of travel routes, and if a route is deemed unsuitable for walking to school, then transport will be provided.</p>
6.3	"There is a need to ensure that the roads are safe to enable this; very often, in rural Gwynedd hardly a single car can travel safely, let alone encourage pedestrians and cyclists."	
6.4	"If you're asking children to walk or cycle a lot of miles in the winter and on unsound sections of the roads, that's not right. Children can get healthy in a lot of other ways and it depends on parents."	
6.5	"Vague"	The Council notes the comment.
6.6	"totally agree with this plan. Too many children are too dependent on cars to come to school instead of walking."	The Council notes the comment.
6.7	"I'm much more interested in transport that is cost-efficient and I've got no interest in sustainable (unless it's the cheapest). The Council is not made of money and should focus on the cheapest way possible rather than meeting fantasy green ideas."	<p>The Council notes the comment.</p> <p>An Equality and Well-being Impact Assessment was undertaken, which formed part of the consultation documentation on the draft</p>

		Education Transport Policy. Following consideration of the consultee's comments, the assessment has been updated.
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6. GENERAL COMMENTS

REF.	COMMENTS	THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE
6.1	<p>"No child should travel on public transport for travel to school and home at the end of the day. All children should be able to travel safely without having to stand. No child should have to wait for public transport that does not transport them to/from school. What about having to carry cooking utensils or PE equipment? No family should have to ensure safe transport for their children - what about the impact of this (how many cars have to travel to school instead of one bus - what is the impact of this on our environment) What about families without cars?"</p>	<p>The Council notes the concerns of the consultee about learners travelling by public transport to their educational setting, and on the impacts of this on the environment.</p> <p>Where learners are eligible for free transport, transport will be provided in accordance with the relevant criteria.</p> <p>Transport is provided either in the form of a public bus, a designated school bus, a taxi or in some cases a travel allowance is offered to parents/guardians to provide the transport.</p> <p>However, the Council recognises that there are some challenges and barriers associated with learners travelling by public transport to access education.</p>
6.2	<p>"Every child should have the right to travel safely to and from school on transport dedicated to school children – no members of the public."</p>	<p>An Equality and Well-being Impact Assessment was undertaken, which formed part of the consultation documentation on the Draft Education Transport Policy. Following consideration of the comments received, the assessment has been updated.</p>
6.3	<p>"In rural areas of Gwynedd, public transport is unreliable or not within reasonable distance. Safe transport is paramount to ensure the attendance and punctuality of children and young people in education. The result of children and young people not being able to reach education settings easily is a lack of skills, low levels of</p>	<p>The Council notes the consultee's comments, and notes the concerns about the reliability of public transport in rural areas.</p> <p>Where learners are eligible for free transport, transport will be provided in accordance with the relevant criteria.</p>

	<p>education, less chance of success in jobs and getting good jobs in the future.</p> <p>One must be aware that some parents, especially in underprivileged areas, are unable to drive themselves and immediately put their children at a disadvantage, if the travel arrangements are not available."</p>	<p>Every effort is made to try to provide suitable education transport, with dedicated links to access a variety of sites.</p> <p>An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken, which formed part of the consultation documentation on the Draft Education Transport Policy. Following consideration of the comments received, the assessment has been updated.</p>
6.4	<p>"All learners should have free transport to the educational facility of their choice. If Cyngor Gwynedd wants young people to continue in education then they need to support those learners to get to the facilities considering that many learners live in rural communities and cannot fund transport themselves."</p>	<p>The Council notes the consultee's comments and notes the concerns about the reliability of public transport in rural areas.</p> <p>Where learners are eligible for free transport, transport will be provided in accordance with the relevant criteria.</p>
6.5	<p>"The government wants parents to work and provide for their family while trying to raise a family; parents cannot work and take children back and forth as some jobs do not include these family hours and the lack of public transport in rural areas makes it impossible for children to complete these courses or attend school. If their services were removed, that would increase the number of parents on benefits as they want to put their children first and would affect single parents who want to work and contribute to the world's income. As a single parent, I couldn't continue to work as much without the taxi, which would result in me reducing my working hours and relying further on benefits, which is not something I wish but I would have no choice."</p>	<p>Every effort is made to try to provide suitable education transport, with dedicated links to access a variety of sites.</p> <p>An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken, which formed part of the consultation documentation on the Draft Education Transport Policy. Following consideration of the comments received, the assessment has been updated.</p>
6.6	<p>"Transporting children to schools is expensive. Could school catchments be re-examined every 5 years and see if it is possible to change funding by changing catchment boundaries e.g. if there was a new housing estate - this would make this beneficial."</p>	<p>The Council notes the consultee's concerns about transport costs and reviewing school catchment boundaries.</p> <p>The Council notes the comment about the link between school catchment arrangements and the School Admissions Code, suggesting that a more dynamic approach to planning education provision is</p>

		<p>needed. Specifically, the response notes that reviewing catchment area boundaries regularly (e.g. every 5 years) in response to demographic changes such as new housing developments could help to ensure that school capacity and transport costs are managed more effectively.</p> <p>In terms of the School Admissions Code, this raises considerations about fairness and reasonable access to local schools, as catchment boundaries can influence who has priority access to school places</p> <p>An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken, which formed part of the consultation documentation on the Draft Education Transport Policy. Following consideration of the comments received, the assessment has been updated.</p>
6.7	"Such schools should be provided no matter how far the distance is over 5 miles if a child has to travel more due to the lack of these schools. If not, children will miss out or they should provide these types of schools in each area to prevent children from failing to get the right support, so more schools should be provided then."	<p>The Council notes the comment.</p>
6.8	"Make sure the Council is in line with the Well-being and Future Generations Act at all times."	<p>The Council notes the comment.</p> <p>An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken, which formed part of the consultation documentation on the Draft Education Transport Policy. Following consideration of the comments received, the assessment has been updated.</p>
6.9	"We recognise that Cyngor Gwynedd will need to review its Education Transport Policy to ensure that it remains efficient and sustainable. However, the proposed changes raise a	<p>The Council notes the concerns of the consultee about some of the changes in question in the Draft Education Transport Policy.</p>

	number of significant concerns about access, average, and learner participation.	An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken, which formed part of the consultation documentation on the Draft Education Transport Policy. Following consideration of the comments received, the assessment has been updated.
6.10	To summarise, while the intention to create a more efficient and targeted transport system is understood, the proposals risk creating barriers to education, reducing choice, and putting rural and vulnerable learners at a disadvantage. A more flexible and inclusive approach is needed to ensure that everyone can have realistic access to appropriate post-16 education."	

THE WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS

7. In your opinion, what effects would this policy have on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English?

Comments	The Council's Response
"Schools in Wales should by all means encourage children to speak Welsh it is only natural, but I would also encourage children to learn how to read and write in English as well."	The Council notes the comments of the consultee.
"It's unlikely to make much of a difference."	The Council notes the comments of the consultee.
"Transport has no effect on language."	The Council notes the comments of the consultee.
"You would be taking away transport facilities of both English speaking and Welsh speaking students. Neither would be discriminated against in this new policy as ALL learners would be discriminated against."	The Council notes the comments of the consultee. An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken, which formed part of the consultation documentation on the Draft Education Transport Policy.

	Following consideration of the comments received, the assessment has been updated.
"The Welsh language should not be an issue in that regard if every school implements a robust language policy."	
"No significant impact either way."	
"It would have a massive impact."	
"I am sick to death of Welsh language bully ideas. Schools should be about giving the students the best preparation possible for the modern world and that is education in English. English is a world language. Welsh is a ghetto language that restricts involvement in the real world."	
"While the policy is not intended to disadvantage the Welsh language, it may do so in practice unless sufficient flexibility is built in. It is important that transport arrangements continue to support equal access to Welsh-medium education and do not unintentionally treat the Welsh language less favourably than."	

8. In your opinion, how would it be possible to draw up or adapt the policy to ensure that it has positive impacts, or more positive impacts on opportunities for people to use Welsh, and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English.

Comments	The Council's Response
"Use a method that helps schools to understand that all pupils may not be able to speak Welsh depending on the pupils' background attending the schools."	The Council notes the comments of the consultee. An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken, which formed part of the consultation documentation on the Draft Education Transport
"It can't..."	

	Policy. Following consideration of the comments received, the assessment has been updated.
“Transporting students to an educational facility is going to have zero impact on the Welsh language.”	
“Where parents want to choose a faith school, this will be of more significance to them rather than the language.”	
“By making sure the Welsh Government keep up to date with the English.”	
“I am sick to death of Welsh language bully ideas. Schools should be about giving the students the best preparation possible for the modern world and that is education in English. English is a world language. Welsh is a ghetto language that restricts involvement in the real world.”	
“A more flexible approach that takes account of language preference as well as proximity will help ensure that learners can access Welsh-medium education and that the Welsh language is actively supported rather than inadvertently disadvantaged.”	

9. In your opinion, would it be possible to draw up or adapt the policy to ensure that it does not have detrimental impacts, or have less detrimental impacts on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English?

Comments	The Council's Response
"No comment - I don't see what impact ensuring safe and suitable transport for pupils in education in Gwynedd has on the Welsh language."	The Council notes the comments of the consultee.

<p>“It would have a massive detrimental effect on ALL students having access to further education putting an already poorly funded education system decades behind it's fellow contemporaries in other UK countries.”</p>	
<p>"Ensure that all taxi drivers speak Welsh with the passengers."</p>	<p>The Council notes the consultee's comments regarding the language skills of education transport drivers.</p>
<p>“I am sick to death of Welsh language bully ideas. Schools should be about giving the students the best preparation possible for the modern world and that is education in English. English is a world language. Welsh is a ghetto language that restricts involvement in the real world.”</p>	<p>The Council notes the comments of the consultee.</p> <p>An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken, which formed part of the consultation documentation on the Draft Education Transport Policy. Following consideration of the comments received, the assessment has been updated.</p>
<p>“Yes, it would be possible to formulate or adapt the policy to reduce or avoid adverse effects on the Welsh language.</p> <p>This could be achieved by introducing greater flexibility within the policy, ensuring that language preference is considered alongside distance when determining transport eligibility. In particular, learners should be able to access Welsh-medium or bilingual provision, even where this is not available at the nearest provider.</p> <p>The policy could also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include clear discretionary arrangements to support access to Welsh-medium education Recognise the importance of continuity in Welsh-language learning and peer groups Take into account the realities of rural travel, where accessing Welsh-medium provision may require travelling further 	

Without these considerations, there is a risk that a strict “nearest provider only” approach could unintentionally disadvantage Welsh compared to English.”	
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10. What do you think would be the impact of this policy on people facing socio-economic disadvantage? Socio-economic disadvantage means poverty of all kinds – financial poverty, digital poverty, living far from services etc.

Comments	The Council's Response
“Updating policies and providing help needs to be acknowledged to help everyone understand if anyone is struggling.”	The Council notes the comments of the consultee. An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken, which formed part of the consultation documentation on the Draft Education Transport Policy. Following consideration of the comments received, the assessment has been updated.
"Reducing transport for pupils who are in education in Gwynedd definitely puts a financial strain on our society regardless of their backgrounds."	
"Not providing transport would affect the learners who do not have access to a car at home, putting them at a disadvantage taking their education into account."	
“Those who would not be able to self-fund would not be able to attend educational facilities meaning less opportunities for those individuals. This would be very discriminatory to poorer students.”	
"Some families would not be able to afford to send pupils to school and therefore this would affect the education of the pupils."	
"It depends on the ability of these families to afford to pay – and, is there support available for those who are really unable to pay?"	
“Those children attending from Bethesda would be at a disadvantage and cause financial challenges for families.”	
“It would definitely impact me as a single parent working full-time, I would have to decrease my working hours and rely on	

benefits more, causing more poverty to myself and the government.”

“The proposed policy is likely to have a disproportionate negative impact on people facing socio-economic disadvantage, particularly those living in rural communities.

Learners experiencing financial hardship are more reliant on free or supported transport to access education. Restricting transport to the nearest provider, or removing eligibility (e.g. for those aged 19+), may:

Increase out-of-pocket travel costs.

Limit access to suitable courses or campuses.

Create additional barriers for those already facing financial pressure.

For learners in rural areas, where public transport is limited, the impact is greater. They may face:

Longer, more complex journeys.

Increased travel costs where free transport is not available.

Reduced ability to participate fully in education.

This could lead to:

Lower attendance and engagement.

Reduced progression opportunities.

Increased risk of learners becoming disengaged from education or training.

Overall, the policy risks widening existing inequalities, particularly for those experiencing financial hardship or geographic disadvantage. Without sufficient flexibility and support, it may create additional barriers to accessing education for the most vulnerable learners.”

"Not much."	The Council notes the comments of the consultee.
"No big impact."	
"No idea and I doubt many would. Try and focus on the main issue which is how this policy will work for the vast majority."	

COMMENTS AND RESPONSES FOLLOWING THE LEARNER CONSULTATION SESSIONS ON THE DRAFT EDUCATION TRANSPORT POLICY

Post-16 Education - Grŵp Llandrillo Menai

a) Comments of Learners at Parc Menai, Bangor Site

1. Theme: Course Location

REF.	COMMENT	THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE
1.1a	"Although the site closest to me provides the subject, it does not provide level 1 in that subject - how will the college deal with this as every course has admission requirements and will it be possible to study the course that suits the level of my qualifications?"	The Council notes the consultee's wishes to be able to choose a post-16 course based on subject and location, and the Council is supportive of learners who choose a post-16 course that is suitable for them.
1.2a	"Students from Dolgellau are happy to travel to Bangor for up to 2 hours a day because they genuinely want to study the course there because of the facilities and resources available, and they have committed and are committed to completing the course - it is very important to be able to complete the course of your choice, in terms of subject and location. "	<p>Nevertheless, the criteria of the Draft Education Transport Policy note that free transport will be provided to the nearest school or college providing the course, and this is consistent with the criteria for learners of statutory education age.</p> <p>The Welsh Government has the My Travel Pass scheme which facilitates and enables young people aged 16-21 years to travel on several journeys for £1 per day, which could apply to learners who choose an out-of-catchment school or college.</p>

2. Theme: Transportation costs

REF.	COMMENT	THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE
2.1a	"For students over 19 years old, many ESOL students at college are over 19 years old, and they will find it difficult to pay for college transport, if they will need to do so"	The Council notes the concerns of the consultee regarding transport costs.
2.2a	"The cost-of-living has increased and makes things more difficult for students aged over 19 years old, and it is also more difficult to find work to help pay for transport costs."	Where learners are eligible for free transport, transport will be provided in accordance with the relevant criteria.

2.3a	"...for some students who travel here, it would take more time and several years for them to achieve their Level 1, 2 and 3 qualifications. This is unfair on those who will possibly take more time to reach their potential."	However, the Council recognises that the lack of transport for learners aged over 19 years old is likely to affect some learners. The Welsh Government has the My Travel Pass scheme which facilitates and enables young people aged 16-21 years to travel on several journeys for £1 per day.
2.4a	"The cost of public transport can be expensive if there is a need to pay for return journeys every day, travel can be £7 each way; this would make it difficult for some students to be able to attend."	
2.5a	"How much will the costs be afterwards? Will they be the same as public bus service costs?"	An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken, which formed part of the consultation documentation on the Draft Education Transport Policy. After considering the comments received, the assessment has been updated.
2.6a	"EMA can help towards travelling costs but it does not leave much money left towards other costs."	The Council notes the concerns of the consultee regarding travelling costs in the context of learners who benefit from the Education Maintenance Allowance as a source of support. Where learners are eligible for free transport, transport will be provided in accordance with the relevant criteria. The Welsh Government has the My Travel Pass scheme which facilitates and enables young people aged 16-21 years to travel on several journeys for £1 per day. An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken, which formed part of the consultation documentation on the Draft Education Transport Policy. After considering the comments received, the assessment has been updated.

3. Theme: Age

REF.	COMMENT	THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE
3.1a	"For students over 19 years of age, many ESOL students at college are over 19 years old, and they will find it difficult to pay for college transport, if they would need to do so"	The Council notes the concerns of the consultee regarding a lack of transport for learners over 19 years old in the Draft Education Transport Policy.

3.2a	"The cost-of-living has increased and makes things more difficult for students aged over 19 years, and it is also more difficult to find work to help pay for transport costs."	Where learners are eligible for free transport, transport will be provided in accordance with the relevant criteria.
3.3a	"...for some students who travel here, it would take more time and several years for them to achieve their Level 1, 2 and 3 qualifications. This is unfair on those who will possibly take more time to reach their potential."	<p>However, the Council recognises that the lack of transport for learners aged over 19 years is likely to affect some learners.</p> <p>The Welsh Government has the My Travel Pass scheme which facilitates and enables young people aged 16-21 years to travel on several journeys for £1 per day.</p> <p>An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken, which formed part of the consultation documentation on the Draft Education Transport Policy. After considering the comments received, the assessment has been updated.</p>
3.4a	"College students are getting older and therefore, a higher percentage of students would not be eligible for transport."	<p>The Council notes the concerns of the consultee regarding a lack of transport for learners over 19 years old in the Draft Education Transport Policy.</p> <p>Where learners are eligible for free transport, transport will be provided in accordance with the relevant criteria.</p> <p>However, the Council recognises that the lack of transport for learners aged over 19 years old is likely to affect some learners.</p> <p>The Welsh Government has the My Travel Pass scheme which facilitates and enables young people aged 16-21 years to travel on several journeys for £1 per day.</p> <p>An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken, which formed part of the consultation documentation on the Draft Education Transport Policy. After considering the comments received, the assessment has been updated.</p>

b) Comments from Learners at Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor, Dolgellau Site

1. Theme: Course Location

REF.	COMMENT	THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE
1.1b	"...currently studying construction and living in the Ffestiniog area and enjoying the course. The same course is offered at the Rhos-on-Sea site, which is closer to my home...but I would like to stay in Dolgellau to study."	<p>The Council notes the consultee's wishes to be able to choose a post-16 course based on subject and location, and to continue with his studies in Dolgellau. The Council is supportive of learners choosing a post-16 course that is suitable for them.</p> <p>The criteria of the Draft Education Transport Policy notes that free transport is provided for learners to the closest school or college in Gwynedd and Anglesey that provides the course.</p>
1.2b	"left the local secondary school because of a lack of relationship with staff and no friends and attending the college instead, and so as the bus is running anyway, we should not be looking to pay for the transport as the college suits me now..."	<p>The Council notes the consultee's wishes to be able to choose a post-16 course based on subject and location, and the Council is supportive of learners who choose a post-16 course that is suitable for them.</p> <p>Nevertheless, the criteria of the Draft Education Transport Policy note that free transport will be provided to the nearest school or college providing the course, and this is consistent with the criteria for learners of statutory education age.</p>
1.3b	"I had to study A level in the college instead of the nearest school as at least two of the courses offered in school are presented in English only, so they aren't suitable for my linguistic needs."	<p>The Welsh Government has the My Travel Pass scheme which facilitates and enables young people aged 16-21 years to travel on several journeys for £1 per day, which could apply to learners who choose an out-of-catchment school or college.</p> <p>An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken, which formed part of the consultation documentation on the Draft Education Transport Policy. Following consideration of the comments received, the assessment has been updated.</p>
1.4b	"The provision or choice of subjects and columns at the local school are not always suitable...and the timetable and choices at the college seem to be more suitable, and so how will this affect the transport provision?"	<p>The Council notes the consultee's wishes to be able to choose a post-16 course based on subject and location, and in the form of options in the context</p>
1.5b	"is it possible to consider the radius around the address in order to convey option 1, 2 and 3 for course options?"	

		<p>of transport eligibility. The Council is supportive of learners choosing a post-16 course that is suitable for them.</p> <p>Nevertheless, the criteria of the Draft Education Transport Policy note that free transport will be provided to the nearest school or college providing the course, and this is consistent with the criteria for learners of statutory education age.</p> <p>The Welsh Government has the My Travel Pass scheme which facilitates and enables young people aged 16-21 years to travel on several journeys for £1 per day, which could apply to learners who choose an out-of-catchment school or college.</p> <p>The Education Department could be contacted to discuss individual situations, if the transport provision is likely to facilitate the learners' choices.</p>
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2. Theme: Learners with ALN

REF.	COMMENT	THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE
2.1b	"Learners who have come to us from Ysgol Hafod Lon Special School feel secure when continuing into Further Education with their fellow learners, it is a major and difficult step."	The Council notes the positive comments and accepts that processes are in place to facilitate the process of supporting learners with ALN as they transfer from a Special School to a further education college.
2.2b	"Some students from Penrhyn Llŷn will have to travel to the Glynllifon site, and the course choices don't always favour special education."	The Council notes the consultees comments on the suitability of every course at the Glynllifon site for learners with ALN.

3. Theme: Change of Address

REF.	COMMENT	THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE
3.1b	"I've moved home address during the year - how will this disrupt my studies?"	The new policy would consider the change of address circumstances in order to facilitate the ability of learners who have already commenced a course who move house during the current academic year to continue to receive transport until the end of that year.

c) **Comments from Learners at Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor, Glynllifon Site**

1. Theme: Course Location

REF.	COMMENT	THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE
1.1c	"Because of personal reasons as a result of bullying at school, I had to attend a further education college further away, not the closest, as the same crew who bullied me also attended the closest college and as a result, I applied for a further education course at another site. How will you deal with such considerations with the new transport policy?"	<p>The Council notes the consultee's wishes to be able to choose a post-16 course based on subject and location, and the Council is supportive of learners who choose a post-16 course that is suitable for them.</p> <p>Nevertheless, the criteria of the Draft Education Transport Policy note that free transport will be provided to the nearest school or college providing the course, and this is consistent with the criteria for learners of statutory education age.</p> <p>The Welsh Government has the My Travel Pass scheme which facilitates and enables young people aged 16-21 years to travel on several journeys for £1 per day, which could apply to learners who choose an out-of-catchment school or college.</p> <p>The Education Department could be contacted to discuss individual situations.</p>
1.2c	"the quality of the facilities and the experiences offered in this college are very valuable to me, although it is further away than the	The Council notes the consultee's wishes to be able to choose a post-16 course based on subject and location, and the Council is supportive of learners who choose a post-16 course that is suitable for them.

	<p>similar one, and possibly gives me better work opportunities after I complete the course; do you take this into account?"</p>	<p>Nevertheless, the criteria of the Draft Education Transport Policy notes that free transport is provided for learners to the closest school or college (in Gwynedd and Anglesey) that provides the course. This is consistent with the criteria for learners of statutory education age.</p> <p>The Welsh Government has the My Travel Pass scheme which facilitates and enables young people aged 16-21 years to travel on several journeys for £1 per day, which could apply to learners who choose an out-of-catchment school or college.</p> <p>An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken, which formed part of the consultation documentation on the Draft Education Transport Policy. Following consideration of the comments received, the assessment has been updated.</p>
1.3c	<p>"at what time of year would decisions about whether learners are eligible or not, be made? - it could guide students' choice of a suitable course and college."</p>	<p>The Council notes the consultee's wishes to be able to choose a post-16 course based on subject and location, and in the context of transport eligibility. The Council is supportive of learners choosing a post-16 course that is suitable for them.</p> <p>The criteria of the Draft Education Transport Policy notes that free transport is provided for learners to the closest school or college providing the course, and this is consistent with the criteria for learners of a statutory education age.</p> <p>The Welsh Government has the My Travel Pass scheme which facilitates and enables young people aged 16-21 years to travel on several journeys for £1 per day, which could apply to learners who choose an out-of-catchment school or college.</p> <p>The Education Department could be contacted to discuss individual situations, if the transport provision is likely to facilitate or confirm the learners' choices.</p>

2. Theme: Transportation costs

REF.	COMMENT	THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE
2.1c	<p>"if a termly payment for a pass would be introduced, then I would not be able to attend the college course, as I cannot afford any payment, and this could possibly mean that several learners would not be able to attend college and miss out on further education."</p>	<p>The Council notes the concerns of the consultee regarding transport costs.</p> <p>Where learners are eligible for free transport, transport will be provided in accordance with the relevant criteria.</p> <p>The Welsh Government has the My Travel Pass scheme which facilitates and enables young people aged 16-21 years to travel on several journeys for £1 per day.</p> <p>The Education Maintenance Allowance provides financial support for learners with costs such as transport to post-16 education.</p> <p>An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken, which formed part of the consultation documentation on the Draft Education Transport Policy. After considering the comments received, the assessment has been updated.</p>
2.2c	<p>"if learners had to pay, and wanted to catch a college bus, how would they pay as it is not possible to pay every day on a college bus, like you do on a public bus?"</p>	<p>The Council notes the concerns of the consultee regarding paying for a college bus.</p> <p>If the Cabinet decides to charge a fee for some elements of post-16 education transport, the Council will put appropriate arrangements in place to respond to that with the transport operators.</p>

3. Theme: Age

REF.	COMMENT	THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE
3.1c	"learners today maybe go to college later, and older than 19 years of age, and so any age cap would result in fewer students in the future, and for the college."	<p>The Council notes the concerns of the consultee regarding a lack of transport for learners over 19 years old in the Draft Education Transport Policy.</p> <p>Where learners are eligible for free transport, transport will be provided in accordance with the relevant criteria.</p> <p>However, the Council recognises that the lack of transport for learners aged over 19 years old is likely to affect some learners.</p> <p>The Welsh Government has the My Travel Pass scheme which facilitates and enables young people aged 16-21 years to travel on several journeys for £1 per day.</p> <p>An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken, which formed part of the consultation documentation on the Draft Education Transport Policy. Following consideration of the comments received, the assessment has been updated.</p>

4. Theme: Public Transport

REF.	COMMENT	THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE
4.1c	"...if the transport has to be paid for, will this mean that buses run more often and at times that better suit the course timetable?"	<p>The Council notes the consultee's comment regarding additional transport provision if there would be a need to pay for education transport.</p> <p>Should the proposal be implemented, an assessment of the education transport and public transport provision would have to be carried out to ensure that transport timetables were suitable to enable learners to arrive at the location in the morning and return in the afternoon.</p>
4.2c	"the public bus I use to attend college only accepts my pass at specific times and there is no flexibility when there is a need to go home early or if I'm ill or have an appointment. Would this change with the new policy?"	
4.3c	"the public bus we currently use is full and we often have to stand for long periods. Will you re-visit the arrangements after the	

	introduction of the new policy so that Glynllifon students are able to use the college bus only?"	
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d) Comments from Learners at Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor, Pwllheli Site

1. Theme: Course Location

REF.	COMMENT	THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE
1.1d	"The choices and options are not available in every college site and so whilst some sites are convenient, it does not always offer every suitable subject"	The Council notes the consultee's wishes to be able to choose a post-16 course based on subject and location, and the Council is supportive of learners who choose a post-16 course that is suitable for them.
1.2d	"circles of friends will be separated if they have to go to different college sites...what about well-being because of this?"	<p>Nevertheless, the criteria of the Draft Education Transport Policy notes that free transport is provided for learners to the closest school or college (in Gwynedd and Anglesey) that provides the course. This is consistent with the criteria for learners of statutory education age.</p> <p>The Welsh Government has the My Travel Pass scheme which facilitates and enables young people aged 16-21 years to travel on several journeys for £1 per day, which could apply to learners who choose an out-of-catchment school or college.</p> <p>An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken, which formed part of the consultation documentation on the Draft Education Transport Policy. Following consideration of the comments received, the assessment has been updated.</p>

2. Theme: Transport Timetables

REF.	COMMENT	THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE
2.2d	"some students have to set-off for college very early and arrive very late...could the timetables be adjusted to address better connections?"	<p>The Council notes the comments of the consultee about the timetables of college buses and public transport.</p> <p>Should the proposal be implemented, an assessment of the education transport and public transport provision would have to be carried out to ensure that transport timetables were suitable to enable learners to arrive at the location in the morning and return in the afternoon.</p>

e) **Comments of Learners at the Llangefni Site**

1. Theme: Course Location

REF.	COMMENT	THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE
1.2e	"It is not fair to force learners, as restricting choices can mean that they are not able to study the course/location and disrupts their future."	The Council notes the consultee's wishes to be able to choose a post-16 course based on subject and location, and the Council is supportive of learners who choose a post-16 course that is suitable for them.
1.3e	"This will force us to study A Levels in a closer location and affect our subject choices that could affect our career choice in the future."	<p>Nevertheless, the criteria of the Draft Education Transport Policy notes that free transport is provided for learners to the closest school or college (in Gwynedd and Anglesey) that provides the course. This is consistent with the criteria for learners of statutory education age.</p> <p>The Welsh Government has the My Travel Pass scheme which facilitates and enables young people aged 16-21 years to travel on several journeys for £1 per day, which could apply to learners who choose an out-of-catchment school or college.</p> <p>An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken, which formed part of the consultation documentation on the Draft Education Transport Policy.</p>

		Following consideration of the comments received, the assessment has been updated.
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2. Theme: Calculating distance

REF.	COMMENT	THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE
2.1e	"How would you differentiate if I live exactly 50% of the time with Mum, which is closer to one site, and 50% with Dad, which is closer to another site; what would happen in this situation?"	<p>The Council notes the consultee's wishes to be able to choose to travel between the addresses of both parents. The Draft Education Transportation Policy makes specific proposals in the context of dual residence and offers clarity in this area.</p> <p>The Education Department could be contacted to discuss individual situations, if the transport provision is likely to facilitate or confirm the learners' choices.</p>

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.

Author: Robert John Jones, Education Transport Manager

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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)
- Education Transport Policy (Draft)

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

As a result of the education transport financial position, the field is subject to strategic review, and it is believed that from revisiting the content of the existing Transport Policy, there is an opportunity to contribute somewhat towards rationalising the costs associated with education transport as well as meeting statutory requirements.

It is believed that there is a need to update and amend the existing Transport Policy for the following reasons:

- The existing transport policy was drawn up in 2009 and it has not been updated since, except for the part regarding post-16 education, following the restructuring and abolishment of the fees that existed at the time.
- The ambiguity and lack of clarity in the existing policy in some areas weakens the Education Department's ability to make firm decisions every time on the validity of requests for transport, leading to higher transport costs for the Council.
- Adding clarity to the Education Transport Policy would assist parents and users to know for certain whether they are eligible to education transport or not, and the rationale for that before applying, reducing the demand on the service to respond to invalid applications.

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

The Authority will give specific consideration to the following stakeholders when undertaking the consultation:

- Schools

- Governing Bodies
- Grŵp Llandrillo Menai
- Parents
- Children and Young People
- Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee Cyngor Gwynedd

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. A robust and balanced effort was made to comply with the duty to engage, and sufficient relevant information has been collected to allow the Council to proceed.

A questionnaire was conducted on the Draft Transport Policy, shared widely with key stakeholders across the education sector, including children and young people, governing bodies, and strategic planning groups. 31 responses were received, providing a valuable qualitative input by stakeholders.

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

Action	Dates	Information
Complaints and enquiries	September 2024 - September 2025	After detailed scrutiny of enquiries and complaints relating specifically to education transport, it is obvious that our existing transport

		policy is weak in terms of offering guidance and the relevant detail when dealing with these issues.
Consult with the Primary and Special Catchment Area Consultative Group	February 2026	Introduce a Draft Policy and highlight the main changes as well as raise awareness of the public consultation
Consult with the Secondary Strategic Planning Group	February 2026	Introduce a Draft Policy and highlight the main changes as well as raise awareness of the public consultation
Engagement meeting with Gwynedd Governors' Forum	February 2026	Introduce a Draft Policy and highlight the main changes as well as raise awareness of the public consultation
Engagement meeting with the Children and Young People County Forum	March 2026	Introduce a Draft Policy and highlight the main changes as well as raise awareness of the public consultation
5 x consultation session with students from Grŵp Llandrillo Menai - at the Llangefni, Bangor, Pwllheli, Dolgellau, Glynllifon sites	March 2026	Introduce a Draft Policy and highlight the main changes as well as raise awareness of the public consultation
Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee	18 June 2026	Introduction of Draft Policy

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

Evidence, Information and Relevant Data

Positive and/or Negative Potential Impact

<p>Race</p>	<p>The Education Department, the integrated transport unit and all Gwynedd schools have relevant policies in practice 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, which extend out to the transport arrangements to school and home for that specific school. Therefore, it is not anticipated that the proposed transport policy would affect this characteristic.</p>	<p>We have not identified the potential impact on this characteristic</p>
<p>Disability</p>	<p>From the consultee's comments, it is concluded that there are some concerns on the impact of the new draft transport policy on disabled or additional learning needs learners, particularly in terms of safety, suitability and fair access to education. Responders noted that not all learners can travel independently, and can place pressure on young people to do so before they are ready. This is particularly relevant to those with complex needs or specific conditions, where travelling without appropriate support can cause direct barriers to access and engagement with education.</p> <p>More broadly, the comments note that the needs of disabled learners are very diverse, and therefore the standard way of providing transport is likely to be insufficient and lead to unfair outcomes. Concerns are also raised that changes to the policy or assessment processes could lead to reducing or withdrawing</p>	<p>The comments received show some acknowledgement of the potential positive impacts for disabled or additional needs learners, particularly in terms of promoting independence and personal development. Some responders note that independent travel, when implemented appropriately, can build confidence and life skills for young people with Additional Learning Needs. However, these advantages are considered subject to an appropriate provision of training, support and resources, emphasising that independence is not appropriate or possible for all individuals.</p> <p>Nevertheless, some comments draw attention to the negative risks on the grounds of disability. Concern is expressed that the policy may place pressure on ALN learners to travel independently before they are ready, creating a direct risk to their safety and well-being.</p>

	<p>specialist transport services, disproportionately affecting this group compared with other learners. To that end, the impact extends beyond the individual learner, with comments drawing attention to the added pressures on families when seeking to secure suitable transport.</p> <p>In general, the evidence suggests that there is a clear risk of a negative impact on the grounds of disability, unless the provision continues to be flexible, tailored and providing adequate support to ensure that disabled learners are not placed at a disadvantage under the Equality Act.</p>	<p>The comments show that any reduction in support or flexibility is likely to have a disproportionate impact on disabled learners, compared with their peers.</p>
Gender	<p>It is not anticipated that the proposed transport policy would affect this characteristic. Implementing the said document would mean that everyone would continue to be treated according to their needs, regardless of their gender.</p>	<p>We have not identified the potential impact on this characteristic</p>
Age	<p>The comments received consistently show that the proposed policy is considered as one that could disproportionately affect different age groups, in line with the "age" protected characteristic in the Equality Act. Specifically, concern is expressed that older learners, particularly those who are post-16 and over 19 years, are more likely to face barriers in terms of access to education, including a smaller choice of courses, reliance on the closest provider only, and longer or more complicated journeys, that may have</p>	<p>There is a potential negative impact on a small group of learners aged 19 years and over who are currently benefiting from the Post-16 Travel Pass. There is an intention to consult on this change, and we will consider the feedback received from the consultation, adapt and change the draft Policy as we see fit, before the policy is adopted in its final form.</p> <p>The comments suggest a range of potential impacts on the grounds of age, with some positive aspects, but mainly concerns about the disproportionate negative impacts on different age groups. In terms of positive impacts, some responders note that existing or flexible (e.g. empty seats)</p>

	<p>a negative impact on attendance, engagement and educational progression.</p> <p>At the same time, these comments draw attention to potential weaknesses for younger children, who are considered more reliant on safe and suitable transport arrangements, and who are less able to travel independently, particularly in rural areas where routes are unsafe. This raises concerns about safety and accessibility risks, and suggest that a distance-based method or standard criteria method could be unsuitable for the needs of young children.</p> <p>More broadly, the evidence notes a lack of flexibility in the method, with many comments suggesting that a "one-size fits all" policy cannot identify developmental differences and practical requirements at different stages of education. This can lead to inconsistencies between learners of different ages - including within the same family - and increases the risk of unfair or unintentional outcomes. In general, the comments suggest that a more graduated and flexible method is needed, which reflect the specific needs of every age group in order to avoid disproportionate impact and to be in keeping with equality principles.</p>	<p>transport arrangements can support the development of young people by fostering independence and responsibility, as well as enabling ongoing access to education and opportunities for families to work.</p> <p>Similarly, a provision that uses existing capacity effectively can help learners who just fall outside the eligibility criteria, expanding access to education to some age groups.</p> <p>Older learners (post-16 and over 19 years) are noted as a group at greater risk of being excluded from educational opportunities due to restrictions on transport, reliance on the closest provider, or removal of support, which may restrict course choice, increase complex journeys and reduce attendance and progression. At the same time, younger children are considered more vulnerable to safety risks and more reliant on orderly transport arrangements, with concerns about the suitability of walking, cycling or using public transport in specific circumstances.</p>
<p>Religion and Belief</p>	<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</p>	<p>The comments received reflect a mix of potential positive and negative impacts based on religion and belief. In terms of positive impacts, some responders acknowledge that a transport provision that supports travel to faith schools</p>

	<p>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. 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>The comments received show that access to faith schools is a key issue in terms of religion and belief, with several responders emphasising the importance of families' ability to choose an education that reflects their religious beliefs. It is clearly noted that a restricted number of faith schools are available locally, and therefore that bigger distances have to be travelled in many cases; as a result, any restrictions on transport or distance criteria may mean that some learners are unable to attend the closest faith school or the most suitable for them. This raises concern that the policy may place religious learners at an unintentional disadvantage, compared to those attending non-faith schools.</p> <p>At the same time, another strong thread of comments emphasises the need for fairness and consistency, with some responders noting that religion should not give any cohort of learners an</p>	<p>could facilitate the rights of families to choose an education that reflects their religious beliefs, particularly if not many faith schools are available locally. In this sense, arrangements that allow further travel, or offers some flexibility, help sustain access to religious education and support a range of educational choices.</p> <p>However, the comments also draw attention to potential negative risks. Concern is expressed that restrictions on distance or eligibility may prevent some learners from attending an appropriate faith school, placing them under a disadvantage compared with other learners.</p> <p>At the same time, strong viewpoints emphasise that religion should not give an advantage or disadvantage, and that every learner should be treated consistently regardless of their beliefs, raising concern that a special provision for faith schools could cause inequality.</p>
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	<p>advantage or disadvantage, and that the policy should treat every pupil equally, despite their religious background. This highlights a clear tension between supporting the rights of individuals to choose their education based on beliefs, and sustain equality principles across the whole system.</p> <p>The comments show that there is a need for careful balance to ensure that no religious group is treated more favourably or less favourably, so that access to education remains fair and inclusive for every learner, in line with the principles of the Equality Act.</p>	
<p>Sexual Orientation</p>	<p>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 crucial to developing emotional well-being, resilience and empathy. An understanding of sexuality with an emphasis on rights, health, equality and fairness empowers the learners to understand themselves, to take responsibility for their own decisions and behaviours and to form relationships.</p> <p>It is not anticipated that the new-look policy would impact people based on sexual orientation.</p>	<p>We have not identified the potential impact on this characteristic</p>

<p>Gender reassignment</p>	<p>It is noted in the Equality policy being implemented by Gwynedd schools that schools, "... oppose all forms of prejudice and discrimination and recognise that pupils have different needs, requirements and objectives."</p> <p>It is not anticipated that the new-look policy would impact people based on gender reassignment.</p>	<p>We have not identified the potential impact on this characteristic</p>
<p>Marriage and civil partnership</p>	<p>The comments received show that an impact on the grounds of marriage and civil partnership was not raised directly, but several broader issues are indirectly relevant through family arrangements and care responsibilities. Specifically, responders draw attention to the impact that transport arrangements can have on parents' ability to coordinate work and childcare, with some comments suggesting that changes to the provision may cause additional pressures on one parent or partner to undertake this responsibility. This can affect arrangements within marriage or civil partnership relationships, particularly where both partners work.</p> <p>In general, although the impact on marriage and civil partnerships is not obvious or specific, the evidence suggests that there is a risk of indirect impacts where changes to the policy can increase pressures on family arrangements or create imbalance in responsibilities between partners, emphasising the need for flexibility in order to avoid unfair outcomes.</p>	<p>The comments received show that only very indirect references are made to the impact on the grounds of marriage and civil partnerships, and there is no direct evidence discussing this protected characteristic specifically.</p> <p>In terms of the potential positive impacts, the comments suggest that the provision of effective transport can help families to coordinate work and childcare, supporting the stability of daily routines and, possibly, reduce pressures on family relationships.</p> <p>However, the comments also draw attention to potential negative impacts, particularly where transport arrangements are less flexible or are reduced. This can cause added strain on parents. There are also concerns about complex living arrangements, such as sharing care between two homes, which can be made more difficult by strict criteria or a lack of flexibility in the policy.</p> <p>In general, the evidence suggests that the impact on the grounds of marriage and civil partnerships is not directly obvious.</p>

<p>Pregnancy and Maternity</p>	<p>The comments received include indirect references to the impacts on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity.</p>	<p>The comments received suggest that there are some potential positive impacts on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity, mainly where there is a provision of suitable and flexible transport provision which enables parents - including mothers - to balance work and care responsibilities. It is noted that reliable access to transport enables the reduction of the need for additional care arrangements, support continuity in employment, and facilitate daily family routines, including for young children.</p> <p>In general, the evidence suggests that the impact of the policy on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity is likely to be indirect, with a positive aspect when a provision supports families, but a clear risk of negative impacts where flexibility or provision is reduced.</p>
<p>The Welsh Language</p>	<p>The comments received suggest that the policy's impact on the Welsh language are mixed, but raise some concerns in terms of linguistic equality. Several responders note that transport in itself does not necessarily have a direct influence on language use, suggesting a restricted impact in some cases. However, others draw attention to the possibility that transport arrangements, particularly where the policy restricts access to the closest provider only, can affect the ability of learners to access an appropriate Welsh or bilingual education. This is particularly relevant in areas where a Welsh provision</p>	<p>The comments received suggest that the policy's impact on the Welsh language are seen to be mixed, with some responders noting a restricted or no direct impact, whilst others draw attention to the potential for positive and negative impacts.</p> <p>In terms of the potential positive impacts, some comments suggest that the provision of effective transport which sustains access to a broad range of schools helps maintain educational choice, including access to a Welsh or bilingual provision, where relevant. There are also suggestions that flexibility in the policy, such as considering education choices as well as geographical location, helps ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than English.</p>

	<p>is not available locally, meaning that further distances have to be travelled.</p> <p>More broadly, the comments highlight that a lack of flexibility in the policy can lead to a situation where language choice is not considered in parallel with distance, leading to a possibility of treating the Welsh language less favourably than English in practice. At the same time, some responders suggest that ensuring equal access to all learners, regardless of their language, means that the policy should not differentiate on the grounds of language at all.</p> <p>In general, the evidence shows a differing opinion between a neutral method in terms of language and the need to ensure that transport provision enables, rather than restricts, access to a Welsh education, emphasising the need to avoid any negative impact that could undermine the principle of not treating the Welsh language less favourably.</p>	<p>However, several of the comments draw attention to potential negative risks, particularly if the policy restricts access to schools or providers that are not just the closest ones. It is noted that such a method could restrict the ability of learners to attend a specific Welsh provision, particularly in rural areas where the provision is dispersed, leading to a situation where the Welsh language could have an unintentional disadvantage.</p> <p>At the same time, some responders note that transport itself is not a factor affecting language use, suggesting that the impact is not negative in each case.</p> <p>In general, the evidence shows uncertainty and mixed views, but it draws attention to the risk that lack of flexibility in transport arrangements could lead to a disproportionate impact on opportunities to use the Welsh language. This emphasises the need to ensure that the policy supports fair access to a Welsh provision, and that it does not risk treating the Welsh language less favourably than English, in accordance with linguistic equality principles.</p>
<p>Socio-economic Considerations</p>	<p>As an authority and on a very positive note, free transport is provided for further education students to attend various education courses in our sixth form schools and many college campuses - this is non-statutory and is implemented at the council's discretion. In this financial climate, this is expensive for the authority, but on the other hand it promotes access to all learners to be able to study in further</p>	<p>The comments received reflect a mix of potential positive and negative impacts based on socio-economic disadvantage. On one hand, some responders acknowledge that accessible transport arrangements and options such as using empty seats can support families by reducing costs and enabling parents to continue in work, improving economic stability and continuous access to education. This, in some cases, can</p>

	<p>education, without being a cost to the learners and their parents/guardians.</p> <p>The comments received clearly show that there is a potential impact on the grounds of socio-economic considerations, with concerns that the policy can disproportionately affect low-income families with some without access to private transport. It is specifically noted that a reduction in transport provision or restricting eligibility could lead to additional costs for parents, creating barriers to accessing education for learners who are not in a position to self-fund their travel. This is particularly relevant in rural areas where public transport options are restricted, meaning that some families are heavily reliant on education transport arrangements.</p> <p>In general, the evidence suggests a risk of disproportionate negative impact on deprived socio-economic groups, unless the policy includes sufficient flexibility and support to mitigate these barriers and ensure fair access to education.</p>	<p>contribute towards better opportunities for learners who do not have resources to arrange independent transport.</p> <p>Concern is expressed that reducing transport provision or restricting eligibility could lead to added costs, creating direct barriers to access to education for some learners. This is obvious in rural areas where the public transport options are limited, and could lead to more complex journeys, less attendance or even removing learners from some educational opportunities.</p> <p>In general, the evidence suggests that there are some risks of negative impacts on families who face socio-economic disadvantage, although there are some potential advantages where the provision is flexible and accessible.</p> <p>The new draft policy includes mitigation measures and flexibility, to ensure that learners from less privileged backgrounds are placed at a disadvantage, and to maintain fair access to education to all children.</p>
<p>Those Who Serve or Who Have Served in the Armed Forces, As Well As Their Families</p>	<p>It is not anticipated that the proposed policy would have an impact on those who serve or who have served in the armed forces, as well as their families. Children from military or ex-military families will get the same fair play whichever school they attend.</p> <p>The comments received include only very indirect references on the impact on people who currently serve or who have served in the armed forces and their families, and there is no specific or direct</p>	<p>The comments received include only restricted or indirect references on the impact on people who currently serve or who have served in the armed forces and their families, but some broader conclusions can be drawn based on the concerns around family circumstances and mobility.</p> <p>In terms of the potential positive impacts, the comments suggest that the provision of flexible and accessible transport can support families with complex living patterns, including</p>

	<p>evidence naming this group. However, several comments raise broader issues that are relevant to their circumstances, particularly in terms of mobility, complex living arrangements and reliance on flexible transport. For example, there are concerns about families who share addresses or who have inconsistent living patterns, which could lead to difficulties with strict criteria such as "main residence", showing that a less flexible policy can cause barriers to ensure consistent access to education.</p> <p>More broadly, the evidence suggests that any reduction in flexibility or transport provision is likely to have a disproportionate impact on families who have less stable or more complex living circumstances, which could include some military families.</p>	<p>those who move often or who have varied living arrangements, by assisting consistent access to education and reducing the burden of arranging transport. This could be relevant to military families where education stability is an important factor.</p> <p>In general, the comments draw attention to the need to ensure that the policy is flexible enough to avoid creating unintentional barriers for groups with unconventional living patterns, in accordance with equality principles.</p>
<p>Human Rights</p>	<p>The comments received suggest several matters that are relevant to human rights, particularly in relation to fair access to education, safety and the right to family life. Responders emphasise the importance of ensuring that every learner is able to reach education safely and reliably, noting concerns around travelling on public transport, unsafe routes, and the impact on physical and emotional well-being. This connects directly to basic rights to safety and access to education without unnecessary barriers.</p>	<p>The comments received suggest a range of potential positive and negative impacts on the grounds of human rights, particularly in relation to access to education, safety and family life.</p> <p>In terms of the positive impacts, some responders note that the provision of effective and flexible transport can support learners' rights to access education consistently and safely, whilst also enabling families to maintain work and childcare arrangements, reducing practical pressures on parents. This can contribute to ensuring that children and young people can take advantage of education in a stable manner, which is a core aspect of human rights.</p>

		However, the comments strongly draw attention to the potential negative impacts, particularly if the policy leads to less access to education transport.
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6. Are there any data or information gaps, and if so, what are they and how do you intend to address them?

Following Cabinet guidance, we have held a public consultation on the Draft Education Transport Policy. The Authority has specifically considered the following stakeholders when undertaking the consultation:

- Schools
- Governing Bodies
- Grŵp Llandrillo Menai
- Parents
- Children and Young People
- Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee

The consultation was an opportunity to gather data and further information to be included in the Education Transport Policy, as well as the Impact Assessment.

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

It is not anticipated that there will be a cumulative impact from introducing the draft Education Transport Policy.

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?

The proposal has been developed, giving due attention to the Public Sector Equality Duty by assessing the potential impact on individuals who share protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

The proposal will follow the statutory requirements to protect the learner from any discrimination, harassment or persecution. Equal opportunities are promoted within the organisations and equality policies and procedures are followed.

When promoting equal opportunities, the policy seeks to ensure that learners are able to have fair access to education by providing transport arrangements that are consistent, transparent and consider individual needs, including disabled learners and learners with additional learning needs.

In order to help remove discrimination, harassment and illegal persecution, eligibility criteria and operational arrangements have been drawn up in a way that is fair and based on objective needs, without treating any group less favourably in an unjustified way.

The policy is monitored and reviewed regularly to ensure that it does not lead to unexpected detrimental impacts on any protected group and to note further opportunities to promote equality.

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.)

The proposed new transport policy will ensure that opportunities are given to everyone to attend the nearest catchment/suitable education sites. Learners are given the opportunities to follow an education pathway of their choice, following a course from the range of subjects offered across all the county's education sites, and a site that meets all of the learner's needs. Suitable, orderly transport is provided, with particular connections for this purpose.

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?

Cyngor Gwynedd's existing Language Policy is based on the principle that Welsh is the Council's natural language and that Welsh is the main administrative and public language, with every service, meeting, correspondence and sign being bilingual, with priority given to the Welsh language. It ensures that the public and staff receive a full service in Welsh, that Welsh skills are essential to every post, and bodies who receive assistance from the Council also promote Welsh. In terms of education, the policy emphasises the central role of schools and education providers when transferring the Welsh language to the next generation and reinforce its use as the main community language and language of learning.

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?

Following consideration and assessment in accordance with the requirements of the well-being act, the seven well-being act goals and the Council's well-being objectives, and it is concluded that the proposal meets the following requirements: The Transport Policy (draft) makes a direct contribution to the Act in many ways:

- **A prosperous Wales** - Opportunities are provided through access to educational opportunities to foster and develop a skilled and educated population. Reliable access to education helps young people to develop skills and employment opportunities in the future.
- **A resilient Wales** - Through their studies, learners become aware of the values which maintain social, economic and ecological resilience, as well as the ability to adapt to change. Use of more sustainable transport can contribute towards reducing emissions and protecting the environment.
- **A healthier Wales** - Being a part of society which promotes physical well-being and seeks to reflect on a positive identity, which is associated with strengthening mental health. 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. Regular access to education supports the mental and physical well-being of learners. Safe travel arrangements can also promote health and safety.

- **A more equal Wales** - Providing access to a comprehensive education for every child, regardless of their background, seeks to ensure that every child and young person can access the highest quality education and training, which enables them to thrive and achieve their potential. This is one of the most direct contributions by the policy.
- **A Wales of cohesive communities** - Opportunities are provided to connect people and communities by providing viable and safe transport links. Reliable transport services help connect rural and urban communities and schools.
- **A Wales with a vibrant culture and a thriving Welsh language** - Welsh-medium education is one of the main methods of realising this goal.
- **A globally responsible Wales** - Access to education promotes and improves the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of our learners, in the hope that this extends to global well-being. Reducing use of individual cars and promoting more sustainable transport can contribute towards addressing climate change.

The new education transport policy supports the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations Act by planning for the long-term, preventing inequalities, working in partnership and engaging with communities. It contributes to each of the seven well-being goals, with a particularly strong contribution towards a More Equal Wales by ensuring that every learner has fair access to education and the resulting opportunities.

The Five Ways of Working:

1. Long-term

- The policy considers the needs of learners in the future by creating sustainable and efficient transport arrangements.
- It can reduce reliance on private cars and support long-term environmental goals.

2. Prevention

- Providing suitable transport helps prevent problems such as absence, educational exclusion and inequalities on access to education.
- It can also reduce traffic and pollution problems around schools.

3. Integration

- The policy supports several well-being goals at the same time, instead of focusing on one field only.

4. Collaboration

- The policy was developed by working with stakeholders such as schools, parents and learners.
- Collaboration helps ensure that the service meets local needs.

5. Contents

- Engagement with learners, families and communities ensures that various voices are heard.

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)?

Transport for learners will be provided through tender processes and third-party agreements administered by the Integrated Transport Unit, Cyngor Gwynedd.

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:

The tender documents will be Cyngor Gwynedd standard documents, which note the expectations in terms of compliance with the General Equality Duty, Human Resources and Welsh language legislation and the Socio-economic Duty.

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

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

Significant Positive Impact:

This is considered when engaging on the proposed draft policy. It is ensured that everyone, including the learner, can voice their opinion on the proposal.

Although it is early days, and the impact assessment is not final, it is anticipated that the policy 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:

Negative impacts may emerge when introducing some changes to the policy, particularly when removing some aspects that are currently offered and at the Council's discretion. These will be considered when engaging on the proposed draft policy, and when drawing up the final policy.

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)

It is possible that some intentional negative impacts will derive from the draft Education Transport Policy, for example:

- There will be stricter guidelines for learners who live in dual residences, in order to better manage costs.
- Further education learners will be expected to follow a course of their choice at the nearest college, to facilitate education transport arrangements.
- More clarity and considerations will be given to faith school catchment areas as there is no reference to them at all in the current policy.

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

No. We will act in accordance with the legal requirements imposed on us.

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?

In order to show more clearly that the education transport policy gives due attention to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, several additional measures can be considered which contribute to the three elements of the General Duty: promoting equal opportunity, removing unlawful discrimination, and fostering good relationships. These steps would strengthen the policy by ensuring not only that access to education transport is fair, but also that the service when operational reduces inequalities, prevents discrimination and builds positive relationships between learners and communities. This would provide stronger evidence that the general duty under the Equality Act 2010 has been considered in full. We will update the Impact Assessment as the direction of the work becomes clearer.

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?

The policy has considered the socio-economic impacts on learners and families. We will update the Impact Assessment as the direction of the work becomes clearer.

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?

It is anticipated that the amended policy will not affect the status of the Welsh language.

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.

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

The EqIA process is an ongoing one that doesn't end when the policy/practice and EqIA 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	Dates	Timetable	Lead Responsibility
Present the Draft Strategy to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee	June 2026	June 2026	Head of Education
Present the Draft Policy to the Cabinet	July 2026	July 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
Review of the Policy	Annually	Education Transport Manager

DRAFT

Appendix 6

General Update on the Education Transport Financial Position and the Work Programme

1. Education Transport Work Programme

1.1 In addition to reporting on the Draft Education Transport Policy consultation, the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee also asked for an update on the progress against the Education Transport Work Programme requirements submitted to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee in December 2024, as well as an update of the financial position as a result of historical overspend in the field of education transport.

1.2 The table below provides a brief update against the requirements of the work programme submitted to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee in December 2024:

Education Transport Work Programme	Progress up to December 2024	Progress up to June 2026
Update the Education Transport Policy and Equality Impact Assessment	An initial draft of the Education Transport Policy has been drawn up. Once the draft Policy is complete, it is intended to consult on it. This policy will meet the statutory requirements in the same way as the existing policy. In parallel, an Equality Impact Assessment has been produced.	A draft of the Education Transport Policy and the associated Impact Assessments have been produced, and on 26 January, the Cabinet's approval to hold a consultation was received. A 6-week consultation period was held between 9 February and 20 March 2026, and consideration has been given to all the observations received. There is an intention to return to the Cabinet to report back on the consultation and submit a final version of the Education Transport Policy before 1 October 2026, for the amended policy to come into force on 1 September 2027.
Review existing education transport contracts to identify efficiency savings	This is ongoing work, and below are examples of what has already been achieved	This is ongoing work; all of the transport contracts are reviewed every term. With a reduction in the number of learners in the near future, it is anticipated that many amendments will be made to the contracts, and reduce the capacity of the routes, thus leading to a reduction in costs.

Identify an education transport pilot scheme that would be able to be implemented in conjunction with a Language Centre	Initial pilot scheme partially implemented this term	<p>As a result of prioritising the Ysgol Hafod Lon pilot scheme, we have been unable to implement another pilot scheme jointly with a Language Centre during the period.</p> <p>However, Eifionydd Language Centre staff have provided customer care and language refresher sessions to the staff employed as part of the Ysgol Hafod Lon Transport Pilot Scheme.</p>
Identify an education transport pilot scheme that could be implemented in conjunction with a special school	Initial discussions have been held with Ysgol Hafod Lon and potential opportunities have been identified but further work is to be undertaken, aiming to start a pilot in the Spring Term 2025.	<p>Pilot scheme with an electric minibus, driver and chaperone directly employed by the Council implemented since January 2026. Feedback from the pilot is very positive.</p> <p>Recruitment difficulties have led to a delay in being able to implement a second pilot scheme with the second minibus at Ysgol Hafod Lon, but we are continuing to try to recruit at present.</p>
Revisit ALN learner transport arrangements	The process of revisiting the timetable for identifying the transport needs of ALN learners has commenced to ensure the best conditions for tendering the provision to ensure value for money.	
Consider the affordability of Post-16 Education Transport as a result of the abolition of the 16+ Travel Pass	Initial discussions have taken place with Grŵp Llandrillo Menai.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-16 Transport has been included as one of the proposals when consulting on the Draft Education Transport Policy. • Discussions have been held with Grŵp Llandrillo Menai, but the college has no intention to contribute to post-16 transport costs at present.
Renewable Electric Vehicles	A grant application submitted to the Welsh Government by the Council for financial support to purchase 2 electric minibuses, which would provide potential opportunities to provide education transport in an alternative way.	A grant application for two electric vehicles has been successful, and two further electric minibuses in the Council's ownership to pilot the provision of education transport in an alternative way. (See a special school pilot scheme above).

2. Education Transport Financial Position

2.1 In terms of the education transport financial position, the table below shows the budget for Gwynedd education transport since 2016/17, as well as the actual expenditure to address the education transport requirements over the same period:

	Taccs a trennau			Bysus			Cyfanswm		
	Cyllideb	Gwir	Gor/(tan) wariant	Cyllideb	Gwir	Gor/(tan) wariant	Cyllideb	Gwir	Gor/(tan) wariant
2016/17	2,064,210	2,038,424	-25,786	2,554,540	2,582,690	28,150	4,618,750	4,621,113	2,363
2017/18	2,021,500	2,223,188	201,688	2,558,770	2,545,402	-13,368	4,580,270	4,768,590	188,320
2018/19	2,335,140	2,471,034	135,894	2,609,570	2,805,616	196,046	4,944,710	5,276,650	331,940
2019/20	2,342,610	2,516,348	173,738	2,821,950	2,884,973	63,023	5,164,560	5,401,321	236,761
2020/21*	2,323,850	1,969,468	-354,382	2,931,910	2,560,678	-371,232	5,255,760	4,530,145	-725,615
2021/22	2,615,480	2,790,864	175,384	3,149,730	3,092,720	-57,010	5,765,210	5,883,585	118,375
2022/23	2,841,050	3,147,025	305,975	3,279,460	3,521,664	242,204	6,120,510	6,668,690	548,180
2023/24	2,743,340	3,427,763	684,423	3,646,240	4,457,345	811,105	6,389,580	7,885,109	1,495,529
2024/25	3,907,460	3,661,661	-245,799	4,182,150	4,619,603	437,453	8,089,610	8,281,264	191,654
2025/26	3,553,671	3,552,096	-1,575	4,223,530	4,709,941	486,411	7,777,201	8,262,037	484,836
2026/27 - amcan	3,528,810	3,522,053	-6,758	4,886,236	4,886,236	0	8,415,046	8,408,289	-6,758

* blwyddyn eithradol

2.2 The education transport budget seen in the table above has increased £3.8m since 2016/17 as a result of inflation and permanent bid applications to the Council by the Education Department to meet the increase in costs to provide transport over the period in question.

2.3 In 2023/24, the field of education transport overspent by £1.5m, on a budget of £6.4m. This was mainly due to implementing a process to re-tender school buses during the year, the impact of the economy in general, along with increased costs for bus providers associated with accessibility requirements. Furthermore, there is increasing pressure on the requirement for taxis, mainly related to Additional Learning Needs.

2.4 In response to the overspend, the Council provided the Education Department with a permanent additional budget of £895k, and a one-off budget of £895k for 2024/25 only. Furthermore, a one-off budget was provided for 2025/26 only to fund the overspend in that year.

- 2.5 This means that there was no overspend in 2024/25 and 2025/26, giving the Education Department the opportunity to identify opportunities to try to rationalise the costs associated with providing education transport. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that implementing modifications to transport contracts and changing the way we provide education transport is a matter that will take some time to implement and fully see its impact. An Education Transport Manager was appointed in April 2024 to ensure a dedicated resource to be able to respond to the situation, and in the same period, the field of education transport has been the subject of a Strategic Review, and a work programme has been created to focus on creating practical solutions to the challenges faced in the field of education transport.
- 2.6 Based on the September 2025 contracts data, a cost of £8.4m was anticipated to provide education transport for the 2026/27 financial year. The cost can be divided into 2 main categories, namely spending on bus contracts of £4.9m and spending on taxis contracts of £3.5m. Based on these costs, a bid was submitted to fund the overspend of the bus contracts that was equivalent to £664,000 for 2026/27, which includes additional costs outside the Department's control, and limited opportunities to implement savings on the heading. As a result of plans implemented to save money, no taxi contracts bid was submitted, expecting the heading to be kept within its budget in 2026/27.
- 2.7 Efforts will continue to identify opportunities to save money / keep costs within control where possible, remembering that the significant pressure on the field remains in accordance with what was noted in 3.9 above.



Pilot Planning

In 2025, it was agreed to implement a pilot project to provide education transport in-house by the Education Department to provide transport to Ysgol Hafod Lon in an attempt to try and reduce transport costs for our special schools, as well as improve the travelling experience for learners and their families. At the time, transport costs to Ysgol Hafod Lon cost £1m per annum, and £500k to Ysgol Pendalar. On the grounds of these costs, it was agreed to prioritise Ysgol Hafod Lon for the pilot.

Suitable vehicles were bought, with easy access and wheelchair equipment in the back. The total cost of the vehicles was £72,000 each, so the total cost for both vehicles was £144,000.

£79,000 from a central fund was earmarked to order two electric mini buses for this purpose, and a grant application from Welsh Government was successful for the other £65,000 under the green vehicle, clean electricity scheme. We were also successful when receiving a UK Government grant to order and install charging points on the site.

The vehicles were ordered in May 2025 and were sent to be adapted for mini buses by a bespoke contractor. Work of installing the charging points was commenced in June and July 2025, most of the work done by the Council's in-house team.

The construction work was completed in September 2025, and the vehicles were received in the Autumn.

During the same period, we advertised for mini bus drivers and travel chaperones.

One qualified bus driver and two travel chaperones were appointed.

Following the appointments, specialist communication training, training on the best use of the Welsh language with the learners, and specialist training to become familiar with the appropriate equipment, manual handling skills and awareness of specialist education transport arrangements were provided.

Suitable learners were identified for the pilot, identifying a group of learners who lived relatively close to each other in the areas of Blaenau Ffestiniog, Llan Ffestiniog and Gellilydan.

Sufficient notice was given to the taxi operators that the arrangement was coming to an end at the end of the autumn term, and those operators were fortunate to be awarded other new contracts for the following term.

Implementing the pilot

The pilot commenced in January 2026. The pilot was supported during the first four weeks, including training, communication with parents, mentoring and shadowing, in order to ensure general support to ensure the pilot's success.

Following the first four weeks, staff were seen to be confident, and the parents and learners were satisfied with the provision and all arrangements, therefore the plan has worked very easily following this initial period.

A saving of approximately £55,000 has already been identified this year as a result of implementing this pilot. In addition, the mini bus and driver have been helping during the day to Ysgol Hafod Lon by providing transport to swimming lessons and activities outside the classroom. This is a huge help to the school and enriches the learners' experiences.

The intention is to operate the second mini bus at the start of the next academic year, and a substantial saving of £130,000 is anticipated during the second year of operation.

Positive observations were received from the parents recently, and we intend to send out a quality questionnaire before the end of term to school parents and staff. Here is a selection of some of the comments we have already received:

"the service is punctual every day, the staff are polite and my child looks forward to travelling every morning. Hopefully it will continue next term..."

"she enjoys travelling on this transport - staff consistency in terms of sitting in the same seat, providing suitable communication resources and being consistent with journey times and routes is a good foundation for the rest of the day for her; we had a few days in the past where it was difficult to get her in the taxi!"

Added Value

As well as the usual transport already in place, there are opportunities to extend the transport provision to secure savings for schools, by supporting journeys during the school day, e.g. swimming lessons, college courses, work experience, curricular days, etc., which would result in operating a full day of education transport contracts in-house.

MEETING	Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee
DATE	18 June 2026
TITLE	Performance Report of the Cabinet Member for Education
REASON TO SCRUTINISE	In order to ensure effective performance management
AUTHOR	Cllr Dewi Jones – Cabinet Member for Education
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT	Gwern ap Rhisiart – Head of Education

1. Why it needs scrutiny

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 field for which I am responsible as Cabinet Member for Education. This includes outlining the latest with regard to the pledges in the Council Plan and the Department's performance measures.

We are implementing the Council Plan 2023-28, and I herein report on the progress up to the end of March 2026, recognising that it is still early days in the context 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 myself 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

The work on the 'Modernising buildings and the learning environment' Project has continued to make progress across a number of sites over the last period.

At Ysgol Ein Harglwyddes, construction is progressing and it is expected that the project will be completed during the summer term with the school opening at the beginning of the autumn term 2026, providing modern facilities that will support improved learning experiences for pupils and the whole school community.

In the Ysgol Tryfan project, further plans for the school were developed during the summer of 2025, highlighting the need to increase the original budget. The Cabinet has subsequently approved an increase in the project's budget from £18 million to £23.6 million. The design team continues to develop a plan that meets net zero building requirements, with work underway to prepare for the submission of the Outline Business Case during the summer term 2026.

2.2.3 Transforming education for children in their early years

The work of the 'Transforming education for children in their early years' Project has continued to make positive progress over the past year. As part of the work to support the development of children's independence, toileting information packs have been distributed to childcare providers across Gwynedd as well as to parents. In addition, an episode of the podcast '*Mam, Dad a Magu*' was created, focusing on children's toileting, in order to provide accessible information and support to families and professionals.

The Childcare for Two-year-olds Scheme is having a positive impact on families by giving access to 12.5 hours of free childcare, helping to reduce the cost-of-living pressure. The Scheme has also continued to expand across the county. In the last year, the scheme has been extended to Tywyn, Harlech, Llandderfel and Llanuwchllyn, Penrhyndeudraeth, Efailnewydd/Buan, Botwnnog/Tudweiliog, Cricieth, Caernarfon, Llanberis and Porthmadog West.

2.2.4 Promoting the well-being of children and young people and reducing the cost of sending children to school

During 2025/26, work has continued to promote the well-being of children and young people and reduce the financial pressure on families when sending children to school. Following the comprehensive consultation in 2024 and the valuable feedback received from parents, learners, staff and headteachers, the findings have continued to inform the work of schools and the local authority.

During the year, schools have used the results of the Cost Friendly School Audit to implement practical steps to reduce costs for families. Examples of this include reviewing school uniform policies, promoting second-hand schemes, considering the cost of school trips and additional activities, and ensuring that information about financial support is clearly available to parents and carers.

The working group has developed a Cost Friendly School Charter and schools have started working towards achieving the relevant measures in order to be recognised as 'Cost Friendly' schools. This work has encouraged schools to share good practice and to give greater consideration to the impact of school costs on learner well-being and participation.

We rely on the co-operation of schools to drive this agenda forward as many of the decisions that affect this are made by individual schools. In light of this, members who are also school governors have a key role to play in influencing and scrutinising the decisions of individual schools.

The project is now fully implemented, and supporting schools to put the principles of the Cost Friendly School Charter into action, share successful practices across the county, and ensure that the voice of families and learners continues to inform provision will be part of the Department's day-to-day work rather than continuing as a specific project within the Council Plan.

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, please refer to **Appendix 2**.

Catering

The Free School Meals provision for all primary learners in Gwynedd has continued to be a success during 2025/26, with the service continuing to support the well-being of children and young people across the county. Schools and the Catering service have continued to work closely together to ensure a consistent provision of nutritious and appealing meals for learners.

Take-up levels for the offer have remained strong during the year, and the Department has continued to promote the benefits of school meals among families in order to encourage more children to take advantage of the provision. In March 2026, an average of 6,160 free school meals were provided on any given day.

As well as providing nutritious meals, the service has continued to support the Council's wider priorities by promoting local food, reducing food waste and raising awareness among learners of the importance of healthy eating.

The Sustainable Schools Challenge

Good progress has continued with the Sustainable Schools Challenge project during 2025/26 with the preparation of the site of the old school in Bontnewydd taking place during the year.

Collaboration between Ysgol Bontnewydd, the community, and project partners has remained strong, with the aim of developing an eco-friendly school and community facilities.

that reflect the Welsh Government's carbon ambitions. The project continues to promote the principles of the circular economy by making the best use of reused materials and sustainable construction methods.

The temporary school has continued to operate successfully, ensuring a suitable learning environment for the pupils while planning and preparation work is underway.

The project continues to develop positively, with the vision of creating a modern, sustainable and innovative building that meets the needs of the local community for years to come.

School Support Service

The School Support Service has continued to develop during 2025/26, with a focus on strengthening the strategic and operational support provided to Gwynedd schools. The service has established arrangements that enable schools to have more cohesive access to support and guidance, ensuring that the needs of schools, headteachers and governors are met in a more effective and timely manner.

During the year, there has been an emphasis on developing a closer relationship between the service and individual schools to ensure that the support provided reflects local needs and school improvement priorities. The service has supported schools in key areas such as leadership, curriculum planning, and workforce planning.

Since the service was established, officers have been able to visit all schools across the Authority, contributing to the development of an open and positive relationship of working in partnership with schools.

Over the past two years, there has been a significant reduction in applications for headteacher positions, with the challenge of attracting individuals to school leadership positions increasing. In response to this, the Education Department has developed a *Future Leaders* programme to provide practical support and ensure a developmental pathway and succession within the education system. The programme is being run for the second time this year for two cohorts, with 17 participants from the primary sector and seven from the secondary sector taking part.

Since January 2026, a new programme has also been set up to provide bespoke support for new headteachers and interim acting headteachers. The programme includes mentor support and networking opportunities to support school leaders during the early stages of their leadership. Currently, 22 headteachers have committed to the programme, and the feedback so far has been very positive.

The School Support Service also provides support and advice to School Governing Bodies throughout the county. To strengthen this provision and respond to the growing demand, additional capacity has recently been added to the team through the appointment of an additional Governor Support Officer. This will enable the service to continue to provide timely and effective support to governors in carrying out their statutory responsibilities.

Attendance

Attendance has remained a priority during 2025/26, with attendance levels showing gradual improvement across the county's schools. Although attendance levels have not yet fully returned to the pre-pandemic situation, the overall trend remains positive and reflects the impact of the work of the Authority and the schools.

Up to April 2026, the Authority's average attendance was 91.0%, which equates to the Wales rate for the same period. Gwynedd's historical data shows a steady increase over a three-year period, with attendance increasing from 89.7% in 2022/23, to 90.4% in 2023/24, and then to 90.9% in 2024/25.

This progress has been supported by a continuing focus on early intervention, monitoring of attendance patterns, and close collaboration between schools, the Authority's services and families. Direct support through Education Welfare Officers has remained a key element of the work, helping to reduce barriers to school attendance and supporting learners to re-engage with their education.

Exclusions

The work of the Inclusion Service, together with the further development of the *Camu i'r Copa* Unit in Felinwnda, has enabled schools to access more timely, flexible and bespoke support for learners who are at risk of disengaging from mainstream education. As a result, schools have been able to implement earlier and more effective interventions before situations escalate to the point where a permanent exclusion is being considered.

The implementation of the new Inclusion Strategy has strengthened a more consistent approach across schools, with a clear focus on early intervention, promoting emotional well-being and positive relationships, as well as developing inclusive practices and restorative approaches to support learners more effectively within their mainstream schools.

In addition, the outreach provision has continued to evolve, providing flexible support tailored to the needs of schools and individual learners. While challenges remain in some complex cases, the collaboration between schools, the Inclusion Service and the support teams has further strengthened.

Pupil Referral Unit - Camu i'r Copa

We are pleased to report that *Camu i'r Copa*, the Pupil Referral Unit which is located on the site of the former Ysgol Felinwnda in Llanwnda, has completed two full terms of operation as a successful registered provision. Since the opening of the centre, the provision has developed into a valuable resource for the young people of the county, providing educational, emotional and social support in a safe, nurturing and responsive environment.

During the 2025/26 academic year, the Centre has supported a number of learners with diverse needs, with a clear focus on building confidence, resilience and positive engagement with education. Through small classes, personal learning plans and appropriate therapeutic support, many of the pupils have shown positive progress in their well-being, behaviour and attendance.

The dedicated team at *Camu i'r Copa* has worked closely with families, schools and partner services to ensure that each individual receives the support most suited to their needs. The curriculum has continued to develop by offering a combination of academic subjects, practical activities and opportunities to develop life skills, with a strong emphasis on well-being and personal development. Positive feedback from pupils, parents and partners has reflected the positive impact the provision is having on local young people.

The Centre's location in Llanwnda has continued to be a key element of its success, ensuring that young people can access specialist support within their own community. This reflects Cyngor Gwynedd's ongoing commitment to providing inclusive, accessible and high-quality education for all learners.

Safeguarding and Well-being

During 2025/26, the Safeguarding and Well-being Team focused on establishing and strengthening the new Safeguarding and Well-being Service within Gwynedd schools. The service has been fully established, with contact and enquiry recording systems now in place and in regular use by schools across the county.

New arrangements for responding to allegations against school staff have been developed and implemented, as well as a review of training arrangements to align with the latest Social Care Wales standards.

Safeguarding quality and monitoring visit arrangements are now established, with reporting and evaluation processes in place. Further work is planned for 2026/27 to evaluate and share good practice. Our annual quality monitoring and evaluation visit arrangements are now robust and compare very favourably with other Local Authorities.

The service continued to provide training and guidance to schools throughout the year, supporting an effective response to learners' safeguarding and well-being needs.

The use of Children Looked After (CLA) attendance data and monitoring has strengthened, with an Attendance Dashboard and supporting systems enabling more effective monitoring at school, catchment and sector level. An annual process for monitoring the Personal Education Plans of Children Looked After has also been established, with training and support being provided to schools.

There were staffing challenges in ensuring timely safeguarding quality visits, but this was mitigated by increasing the capacity of the service from three to four members of staff, thereby improving the team's ability to respond to demand and maintain consistent support.

Youth Service

During 2025/26, the Youth Service has continued to expand and strengthen its community provision across Gwynedd, ensuring broad and accessible opportunities for young people across the county. The service now delivers 34 community projects and clubs on a weekly basis across Arfon, Meirionnydd and Dwyfor, including fixed community clubs, mobile provision and specialist services.

During the year, five new community clubs were established in priority areas, namely Trawsfynydd, Bala, Llandwrog, Mynytho and Tywyn. This development has strengthened local access to youth activities and ensured that more young people in rural communities are able to access safe and supportive provision within their area.

Partnership work has remained a key element of the service's success. The ongoing collaboration with the Urdd has enabled 'aelwydydd' and after-school activities to be held and developed across the county, while close work with secondary schools has ensured a provision that is more co-ordinated and responsive to young people's needs.

Significant progress has also been made in the area of youth participation and engagement. Young people's forums have now been established across Gwynedd, and work has begun on developing a young people's voice forum at Council level. This will provide further opportunities for young people to contribute directly to county decisions and influence services that affect them.

In addition, the service has begun preparing for the development of the Welsh Government's new five-year Youth Work Strategy. This work will involve extensive engagement with young people, partners and Council services to ensure that the needs and priorities of young people in Gwynedd are at the heart of plans for the future. Face-to-face meetings have been held to engage with service partners in Caernarfon, Bangor, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Pwllheli and Bala.

The work of the Youth Service has continued to have a positive impact on the well-being, confidence and personal development of young people across Gwynedd. By providing safe and supportive spaces to meet, socialise and develop new skills, the service has helped to strengthen community ties and reduce feelings of loneliness and social exclusion.

4. Consultation

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

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Report on Council Plan projects 2025-26

Appendix 2: Education Department Performance Measures

				<p>The Childcare Scheme has a positive impact on families by providing access to 12.5 hours of free childcare, helping to reduce the cost of living.</p> <p>There is also a positive impact on children, through access to quality care and activities that support their development alongside their peers.</p> <p>Childcare providers benefit from the Scheme through financial investment in resources and professional support from the Early Years Advisory Teacher and the wider childcare team.</p>
<p>Education Department:</p> <p>Modernise buildings and the learning environment</p>	<p>Despite significant investment over the last decade, several of the county's school buildings are old and need modernisation. We will continue to make improvements to schools across the county, specifically in the Bangor and Cricieth areas, and we will take every opportunity to apply for grant assistance to enable us to modernise existing buildings and develop new buildings.</p>	<p>Hirael Commencement of construction work on the site.</p> <p>Our Lady's School Complete the construction work and open the new school in Easter 2026.</p> <p>Tryfan</p> <p>i) Compile and submit a business case (Outline Business Case)</p> <p>ii) Agree on an outline design</p> <p>Bontnewydd</p> <p>i) Submit the full business case (Full Business Case)</p> <p>ii) Complete the construction of the temporary school</p>	<p>No</p> <p>Partially</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>What has been achieved:</p> <p>Hirael Design work has taken place in 2025/26.</p> <p>Our Lady's School The construction is progressing and it is expected that the project will be completed during the summer term with the school opening at the beginning of the autumn term 2026.</p> <p>Tryfan During summer 2025, plans for the school were developed noting the need to increase the budget. The Cabinet has subsequently approved a recommendation to increase the project budget from £18m to £23.6m. The design team continues to work on developing a plan that achieves net zero requirements, preparing for the submission of the Outline Business Case in the summer 2026 term.</p> <p>Bontnewydd Construction of the temporary school was completed during the 2025 summer term, and since September 2025, the school and community centre have operated from the temporary building. The full business case was</p>

		<p>iii) Demolish the existing building</p>	<p>Partially</p>	<p>submitted in March 2026, following a detailed process of value engineering.</p> <p>Impact on the people of Gwynedd:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better education facilities – More children benefit from schools with modern learning environments that enhance the educational experience of Gwynedd's learners. • Economic opportunities – Capital developments create jobs and community benefits and consequently strengthen the local economy. • Net zero buildings – Proposed projects are sustainable, which will reduce the carbon footprint of our schools. • Improved use of facilities – More children, groups and community organisations benefiting from access to modern, multi-use facilities that will be open to the wider community.
<p>Education Department:</p> <p>Promote the well-being of children and young people and reduce the cost of sending children to school</p> <p>Page 175</p>	<p>With the increasing costs of daily items such as school uniform, food, transport and stationery, we will revisit the costs associated with sending children to school, with the intention of reducing these costs, whilst protecting the education and valuable experiences that our children have during and after school hours.</p> <p>We will also deal with well-being issues including emotional and psychological challenges, and support wider issues that affect children and young people, for example building confidence,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compile and distribute a 'Cost of attending school' audit for each school to evaluate existing arrangements. • Analyse the findings of the audit. • Share findings with schools in the form of an individual action plan for each school. 	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>What has been achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 'Cost of attending school' audit was compiled and distributed to each school in Gwynedd. • All responses were analysed and key areas of costs and challenges were identified. • Each school that responded was given an individual action plan, based on the responses, to discuss with the governors. <p>Impact on the people of Gwynedd:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the financial pressure on families by helping schools reduce unnecessary costs and ensure a suitable advance notice for a request for money.

	equality, mental health, transport issues, and securing work experience and job opportunities.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More opportunities for children and young people to take part in activities, regardless of the family's financial situation. • Schools are mindful of financial challenges when planning events and asking for contributions. • Dedicated cost reduction provisions and support are planned and provided by schools.
Education Department and HE YGC Extend opportunities for play and socialising for the county's children and young people	We will look at how the new provision for Youth is working across the county and what outcomes this delivers for young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with Town and Community Councils with a view to increasing the number of community clubs across the county. • Align the local authority's strategy with the Welsh Government's five-year plans. • Identify ways of engaging more broadly with young people and, in particular, specific groups of young people. • Develop a memorandum of understanding with secondary schools to ensure planning, presenting and reviewing cohesive youth provisions within a school context, contributing to the well-being and positive behaviour of young people aged 11-18. 	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes (continues in 2026/27)</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>What has been achieved:</p> <p>The Youth Service delivers 34 community projects and clubs on a weekly basis across Gwynedd, with 16 based in Arfon, 10 in Meirionnydd and 8 in Dwyfor, ensuring a wide geographical spread and fair access for young people across the county. The provision includes 12 clubs funded by local councils, 3 Friendly Clubs in partnership with Derwen, 18 mobile community clubs that respond flexibly to local needs, and 1 specialist Neuro club. During the 2025/26 year, 5 new community clubs were opened in priority areas, in Trawsfynydd, Bala, Llandwrog, Tywyn and Mynytho.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Youth forums have been set up across the county, with plans to launch the Council's full young people's voice forum. This will enable direct input from young people into the leadership of the Council, with a new Engagement and Communications Coordinator supporting participation, particularly from the hardest to reach.</p> <p>The Youth Service has developed plans jointly with Secondary schools to ensure clear, purposeful and effective provision.</p> <p>Impact on the people of Gwynedd:</p> <p>The provision of clubs and projects across the county ensures fair access to safe and supportive activities,</p>

				<p>helping to improve young people's well-being, confidence and social skills, as well as reducing feelings of loneliness in rural communities.</p> <p>By expanding provision to priority areas and offering flexible models such as mobile clubs and specialist provision, more young people are able to access relevant services that meet their needs.</p> <p>The partnership work with organisations such as the Urdd and schools strengthens the support around young people, ensuring a more coherent approach to working and better educational and social outcomes.</p> <p>The development of young people's forums and plans to strengthen their voice means that the young people of Gwynedd have more influence on decisions that affect them, fostering a sense of ownership and active citizenship.</p> <p>In the long term, the development of a five-year Strategy will help to ensure a more sustainable service, designed around the needs of the county's young people.</p>
<p>Education Department</p> <p>Formulate and implement a 10-year strategic direction for education in Gwynedd</p> <p>Page 177</p>	<p>Formulate a 10-year Education Strategy for Gwynedd engaging with key stakeholders on the priorities to ensure a resilient education system, together with world-class educational provision and experiences for children and young people in the county</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement on the draft Strategy. • Present the Education Strategy to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee. • Submit the final Education Strategy to the Cabinet with the Strategy becoming operational. 	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>What has been achieved:</p> <p>The Schools Strategy sets out a clear vision for education in Gwynedd over the next 10 years. It was developed through engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, including headteachers of primary, secondary and special schools, the Gwynedd Governors' Forum and the County Children and Young People's Forum, as well as an electronic survey which was open for eight weeks. This ensured that the Strategy was informed by professional perspectives and learner voices.</p> <p>The draft Strategy was submitted to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee on 11/12/25.</p> <p>The Strategy was submitted to the Cabinet on 10/02/26</p>

Impact on the people of Gwynedd:

The new Schools Strategy has a positive and long-term impact on the people of Gwynedd by setting a clear direction for the development of education over the next decade.

For learners, it means more consistent and high-quality education provision, informed by their needs. By including the voice of young people in the process, the Strategy is more relevant and reflects real experiences in the schools.

The aim of the Strategy is to build an inclusive, fair and high-quality education system. It will support better standards of education through better school organisation in response to demographic changes, more effective use of resources, and strengthening school leadership and workforce development. This is expected to lead to more consistent learning experiences and better opportunities for children and young people to reach their potential.

For schools and staff, it provides clarity on priorities and expectations, supporting better planning and collaboration across the county.

The Strategy also supports a more sustainable school network to strengthen schools and communities, and promotes the daily use of Welsh among children and young people, contributing to increasing the number of Welsh speakers.

The wide-ranging engagement process has strengthened trust and ownership among stakeholders, laying a solid foundation for more effective educational decision-making in Gwynedd in the years to come.

<p>Education Department</p> <p>Review and improve the range of inclusion provisions in Gwynedd.</p> <p style="text-align: right; vertical-align: bottom;">Page 179</p>	<p>The range of inclusion provisions available to learners with emotional, behavioural and social needs needs to be reviewed and improved. The needs of these learners have increased, with the impact of the pandemic seen clearly and long term.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult, restructure, and appoint staff. • Register the provision as a Portfolio Pupil Referral Unit. • Form a Management Committee for the PRU. • Induct and train staff. • Launch an Inclusion Strategy. 	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>What has been achieved:</p> <p>The restructuring and appointment of staff has been completed, and the provision is now officially registered. A Management Committee has also been established, with its first meeting held in November 2025.</p> <p>Induction sessions were held for staff, along with training on relevant systems and strategies to ensure full readiness.</p> <p>The Pupil Referral Unit ‘Camu I’r Copa’, which is located on the site of the former Ysgol Felinwnda in Llanwnda, is now operational as a registered provision and has begun to support learners. The centre is an important resource for young people in the area who require tailored educational support, offering a safe and supportive environment that responds to their individual needs.</p> <p>In addition, the Inclusion Strategy was presented in the Strategic Groups with the headteachers in October 2025.</p> <p>Impact on the people of Gwynedd:</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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</p>
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				<p>their potential and improve their well-being alongside their academic attainment.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>This aligns with Cyngor Gwynedd's wider vision for modernising education.</p>
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A Welsh Gwynedd: Ensuring that our residents can continue to live in a naturally Welsh speaking community

Department and Project	Overview	What we want to achieve during the third year 2025-26 (milestones):	Has the milestone been completed	What has been achieved during the year and the impact (or likely impact) on the people of Gwynedd?
<p>Education Department</p> <p>Modernising and extending the immersion provision to teach Welsh to children</p> <p>Page 180</p>	<p>It is essential that learners who are latecomers are afforded opportunities to learn Welsh as soon as possible, through a first-rate modern provision that is spread across Wales. It is essential that learners who are less confident in their Welsh language also have an opportunity to gain confidence and to improve their Welsh with the support of the Immersion Education System. We also wish to see our language immersion methods extended to support the Welsh language in schools that serve communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • 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. • Equip the Foundation Phase workforce in terms of the principles of immersion education. Conduct regular training for Foundation Phase 	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>What has been achieved:</p> <p>The new website has been launched, with weekly blogs (including historical ones) included, and resources have been provided to schools through HWB, along with additional resources on request.</p> <p>A Youth Sub-Committee has been established and meetings have been held, but it has not met the need to share information about Outcome 5; this is planned to be addressed through the Welsh Language Programme Board from April 2026.</p> <p>Training for prospective teachers at Bangor University took place in October 2025, and some have taken advantage of an invitation to the centres to observe the work of the immersion teachers.</p> <p>Immersion staff have met staff from Anglesey, Denbighshire, Conwy, Flintshire and Wrexham Authorities to share resources.</p>

	<p>where opportunities to use Welsh in the home and outside school are limited. This project in cooperation with the Immersion System and our schools will give all our learners the best opportunity to become confident Welsh speakers who can use the language in all aspects of life.</p>	<p>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.</p>		<p>A member of staff from the Immersion System is working with two secondary schools on a scheme that will meet the need for immersion resources for older learners. The resource has been discussed with Agored Cymru.</p> <p>Impact on the people of Gwynedd:</p> <p>The above has a positive impact on the people of Gwynedd, especially children and young people, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving access to Welsh learning information, resources and materials and strengthening immersion provision, enabling learners – including older ones – to build confidence and ability in Welsh. • developing the skills and expertise of education staff. • taking advantage of regional collaboration opportunities to strengthen provision for the benefit of Gwynedd learners. • including the voice of young people with the intention of further strengthening their role to improve the process of information-sharing and their influence
<p>Education Department</p> <p>Review Gwynedd's Education Language Policy and conduct an evaluation of the Immersion System to ensure that all the Education</p>	<p>Review Gwynedd's Education Language Policy along with undertaking an evaluation of the Immersion System to ensure that all education policies and services provided in Gwynedd set a firm foundation for the Welsh language, contribute to Welsh 2050, and reflect the most recent changes in the field by the Welsh Government.</p>	<p>1. Language Policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement on the draft Language Policy. • Present the model Language Policy to the Cabinet. 	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>What has been achieved:</p> <p>A draft of Gwynedd's Model Education Language Policy was submitted to the Cabinet on 16/12/25, and it was agreed to use it for public consultation.</p> <p>The consultation took place between 7 January and 25 February 2026 to gather responses to inform a revised version of the policy.</p> <p>It is intended to report back to the Cabinet in June 2026 to decide whether to adopt the policy.</p>

<p>policies and services provided to children and young people in Gwynedd set a firm foundation for the Welsh language</p>		<p>2. Immersion System:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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). • Submit the Report to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee on 16 October 2025. • Respond to the findings of the Bangor University Report – Evaluation of the Gwynedd Immersion System by reviewing the practical arrangements of the 10- 	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>If approved, school governing bodies will consult with their communities before implementing it from September 2026.</p> <p>Impact on the people of Gwynedd:</p> <p>The above steps have a positive impact on the people of Gwynedd by giving parents, learners and the wider community the opportunity to contribute to the formulation of an Education Language Policy. The process of consultation and reporting back to Cabinet ensures that decisions are made in an open and accountable manner. The aim of the Policy is to support the development of the Welsh language in education. By developing and implementing a clear language policy, it is expected to strengthen Welsh language provision in schools and improve learners' language outcomes. The aim of the policy is to ensure consistency across schools and to assist in ensuring a more consistent approach across schools in Gwynedd.</p> <p>What has been achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bangor University submitted a report on an evaluation of the Immersion System to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee on 16/10/25. • The report was accepted by the Committee. • At present, the current structure cannot be changed without significant investment from the Welsh Government. While communication between the Cabinet Member for Education and the Welsh Government has taken place, there has been no response regarding additional funding. • Nevertheless, a number of improvements and adaptations are already being made within the current structure, in line with the Scrutiny Committee's comments. These are included in the System's Development Plan and associated work programme.
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		<p>week course and strengthening the after-care provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Impact on the people of Gwynedd:</p> <p>Continuous improvements and adaptations to the Immersion System ensure that learners continue to receive effective support to develop their Welsh. Consideration of the findings of the evaluation and stakeholder views also helps to refine the provision for the benefit of children and young people.</p> <p>Although no significant changes are possible, the ongoing work contributes to maintaining and improving language standards.</p>
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Performance of the Education Department

81

Indicators

59

Amount of Green

72.84%

% Green

19

Amount of Amber

23.46%

% Amber

3

Amount of Red

3.70%

% Red

"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
CLA	Children Looked After
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

82

Catering

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

65

Catering

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

27

Catering

% of School Food Hygiene and Standards Audit reports rated 5

89

Business Support

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

98

Business Support

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

100

Education Transport

Number of transport complaints

9

Safeguarding

% difference between the attendance of Children Looked After (CLA) and not looked after

0.08

Safeguarding

% of scrutinised Personal Education Plans containing suitable educational targets

88

Safeguarding

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

100

Safeguarding

% of school staff with a current DBS check

99.31

Safeguarding

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

100

Safeguarding

Number of days Children Looked After have been out of education in an academic year

45



Education Indicators

Governors

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

86

Governors

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

95

Governors

% of governors attending induction training

77

Modernisation

% of capital projects progressing as expected

90

Modernisation

% of non-capital projects progressing as expected

100

School Admissions

Number of school admission appeals received during the period

0

School Admissions

Number of School transfer applications received during the period

230

School Admissions

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

99.80

School Admissions

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

100

School Standards

% of schools that have received a support visit during the term

97.80

School Standards

% of schools without a permanent headteacher

13

School Standards

Number of schools in an Estyn statutory category

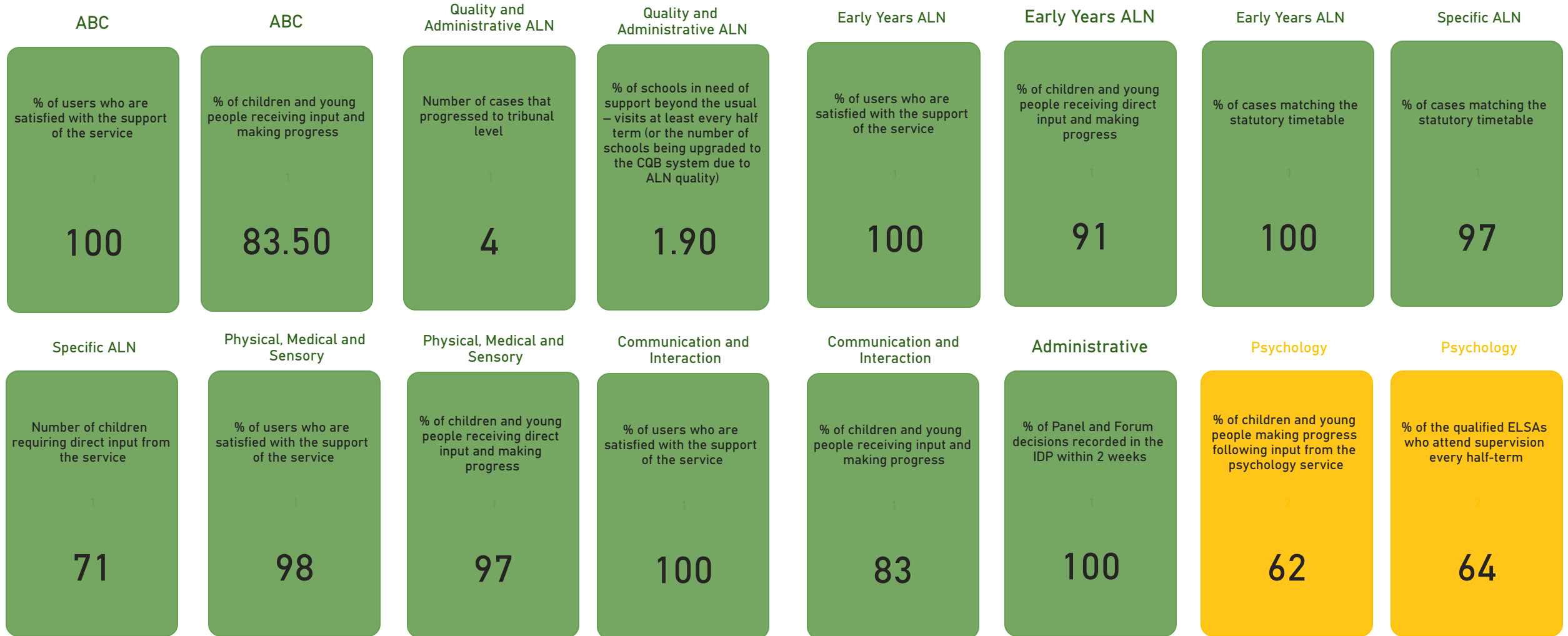
5

Data Unit

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

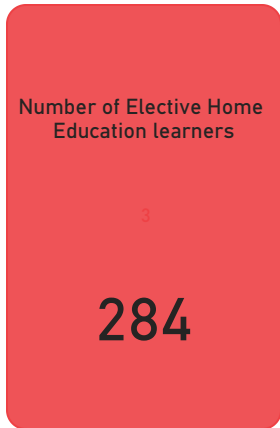
80

ALN Indicators

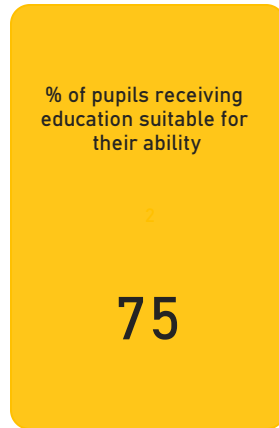


Inclusion Indicators

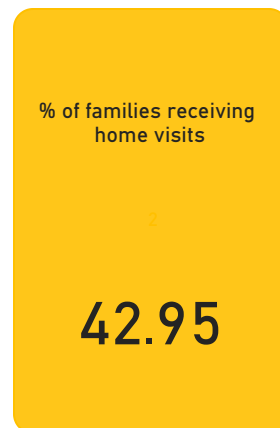
Elective Home Education



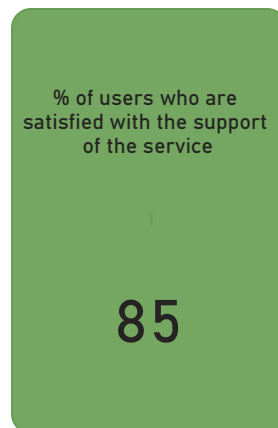
Elective Home Education



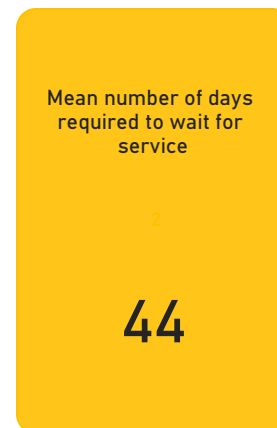
Elective Home Education



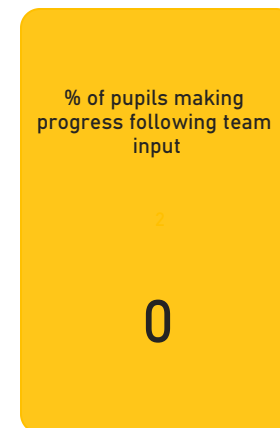
Counselling



Counselling



Inclusion



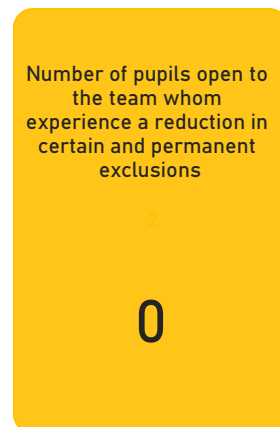
Inclusion



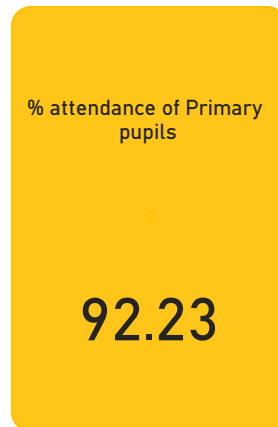
Inclusion



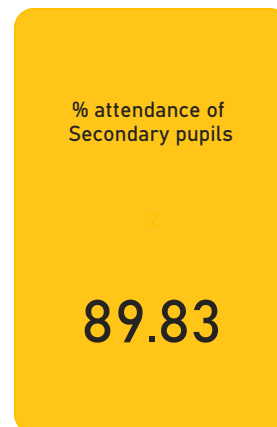
Inclusion



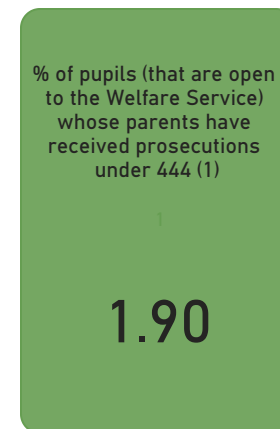
Welfare



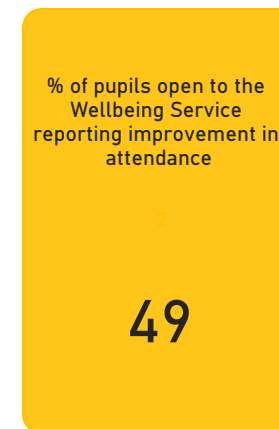
Welfare



Welfare



Welfare



Inclusion Indicators

English as an Additional Language

% of children and young people receiving direct input and are progressing

94

English as an Additional Language

% attendance of pupils receiving support

83

Family Engagement Officers

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

63

Family Engagement Officers

% of pupils attending our community activities

54.35



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

Language Centres

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

67

Language Centres

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

100

Language Centres

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

36

The Welsh Language

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

97

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.

95

Youth Service

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

97

Youth Service

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

76

Youth Service

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

71

Youth Service

% of young people who have enjoyed the service provided

95

Youth Service

Youth Support Service Case Loads 16-25 year olds

96

Youth Service

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

489

Youth Service

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

5,951

Youth Service

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

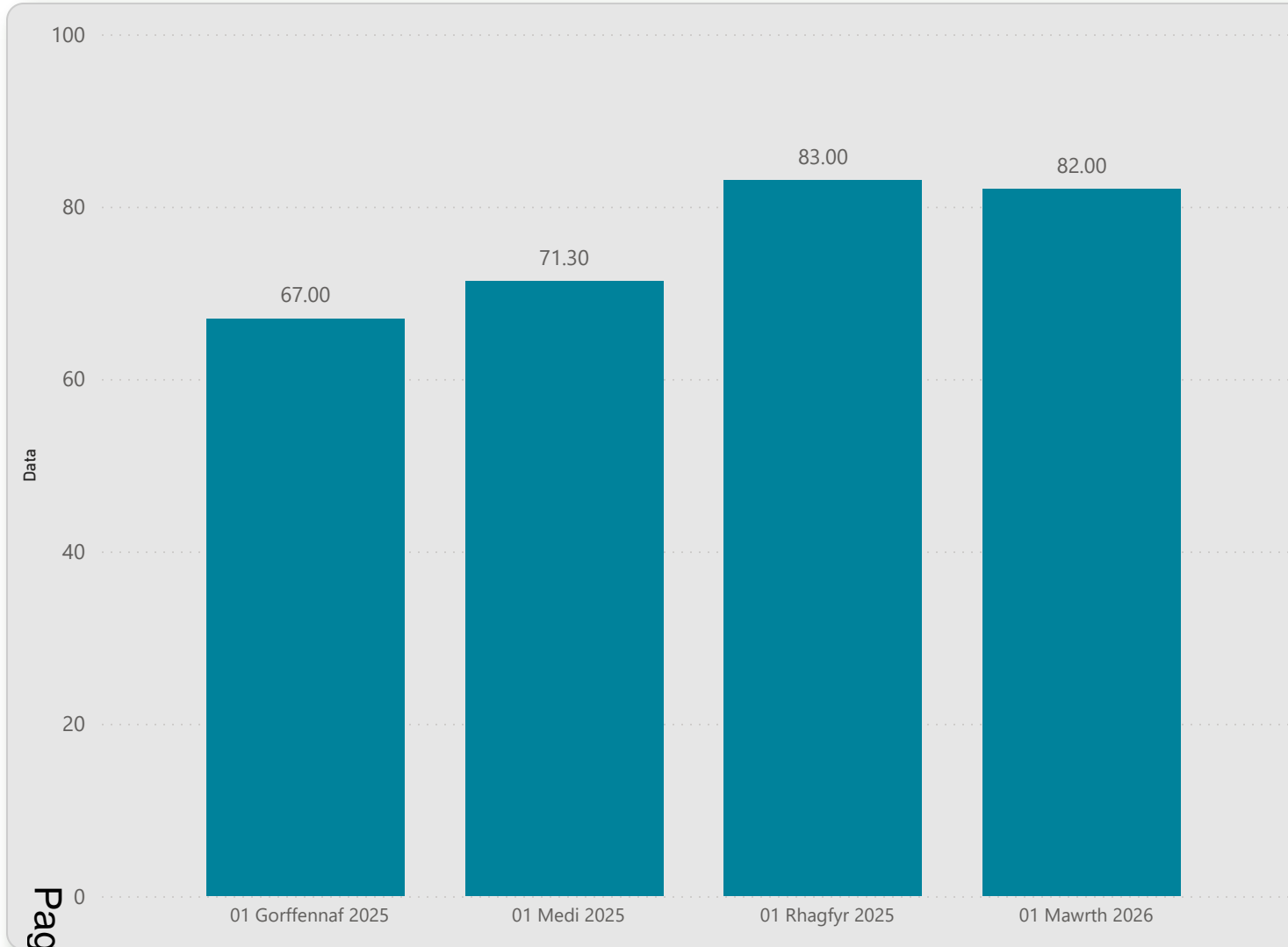
3,114



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



82% of learners took up the free school meal offer in March 2026.

This figure includes learners who are eligible through the Universal Primary Free School Meals (UPFSM) scheme, as well as those eligible through benefits-based Free School Meals (FSM). It should also be noted that attendance levels can influence these figures.

Regarding the uptake of the free lunch grant in the primary sector, 73% of learners took up the offer through the UPFSM scheme. This data is based on a sample week in March. When compared with neighbouring local authorities, the percentage of learners taking up the offer follows a similar pattern, but Cyngor Gwynedd has a higher percentage of learners taking up the scheme than some authorities in North Wales.

In recent weeks, themed menus have been planned — such as St Dwynwen's Day, St David's Day, Easter and Chinese New Year — in an effort to encourage more learners to take up the school meal offer. Initial feedback from Headteachers has been positive.

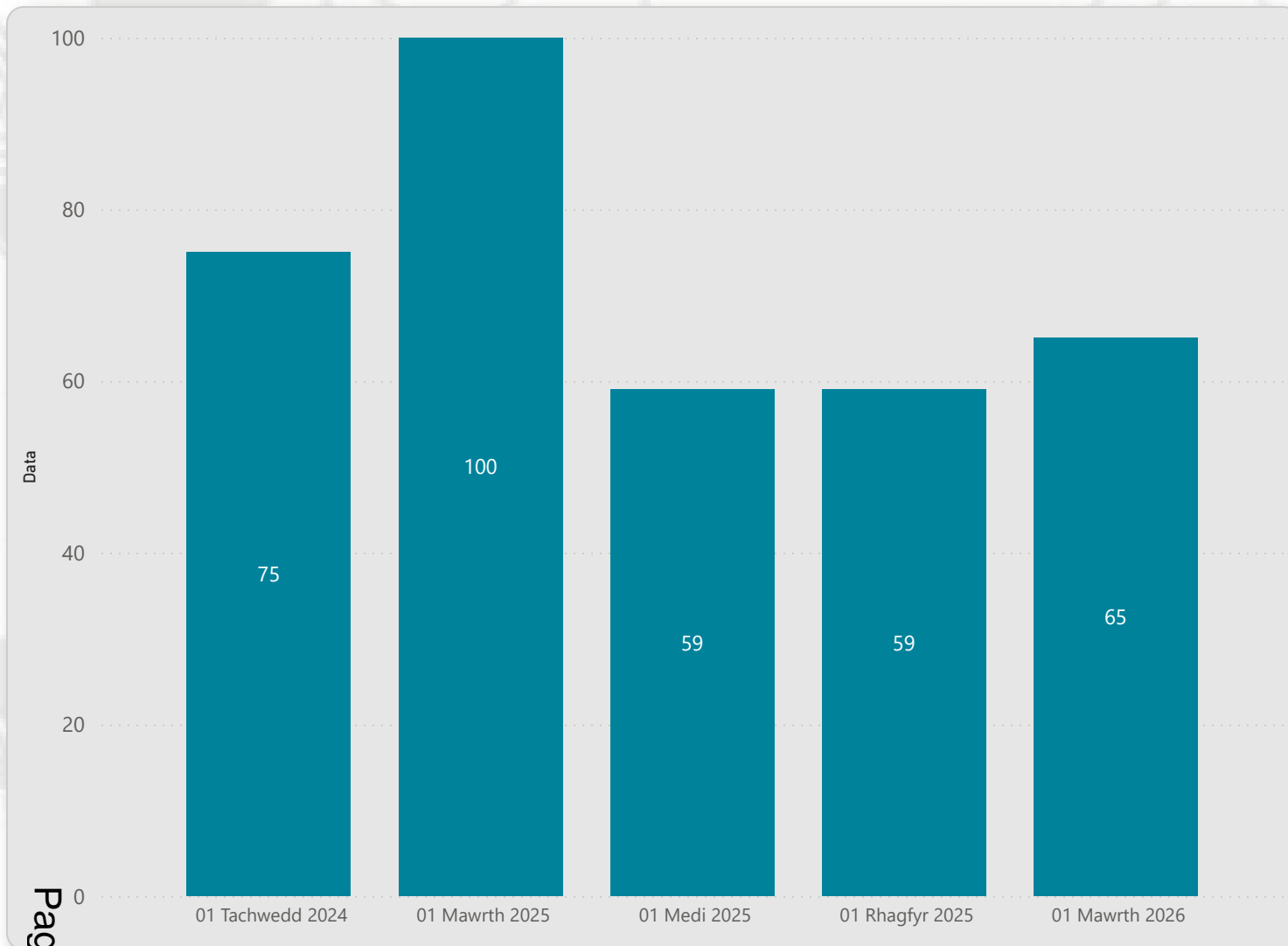
Monthly

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



11 schools completed the questionnaire, with a total of 667 primary-aged learners. Of the learners who completed the questionnaire, 90% were satisfied or neutral:

- 65% satisfied (happy face)
- 25% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (neutral face)
- 10% dissatisfied (sad face), noting that they did not like the food.

The number of schools that completed the customer satisfaction questionnaire for March was not high, so we do not have a detailed overview across all schools. General comments such as “nice food” and “lovely food” appear consistently across responses. In terms of preferences, some meals are more popular than others, such as chips, pizza and roast dinner in some areas. Overall, the views of learners who selected a sad face tend to reflect personal taste and preference rather than concerns about food quality. In addition, the Food and Fun and Free School Meals Promotion Officer visited 5 schools in December: Ysgol yr Hendre, Ysgol Glancegin, Ysgol Cymerau, Ysgol Llanllechid and Ysgol y Traeth. Similar responses emerged following the visits, with personal preferences influencing whether learners choose school meals or not. It became clear that more older learners in the schools choose to bring a packed lunch. The main reasons included preferring familiar foods from home and the influence of friends. It also appears that some learners who bring a packed lunch throughout the week choose school meals on Fridays because chips are on the menu.

Monthly

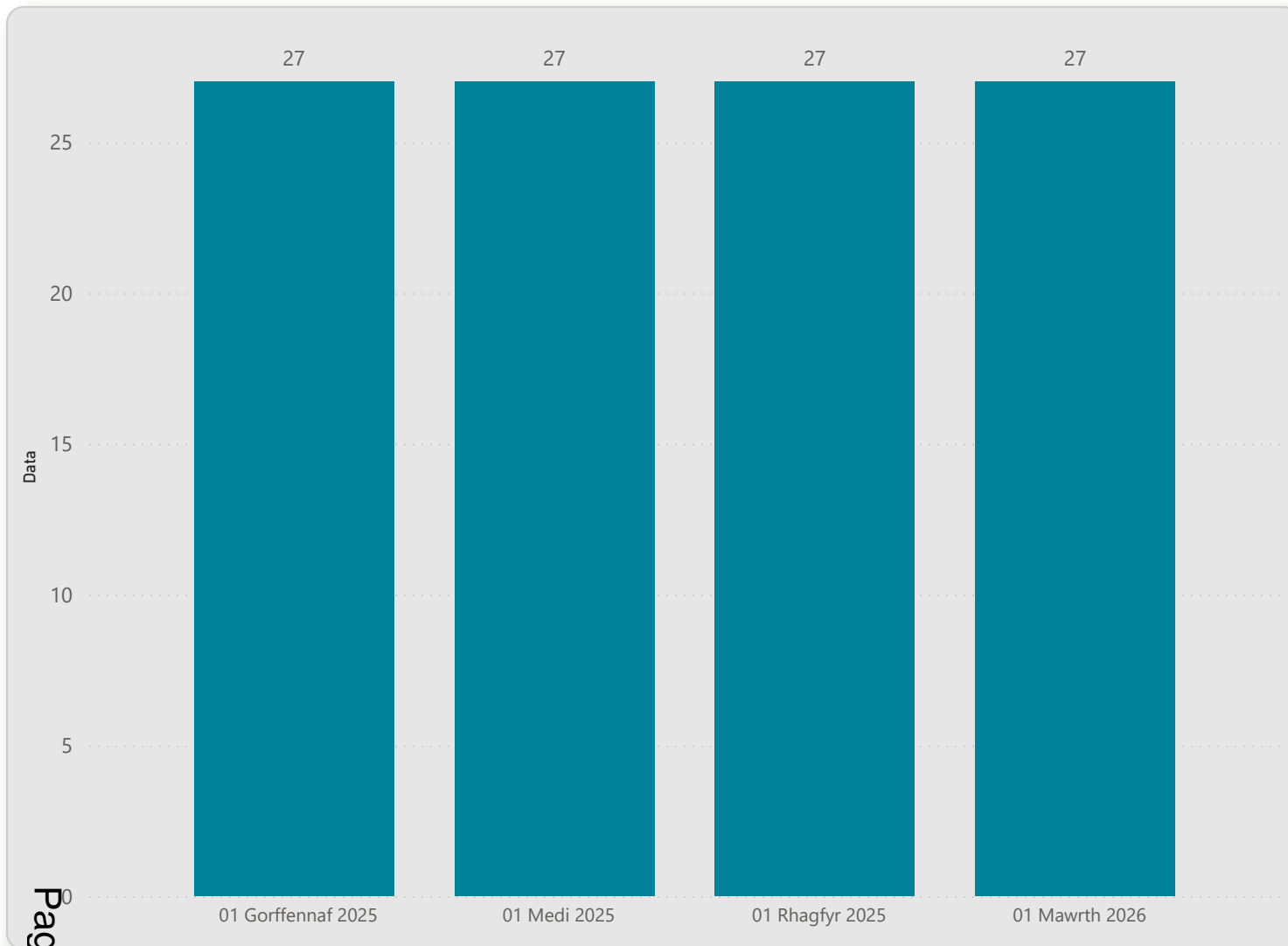
Rhian Eifiona Hughes (ADDYSG)



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 took part in the Summer 2024 Food and Fun Programme. Eight schools made use of the programme last year during Summer 2025 (30 schools were eligible, PLASC data January 2025).

Although the Food and Fun Programme is an excellent initiative, fully funded by the Welsh Government and offering valuable opportunities for our learners over the summer, it remains a challenge to secure school commitment to working 12 days during the summer holidays. Working during the holidays is not part of the employment contracts of many school staff, nor of staff in the Education Catering and Cleaning Service, so we rely on the goodwill of staff to take part. To support this, we have collaborated with Community and Family Engagement Officers and external agencies to assist in some schools, although this support is not available in every area.

Some schools have expressed that the Nutrition Skills for Life (Level 2) training, which is essential for running the programme is a barrier, as staff need to be released to attend the course (6 sessions). The course can now be completed online, which makes participation easier for schools, but a few schools still see this as a barrier because the sessions take place during school hours.

For Summer 2026, we have registered 8 schools to take part in the programme. Discussions were held with more schools initially, but unfortunately Headteachers were unable to commit this year.

A Project Board has been arranged with the schools and key partners at the beginning of March to go through the programme requirements. The next steps are to confirm that each school has sufficient staffing for the summer and to ensure that the programme lead attends the food and nutrition training with Betsi Cadwaladr in April. During April and May, face-to-face meetings will need to be arranged in the schools to develop an activity timetable and provide support as required.

Monthly

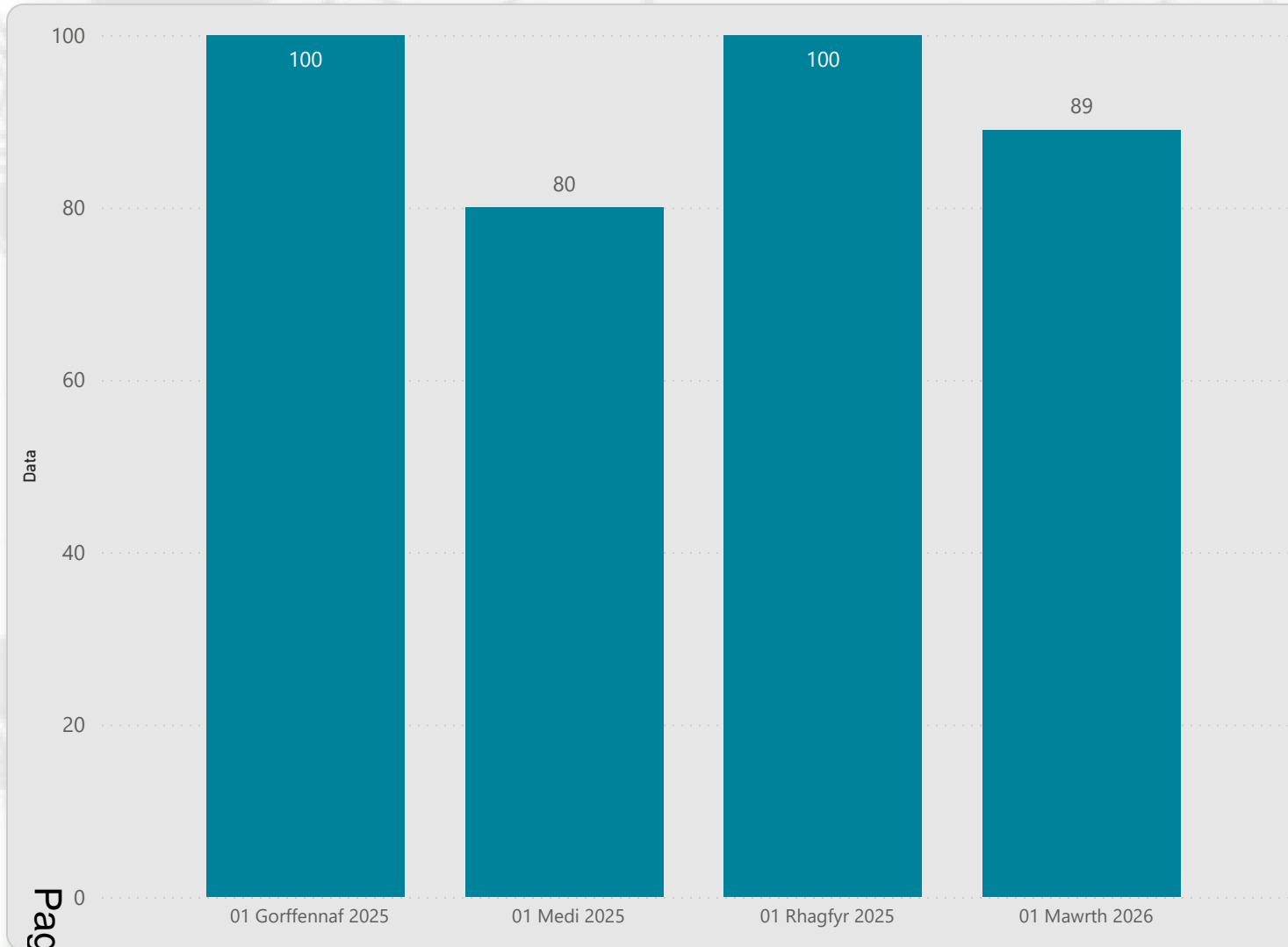
Rhian Eifiona Hughes (ADDYSG)



Catering

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

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



8 out of 9 schools received a score of 5, and 1 received a score of 4.

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

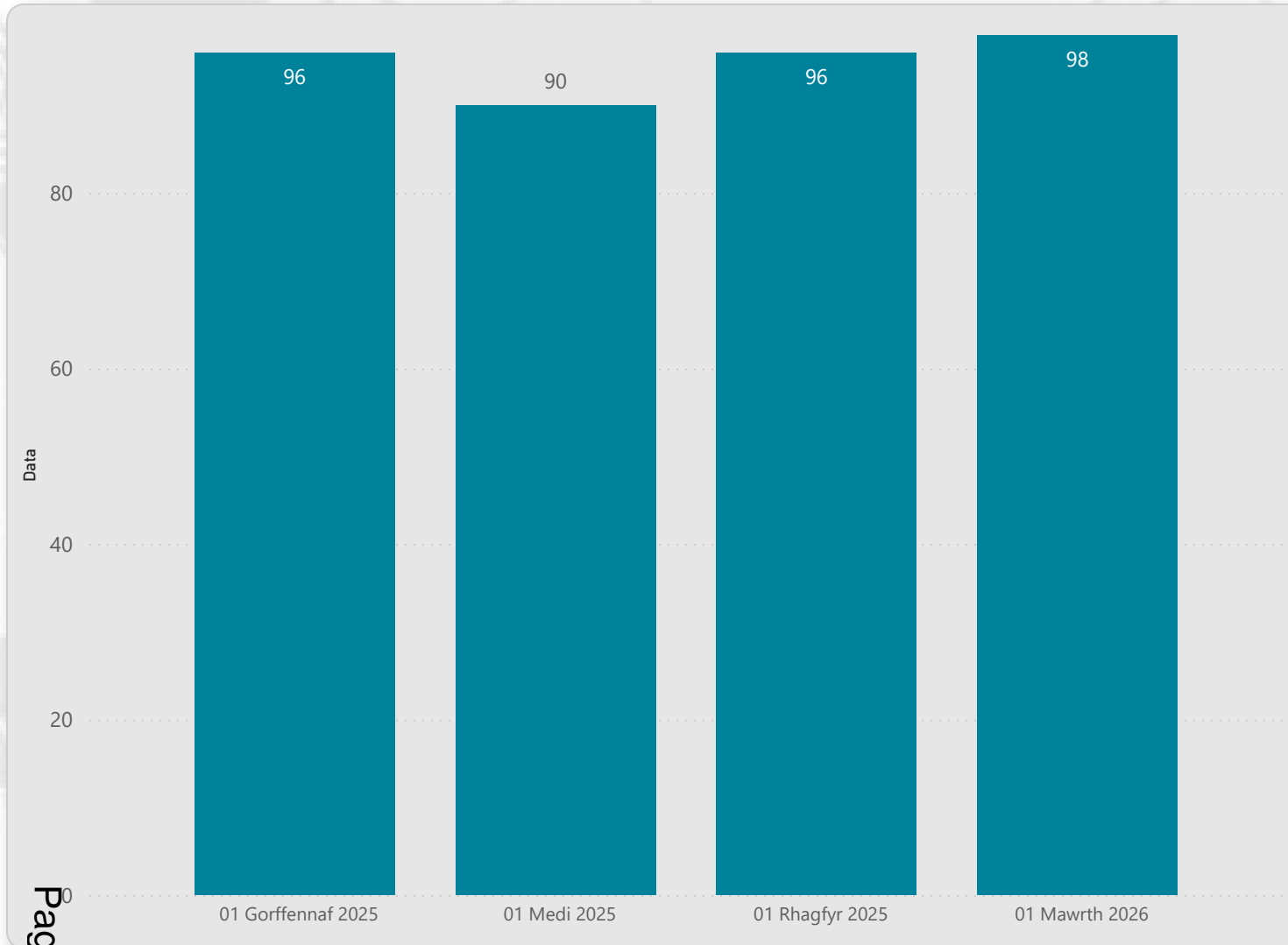
Monthly

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 1,954 invoices during the period 01/01/26 to 20/03/26. 98% of the invoices were processed within 7 days (equivalent to 5 working days) of receipt, which is a high percentage. There were valid reasons for the 2% that were not processed within the seven-day timeframe.

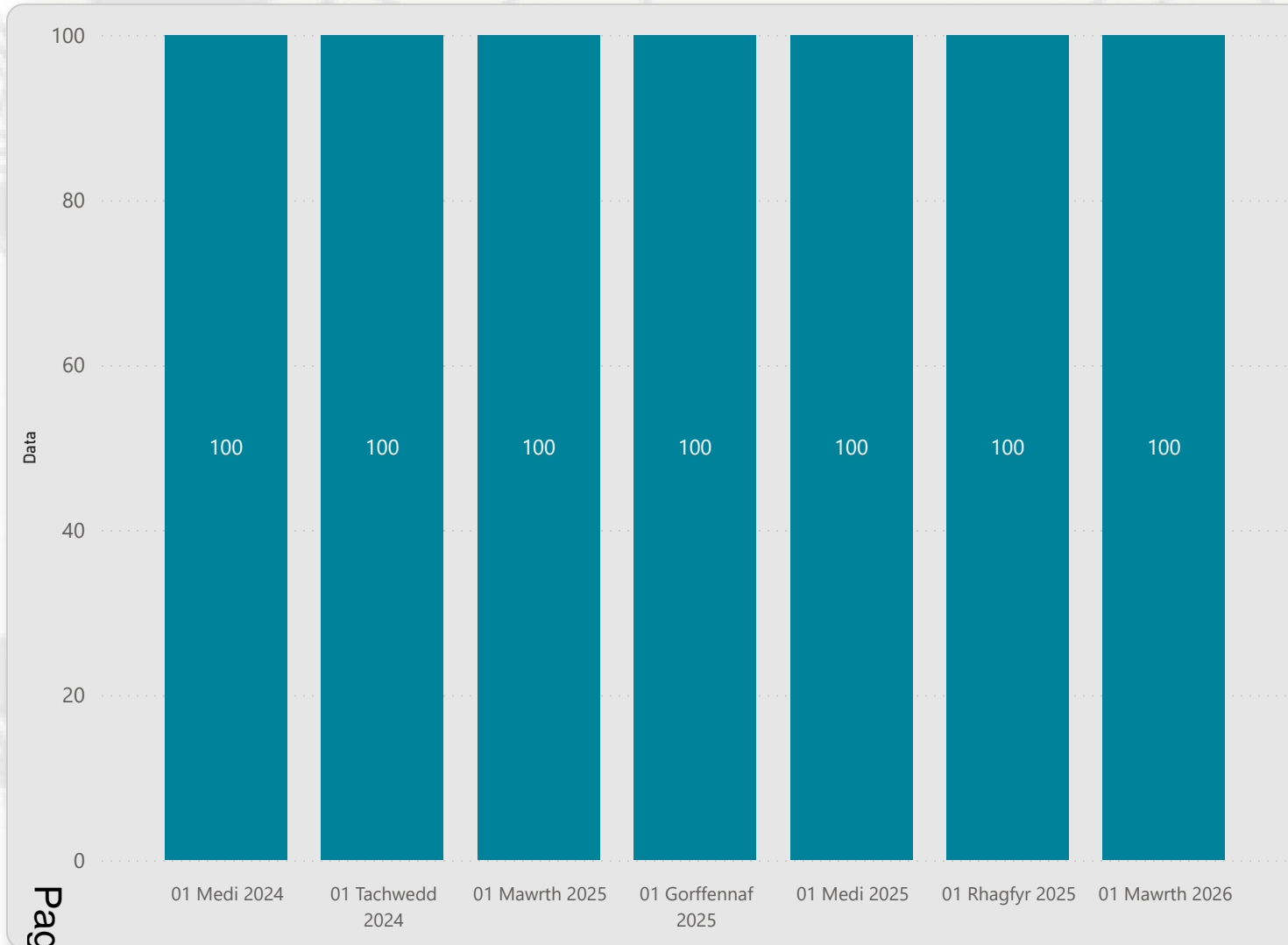
Monthly

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



Questionnaires were sent to the headteachers of the schools that staff visit. In addition, meetings were held with 30% of the headteachers to gather their views on the service, with the aim of improving future provision.

The responses received were very promising, with 5 schools having responded to the questionnaires so far, all indicating that they are very satisfied with the service. We will follow up on the questionnaires that have not yet been returned after the Easter holidays.

Here are some of the comments noted on the questionnaires:

- This support has reduced the administrative burden on me as a headteacher who also teaches four days a week. I can recommend this service to anyone.
- The service is extremely valuable to us as a small school that cannot afford an administrative officer. It significantly reduces the Headteacher's workload, and every visit brings great relief as the administrative work and task list are completed.
- The business officer knows what work needs to be done in the school, which makes my job much easier, and her contacts within various council departments are extremely valuable.

During the meetings, headteachers expressed that they could not manage without the service, as it reduces their workload and enables them to focus on their statutory duties.

All schools wish to continue purchasing the service again in the 2026/27 financial year, which is very good news, and in addition, two further schools have decided to buy into the service in 2026/27.

Monthly

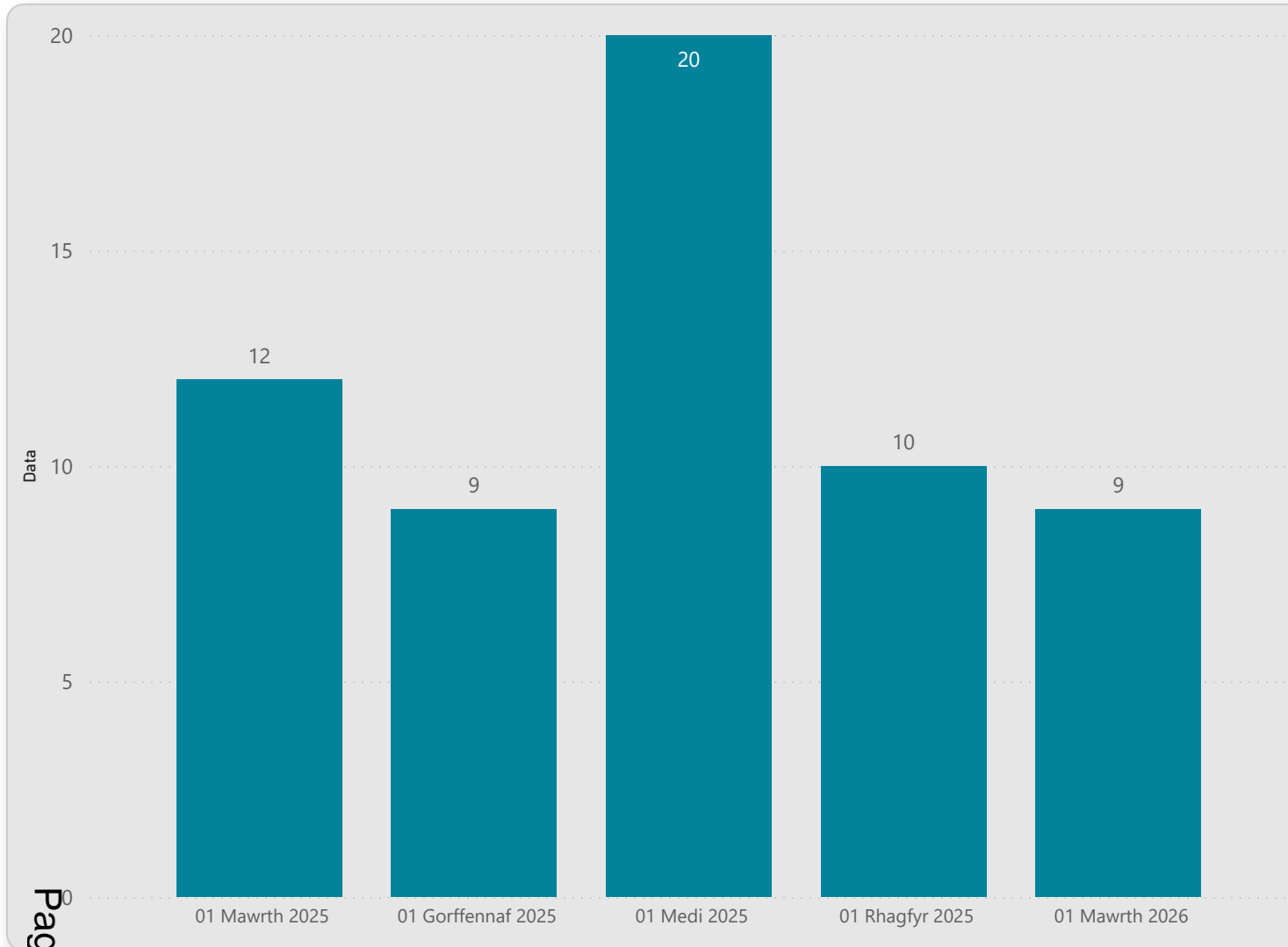
Kathryn Aveline Roberts (ADDYSG)



Education Transport

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

Indicator: Number of transport complaints



It is clear that all learners have now settled and become accustomed to the provision, which is reflected in the number of complaints received. One complaint was received regarding damage to bus shelters in a neighbouring village. The matter was dealt with in collaboration with the local police, the school and the transport unit to identify those responsible and agree a solution.

Three complaints were received regarding the refusal of school transport for a learner who was not eligible because their new school of choice was out of catchment. However, the background of these learners which was reviewed in case they meet ALN criteria or special exemptions.

Two complaints were received relating to the behaviour of some learners in taxis. Appropriate collaboration took place between the schools, council officers and providers, and positive solutions were found by adapting the existing provision.

One complaint was received regarding the suitability of a specialist vehicle. Again, several officers worked together to identify a solution. In partnership with the taxi operator, it was ensured that the new vehicle was suitable and met the needs of the learner concerned.

One complaint expressed concern about learners travelling without a valid ticket on education transport provided by Transport for Wales trains. Monitoring visits were undertaken, meetings were held with staff, the full arrangements were reviewed, and train tickets were arranged for the learners involved.

Finally, one complaint was received from a school bus operator regarding unacceptable behaviour by a small group of learners on a route in a nearby area. Appropriate collaboration took place with the school concerned to identify an immediate short-term solution, and discussions are ongoing to establish a long-term arrangement to...

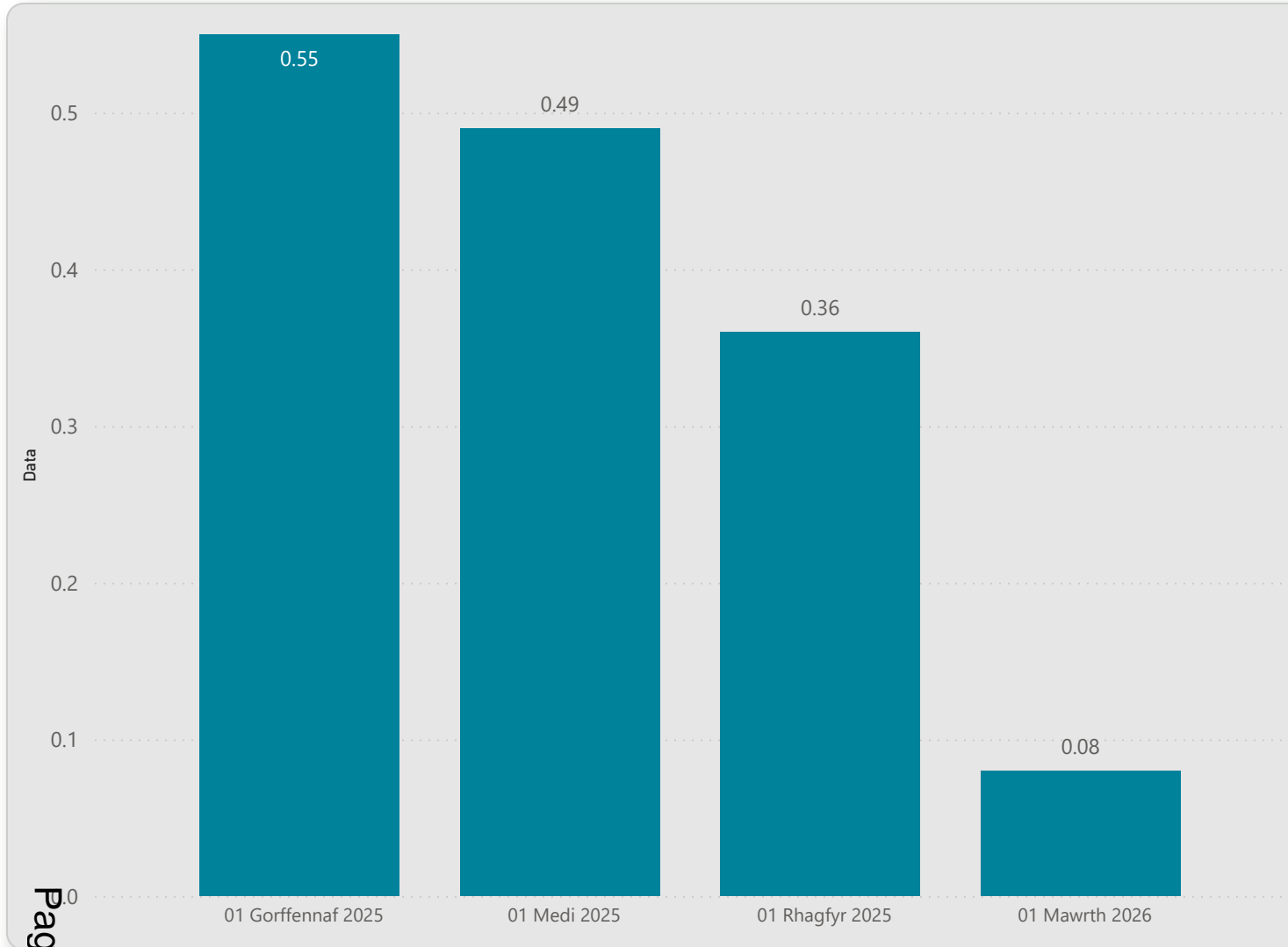
Monthly

Robert John Jones (ADDYSG)

Safeguarding

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

Indicator: % difference between the attendance of Children Looked After (CLA) and not looked after



Attendance for Children Looked After (CLA) currently stands at 91.48% (an increase of 0.24% since the previous reporting period), which is consistent with the overall Gwynedd school attendance rate of 91.56%, a difference of only 0.08%. In the primary sector, CLA attendance is 94.88% (an increase of 1.44% since the last reporting period), which is positive compared with the Gwynedd primary attendance rate of 93.15%. In the secondary sector, the picture reflects the additional challenges faced by some pupils in care, with a 2.02% gap between CLA attendance (87.69%) and the Gwynedd secondary attendance rate (89.71%).

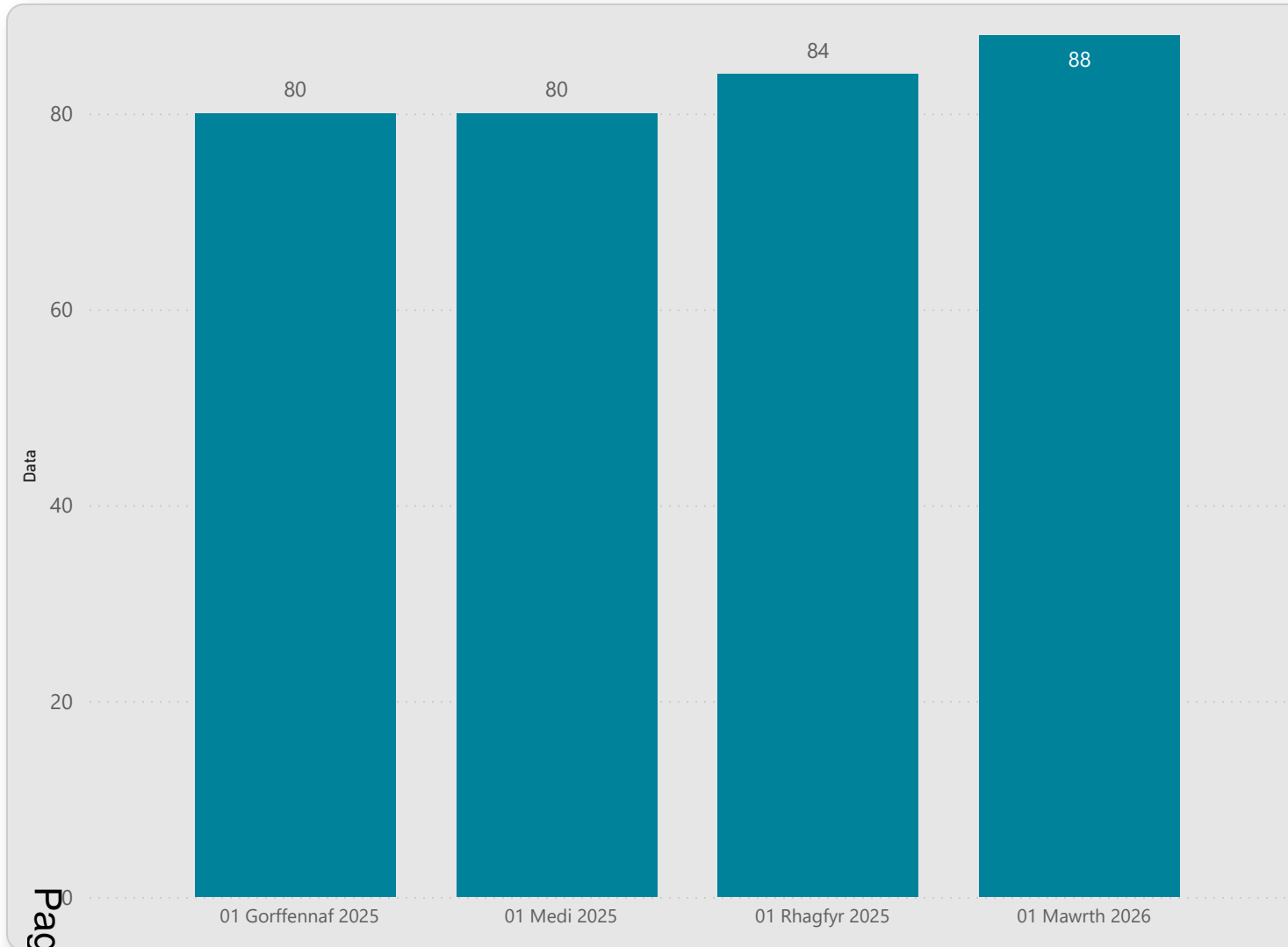
Monthly

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



Following an audit earlier in the academic year of all Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for Children Looked After in Gwynedd schools, ongoing work has begun to support schools in improving those plans where additional information or specific enhancements were identified as necessary.

The audit found that all PEPs included targets, but it also highlighted that some plans required:

- improving the quality of the targets, particularly by ensuring they are more specific and follow SMART principles
- more explicit inclusion of the pupil's voice
- clearer targets relating to educational attainment and emotional/social wellbeing

Work to strengthen these plans is already underway. The Gwynedd Children Looked After Support Officer is providing:

- direct advice to schools
- improved templates and guidance
- one-to-one supportive meetings where needed

The updating and improvement work is being carried out as part of the regular review cycle, and schools have begun to strengthen their plans based on the audit findings

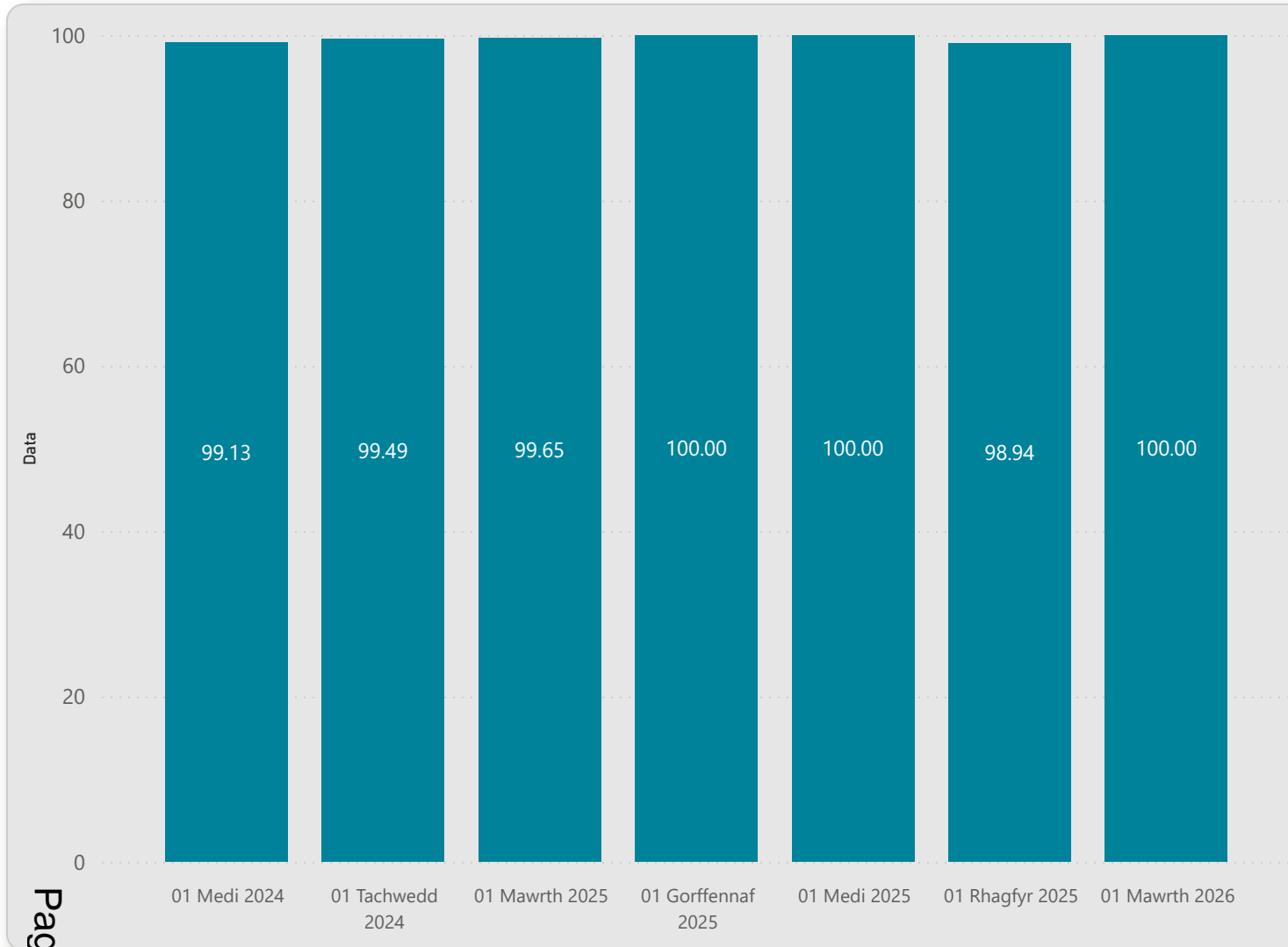
Monthly

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 (excluding school-based staff and ancillary staff working in schools) have a current DBS check.

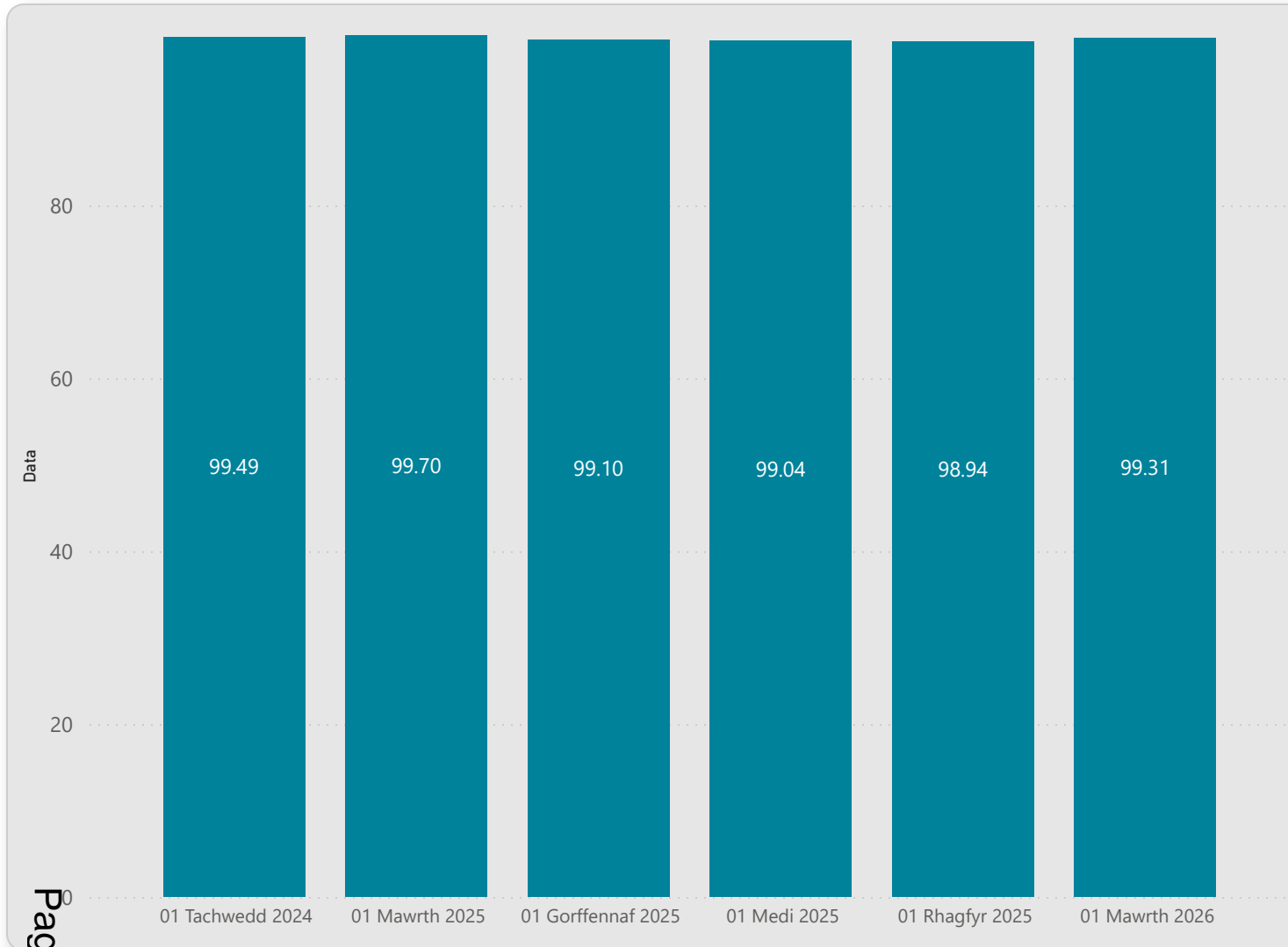
Monthly

Llion Williams (ADDYSG)

Safeguarding

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

Indicator: % of school staff with a current DBS check



DBS reports are monitored monthly as part of the Department's compliance arrangements, in addition to the automatic alerts generated through the self-service system. For February 2026, the Department's DBS compliance level stands at 99.31%.

Work is ongoing to ensure that casual staff are not included in the analysis, in order to maintain data accuracy. No member of staff begins working in a school without a valid DBS check.

At present, there are 20 individuals on the "DBS not updated" list, categorised as follows:

- 5 individuals – absent due to long-term sickness or other leave, including 2 teachers and 3 support assistants.
- 10 individuals – awaiting manager verification of their application, including 1 teacher, 1 behaviour support assistant, and the remainder being casual staff.
- 2 individuals – need to complete their application, consisting of 1 assistant and 1 teacher (both in supply/casual roles).
- 3 individuals – awaiting DBS results, including 1 teacher, 1 assistant, and 1 catering/cleaning staff member. These three have a DBS check, but the update process has not yet been completed in line with the council's 3-year policy. Risk assessments are carried out to ensure these individuals can continue their duties until the DBS update process is completed.

All cases are monitored regularly, and follow-up is undertaken with line managers to ensure timely progress and compliance with statutory requirements and good practice.

Monthly

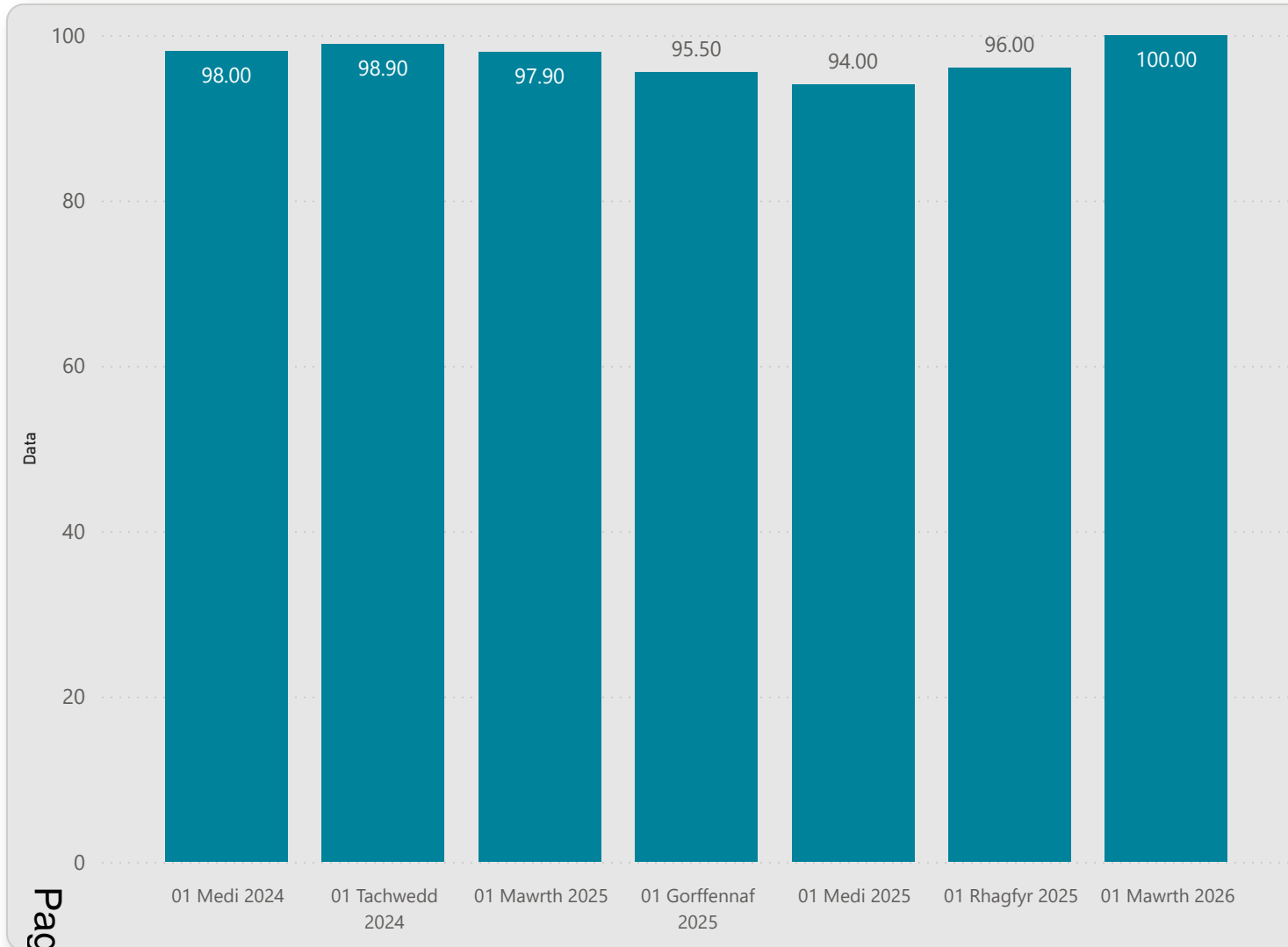
Llion Williams (ADDYSG)



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



During the visit cycle between January and March 2026, it was found that all schools were compliant at a good level or better with statutory and local safeguarding requirements. Despite the overall high level of compliance, a series of basic actions were identified in three schools, aimed at strengthening safeguarding arrangements in practice.

These actions related to:

- Increasing the visibility of safeguarding messages by adding more posters and safeguarding guidance around the school.
- Ensuring consistent visitor procedures, including providing a visitor lanyard to every individual who signs in.
- Renewing Group C (Designated Person Level) training for certain staff members before the end of the term. This is to remain within Gwynedd's two-year renewal cycle—higher than the national requirement of every three years—as part of maintaining strong compliance standards.

These three schools will receive additional supportive visits after Easter to monitor progress and ensure that all recommendations have been fully implemented.

Monthly

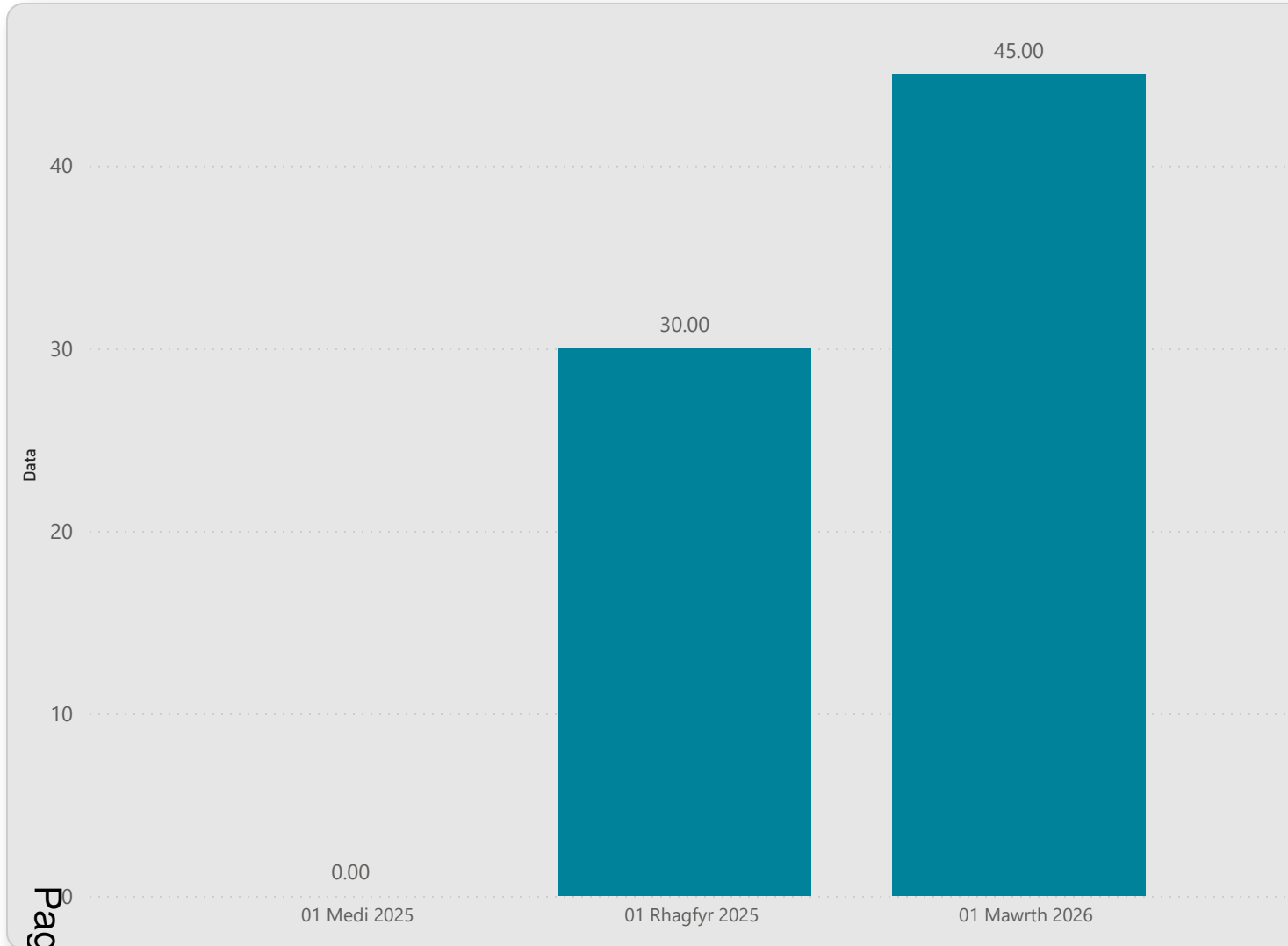
Llion Williams (ADDYSG)



Safeguarding

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

Indicator: Number of days Children Looked After have been out of education in an academic year



There are currently two pupils within the Children Looked After sector who are outside mainstream education, and multi-agency work is ongoing to ensure that suitable and interim provision is in place while efforts continue to stabilise their educational situation.

Pupil 1

The most recent data relates to a pupil who had not attended school for an extended period before a formal request was submitted to change schools. The new school has now accepted the transfer and is working closely with the School Wellbeing Team and the Social Worker.

Despite several transition meetings arranged by the school, the pupil has not attended to date. As a result:

- New arrangements have been made for a meeting between a member of school staff, the Safeguarding and Wellbeing Officer, and the pupil in a community location (off the school site).
- The situation is being monitored continuously, with regular discussions between the Social Worker and the Independent Reviewing Officer to ensure support is in place and to assess progress.

Pupil 2

The second pupil is also currently outside mainstream education. Ongoing discussions are taking place between:

- Social Services
- The Children Looked After Coordinator
- The Inclusion Team

These partners are working together to develop a temporary alternative provision plan for the pupil until a stable and suitable educational placement becomes available that can meet their needs.

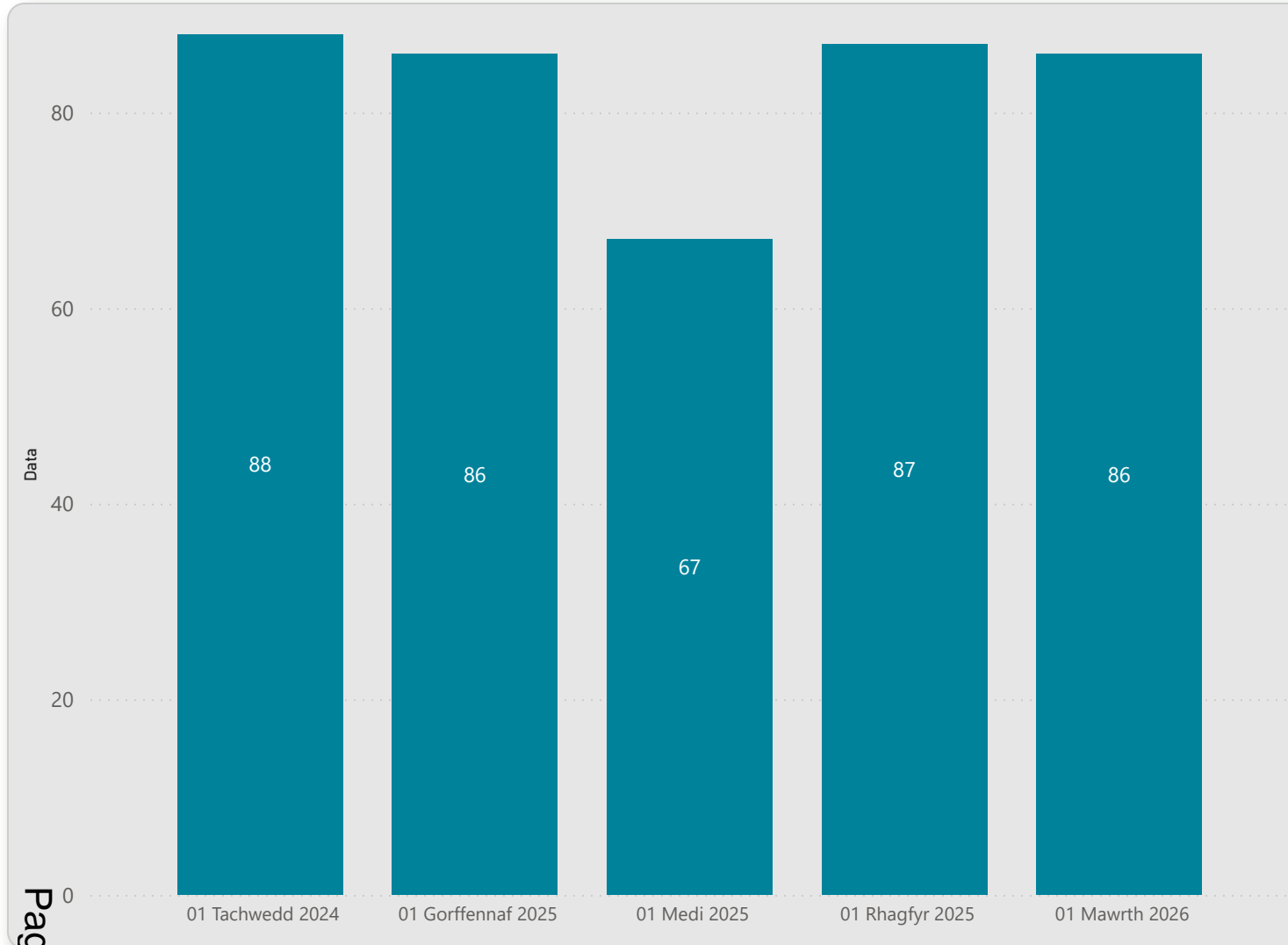
Monthly

Llion Williams (ADDYSG)

Governors

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



These percentages are based on 21 responses from attendees of the New Governor Induction, New Chair Induction, Redundancy, and Safeguarding sessions for Chairs and Designated Safeguarding Governors. A total of 82 Governors attended these training sessions. It is concerning that only a quarter of attendees complete the evaluation form that is sent out after the training.

Of the 21 responses, 18 (86%) indicated that their confidence in the subject area had increased following the training. Of the 3 respondents (14%) who did not feel more confident, 2 were already confident beforehand, and the third — who attended the Redundancy training — questioned the suitability of the session. Their comments will be considered before delivering Redundancy training in 2027.

It will also be necessary to consider whether an alternative method of collecting this information is required.

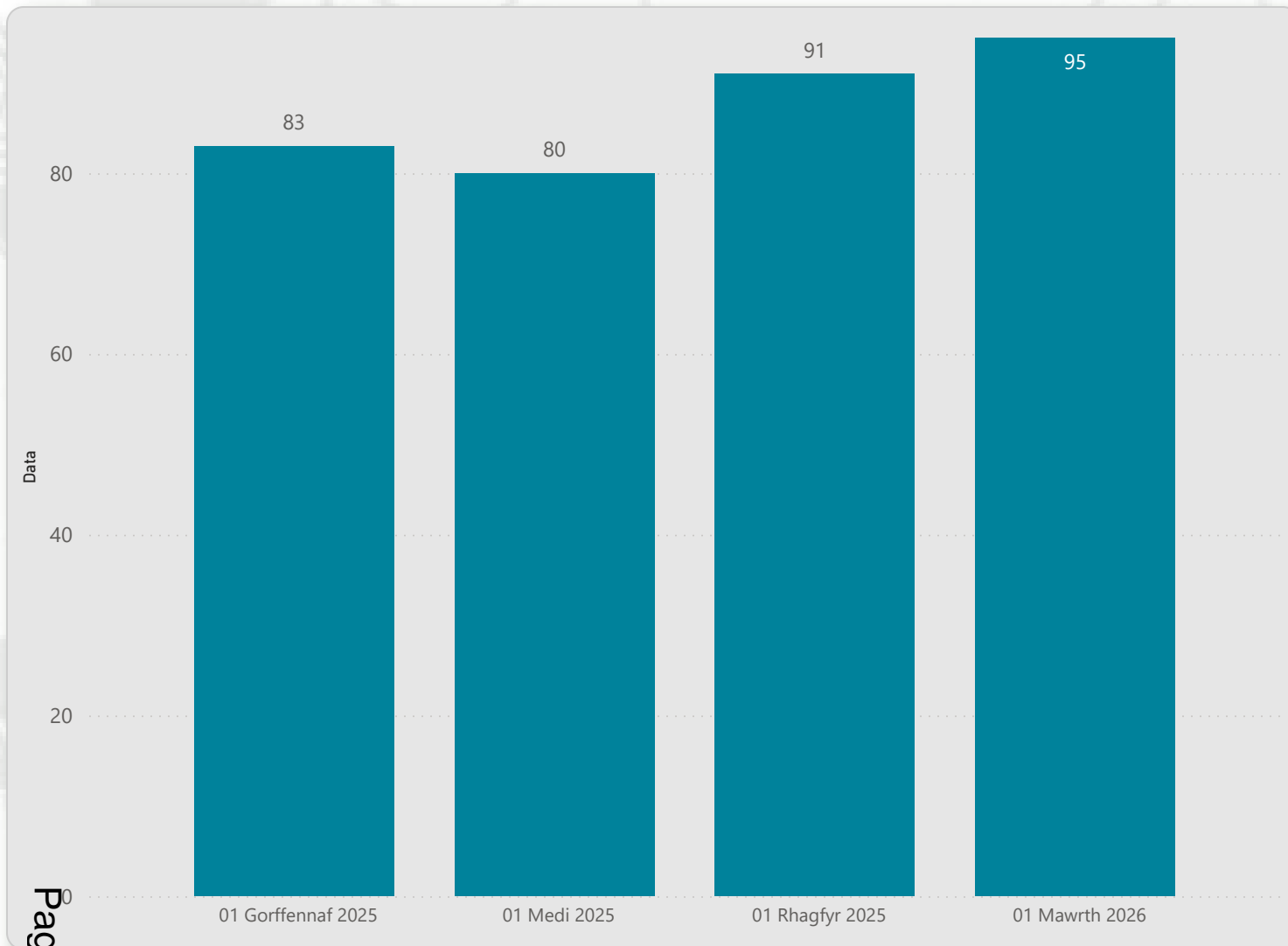
Quarterly

Buddug Mair Huws (ADDYSG)

Governors

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)



Each individual Governing Body Clerk was asked to complete a survey that specifically requested information regarding induction training for Governors as well as Chairperson training. To date, we have received information for 58 Governing Bodies out of a total of 88 (66%) – a figure that remains disappointing. The information presented is based solely on those responses.

We asked for the name of the Chair of the Governing Body, when they were first elected to the role, and whether they had attended the New Chairs training. Of the 58 Chairs, 95% (55) had already attended the training. Of the 5% (3) who had not attended, 2 were new to the role and had been elected Chair for the first time last term. One of these had booked a place on the Chairs training in March 2026 but had to cancel at the last minute. The remaining Chair who had not attended the training had been in post since September 2024.

Gathering information about governing bodies continues to be a challenge, as we are dependent on the actions of the Clerk. We have identified that developing the role of the Clerk is a key action within our work programme for 2026–27, with Clerk training scheduled for April 2026.

To move forward, the following will be required:

- Continue to pursue information from the 30 Governing Bodies that have not yet responded, in order to gain a fuller picture of the situation.
- Target individual Chairs who have not attended the training and ensure that they complete the online training immediately.
- By September 2026, review the training programme in its entirety and ensure that any new Chair completes the training during the Autumn Term.

Quarterly

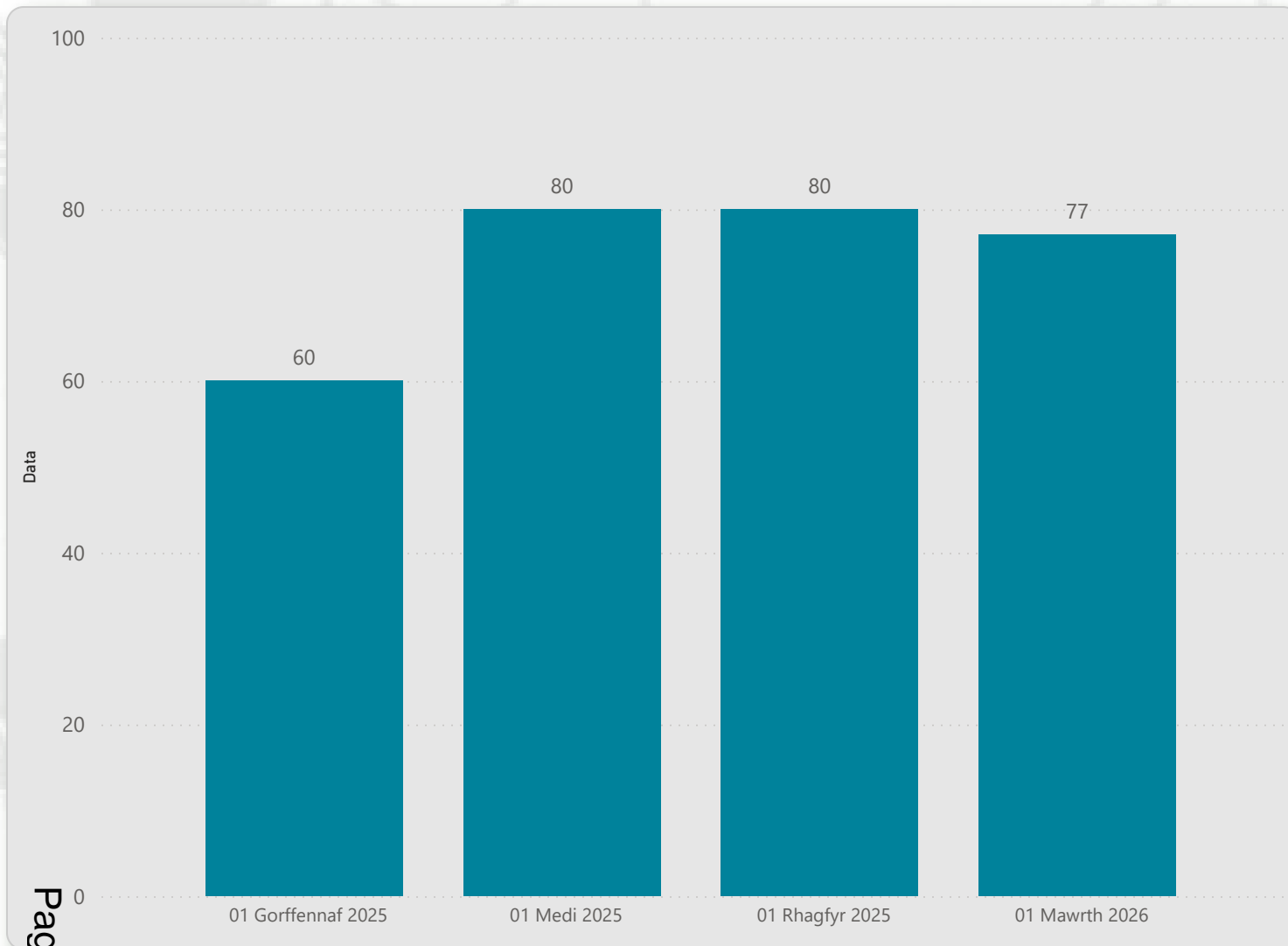
Buddug Mair Huws (ADDYSG)



Governors

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

Indicator: % of governors attending induction training



Each individual Governing Body Clerk was asked to complete a survey that specifically requested information regarding induction training for Governors as well as Chair training. We received information for 58 Governing Bodies out of a total of 88 (66%). The information presented is based solely on those responses. We asked for the number of current Governors on each Governing Body, how many of them had attended Governor Induction training, and of those who had not attended, how many had been Governors for less than a year (in order to comply with the statutory requirement). Excluding Headteachers, there were 703 Governors serving on the 58 Governing Bodies. Of these, 77% (544) had attended the training. Of the 23% (159) who had not attended, 11% (74) were new to the role, with most having started between September and December 2025. This leaves the remaining 12% (85) who have been Governors for more than a year and have not completed the induction training.

Looking more closely at who these Governors are, several are school staff members (teachers and support staff) who have been Governors for many years. Beyond that, it is clear that some schools are better than others at ensuring their new Governors attend training. The situation varies significantly from school to school.

To move forward, the following will be required:

- Continue to pursue information from the 30 Governing Bodies that have not yet responded in order to gain a fuller picture of the situation.
- Promote the general programme of induction sessions through the Clerks of each Governing Body.
- Target individual schools where several Governors have not attended the training.
- Deliver a training programme for Clerks to ensure that Governing Body Clerks understand the importance of promoting and recording Governor training.

Governance as a whole will be one of the main priorities for the Education Department for 2026–27, with the development of an annual training programme for Clerks and Governors being a key action.

There is also an intention to pilot a Professional Clerk arrangement with those schools that currently do not have a Clerk in place.

Quarterly

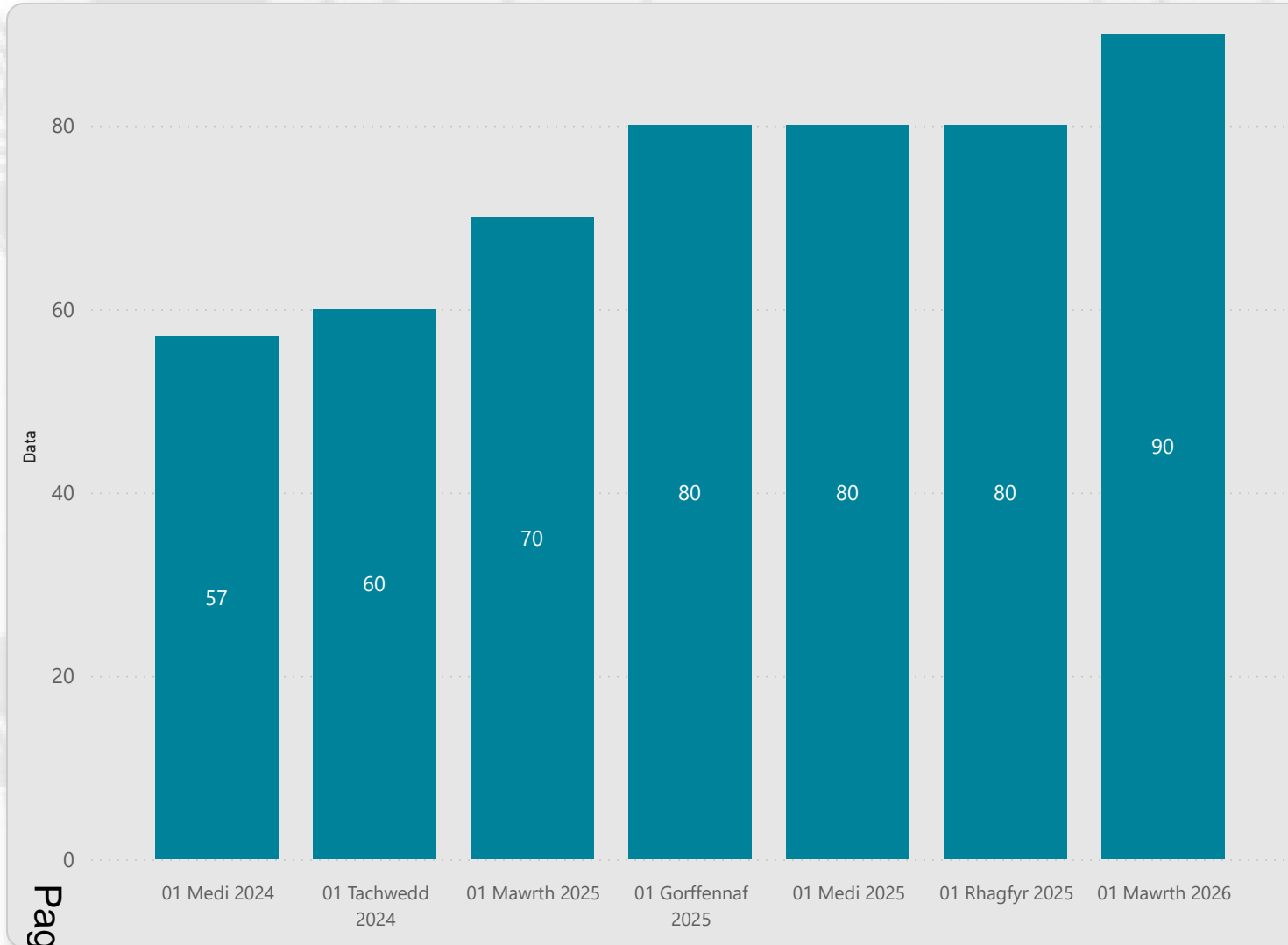
Buddug Mair Huws (ADDYSG)



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 made good progress over the period and are on track to be delivered on time, with others already completed, including Ysgol Llanllechid. Approval was also received at the end of March for the £18.5m Bontnewydd Community Campus Business Case, which enables us to move forward and begin work on site. However, the car park for Ysgol Y Faenol and Penrhosgarnedd Centre has yet to be created, in collaboration with Pentir Community Council (Band A Project). We are currently in the middle of the tendering process for this, and the Community Council is now making use of the new Centre on the school site, which is particularly good news.

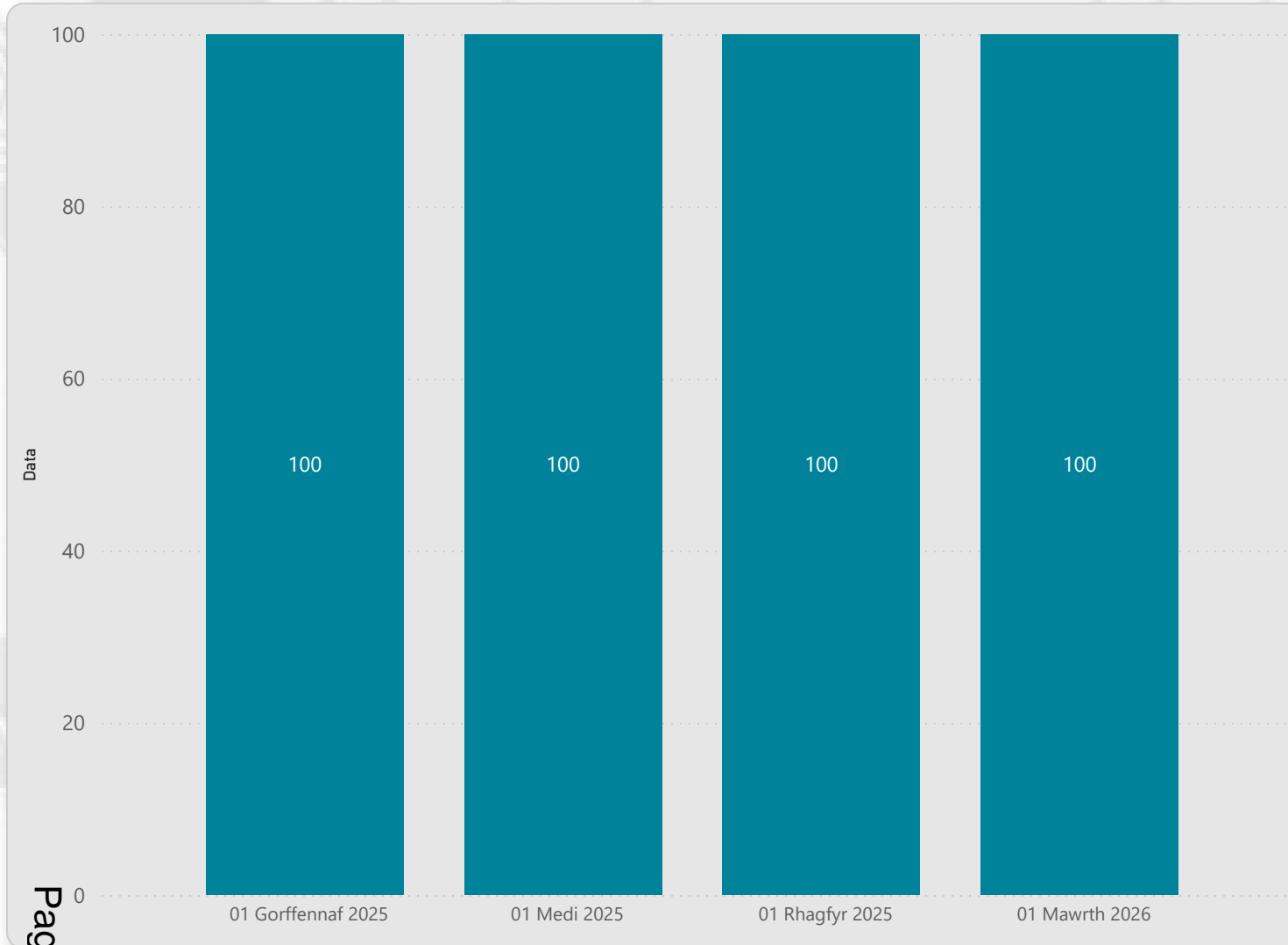
Monthly

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



A statutory consultation on the proposed closure of Ysgol Nebo and Ysgol Baladeulyn on 31 December 2026, with places for learners to be provided at Ysgol Llanllyfni and Ysgol Talysarn from 1 January 2027, has been carried out, with the consultation period ending in late January 2026. The Modernisation Team is currently considering all comments received during the consultation period, with the intention of reporting back to the Cabinet in May 2026. On February 10th, a proposal paper was presented to Cabinet seeking approval to publish a statutory notice, allowing a 28-day statutory objection period on the proposal to close Ysgol Y Garreg on 31 August 2026 and to designate Ysgol Cefn Coch as the alternative school from 1 September 2026. The 28-day objection period has now ended, and no objections were received. We will now proceed to secure a final decision on the proposal to close Ysgol Y Garreg on 31 August 2026 and designate Ysgol Cefn Coch as the alternative school from 1 September 2026, with the decision expected in May 2026.

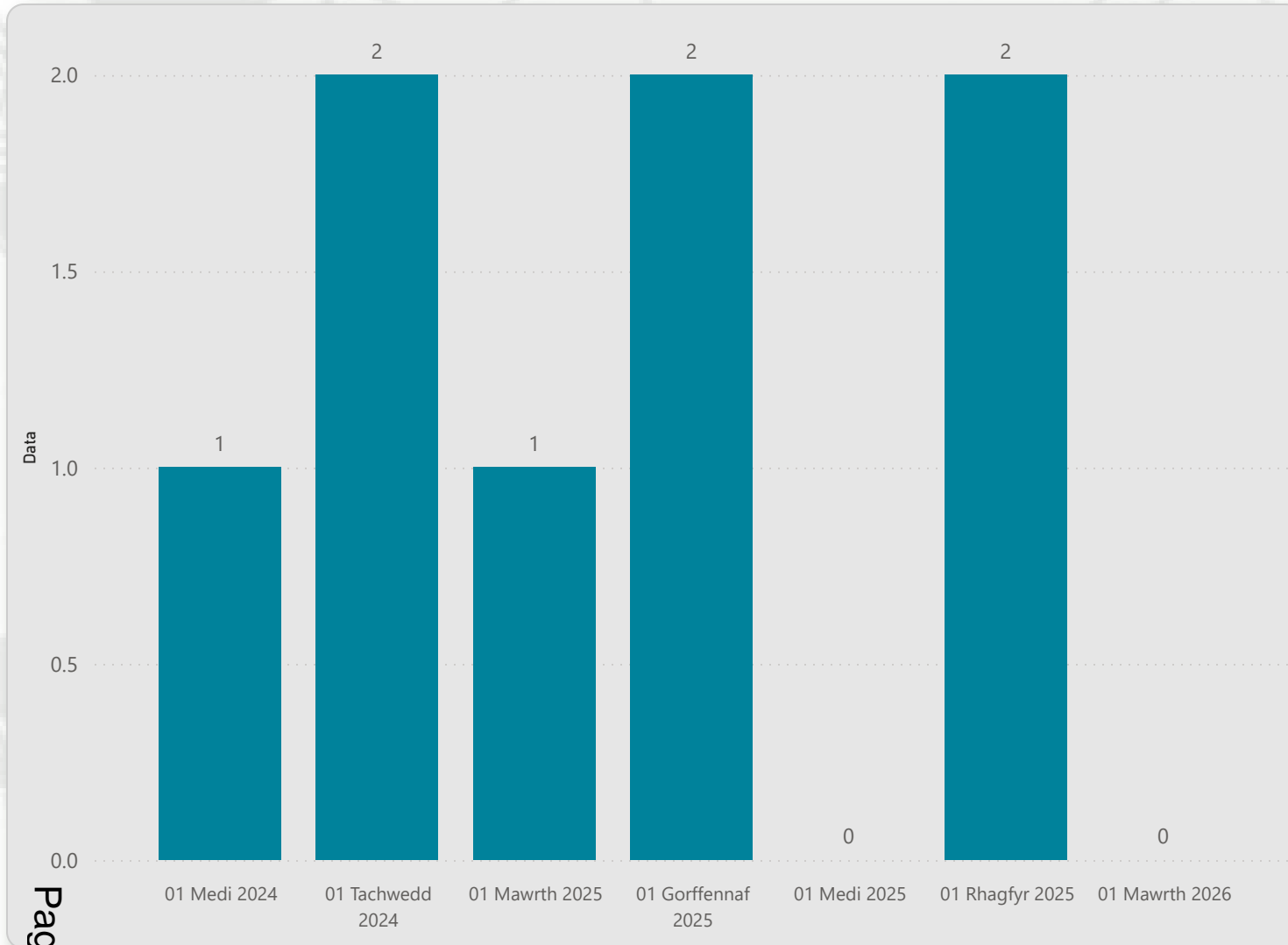
Monthly

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 appeals were received against the Authority's decisions during the reporting period. However, as we approach the decision day for Reception-year applications for September 2026, there is potential for appeals arising from the refusal of 15 first-preference applications. These appeals will need to be responded to as they are submitted.

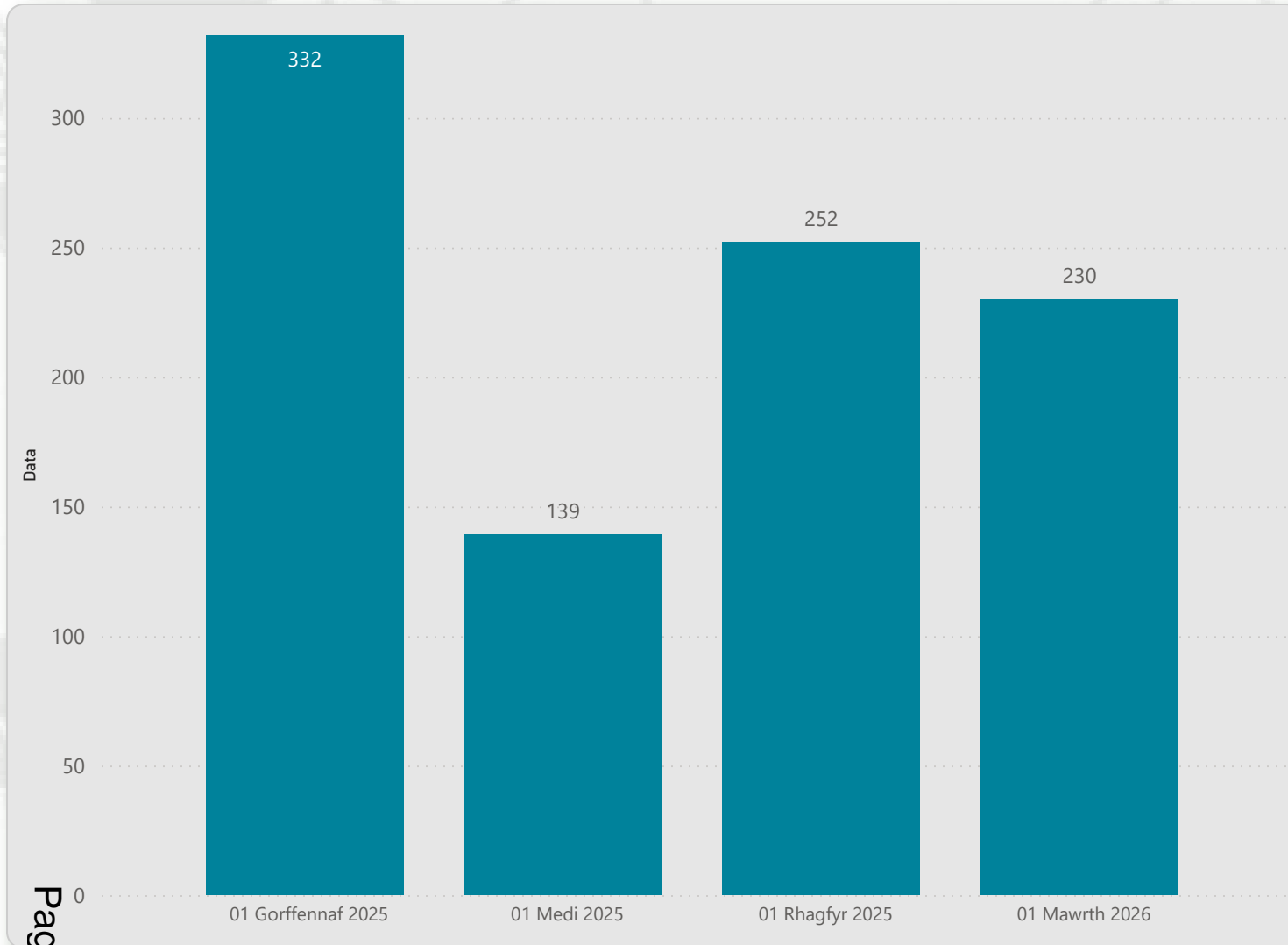
Monthly

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



The School Admissions process takes place continuously throughout the year via the school transfer process – parents have the right to request a transfer at any point during the year, without needing to give a reason for doing so. During the period, 230 school transfer applications were received in Gwynedd. Of these, 148 were for the primary sector, and the data shows no clear trend of pupils moving out of any particular school. In the secondary sector, 82 transfer applications were received. Although transfer requests were submitted from all secondary schools in general, the data also shows a higher number of transfer applications from certain specific secondary schools.

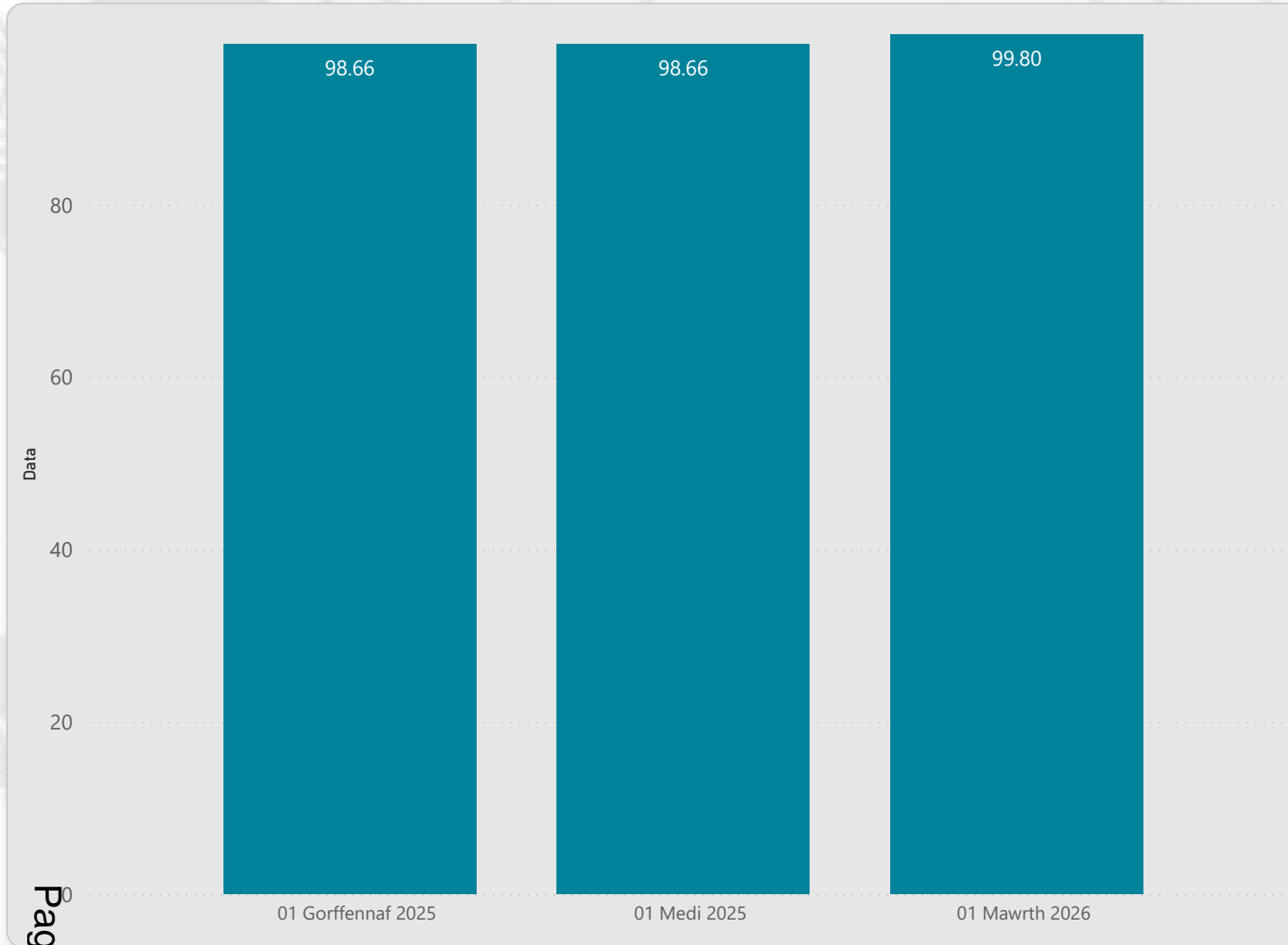
Monthly

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



A total of 947 Reception-year admission applications were received for September 2026. Of these, 15 applications were refused due to oversubscription; all 15 were offered places at their second-choice school. Parents have the right to appeal the decision, so an increase in appeals is anticipated in the next reporting period.

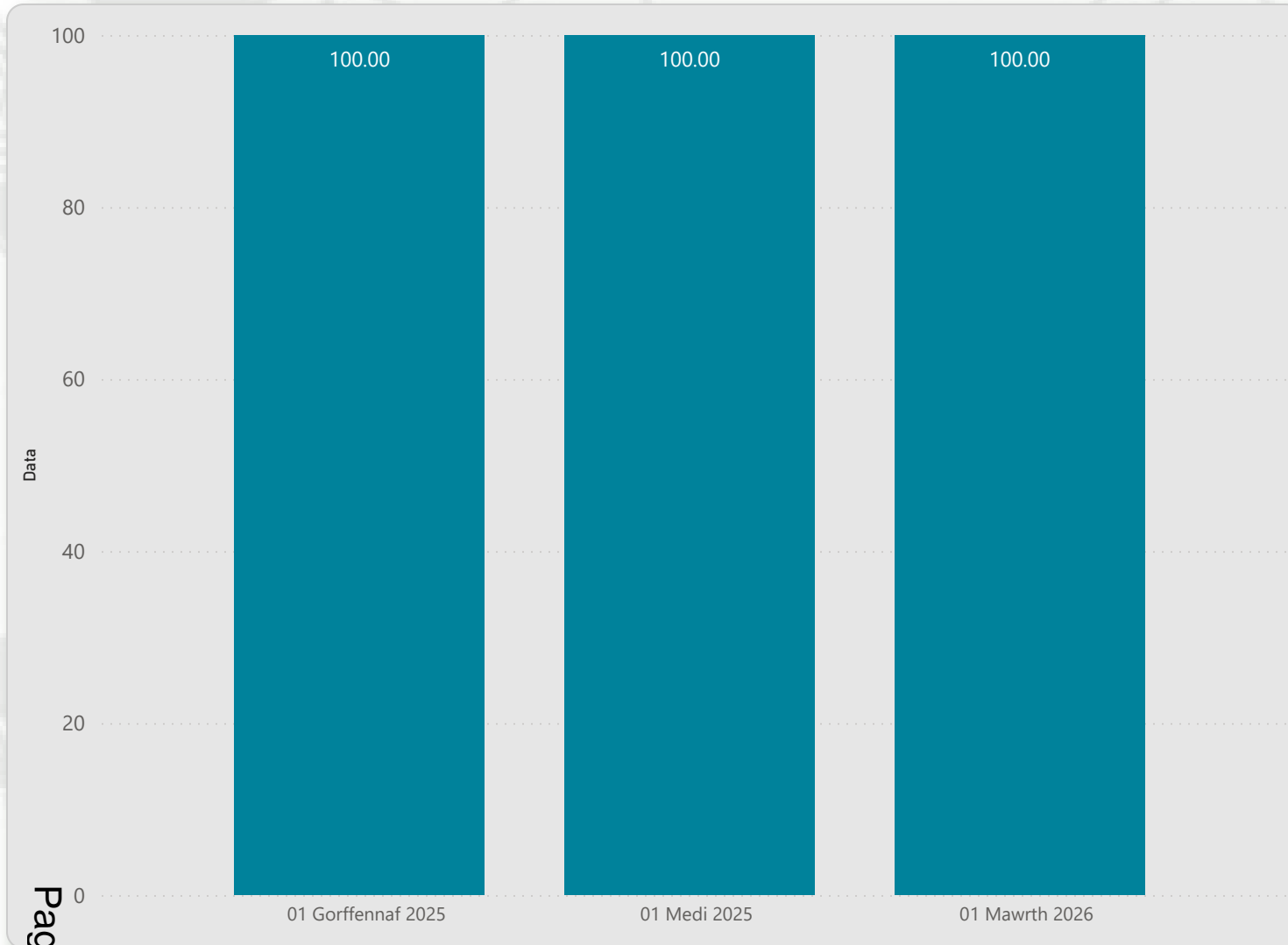
Quarterly

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



A total of 1,144 applications for Year 7 admission were received, and all applicants have been offered their first-choice school. Late applications continue to be submitted and are being processed.

Quarterly

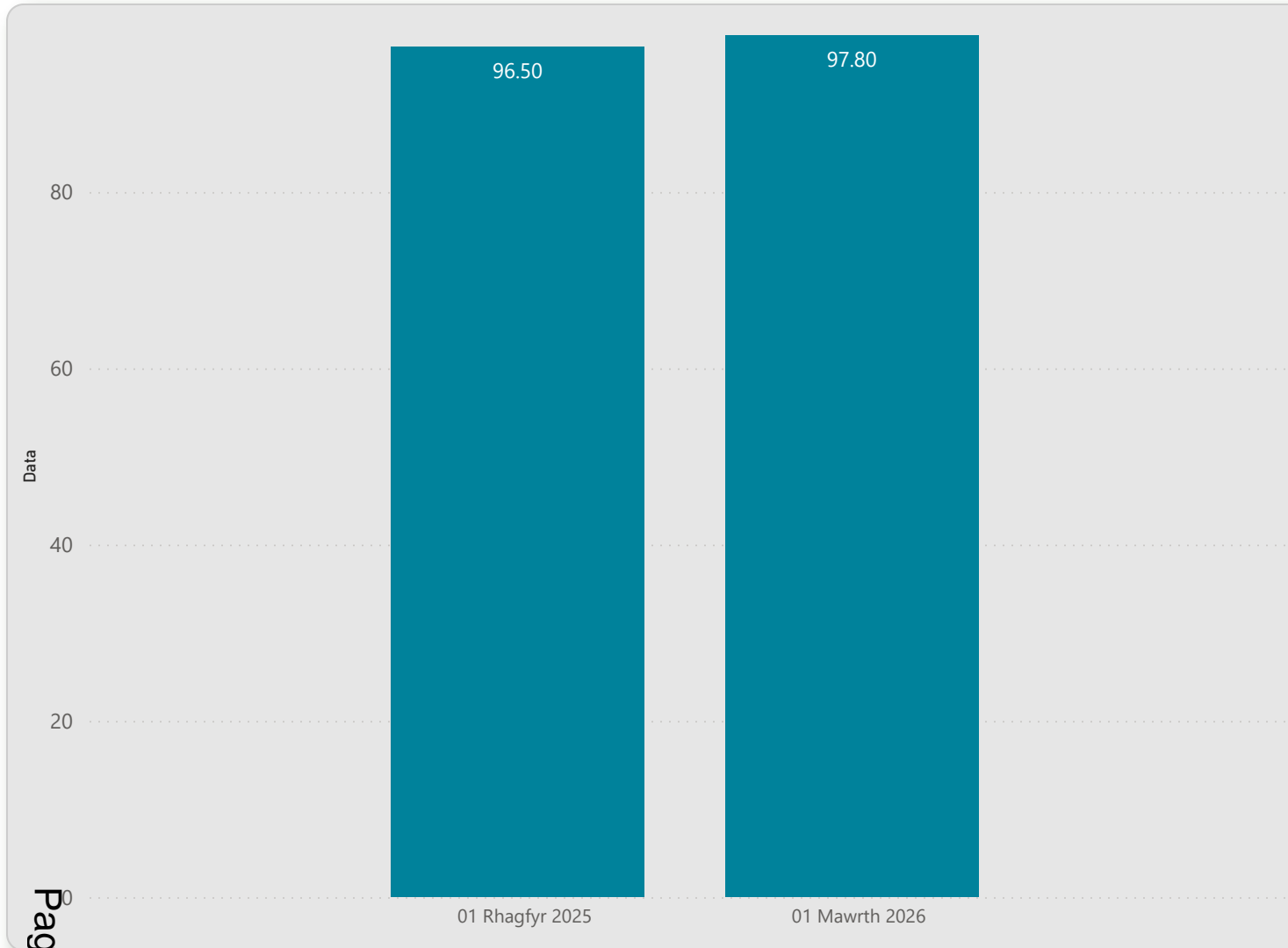
Kenny Norgain (ADDYSG)

School Standards

Purpose:

Support the effective management, leadership and governance of Gwynedd schools

Indicator: % of schools that have received a support visit during the term



97.87% (92 schools) have received at least one core supportive visit during the term from school support officers.

This represents a small increase compared with the Autumn Term. Since the establishment of the Service, officers have succeeded in gaining access to every school across the Authority, with a growing sense of open, collaborative partnership developing with the Authority. These visits have evolved to focus specifically on schools' self-evaluation and quality assurance processes, including scrutinising learners' work, conducting learning walks, and listening to the learner voice.

These visits have enabled officers to develop a strong understanding of all schools within the Authority, identifying where best practice exists as well as recognising those schools that require further support with specific aspects.

Although the role of school support officers will evolve as...

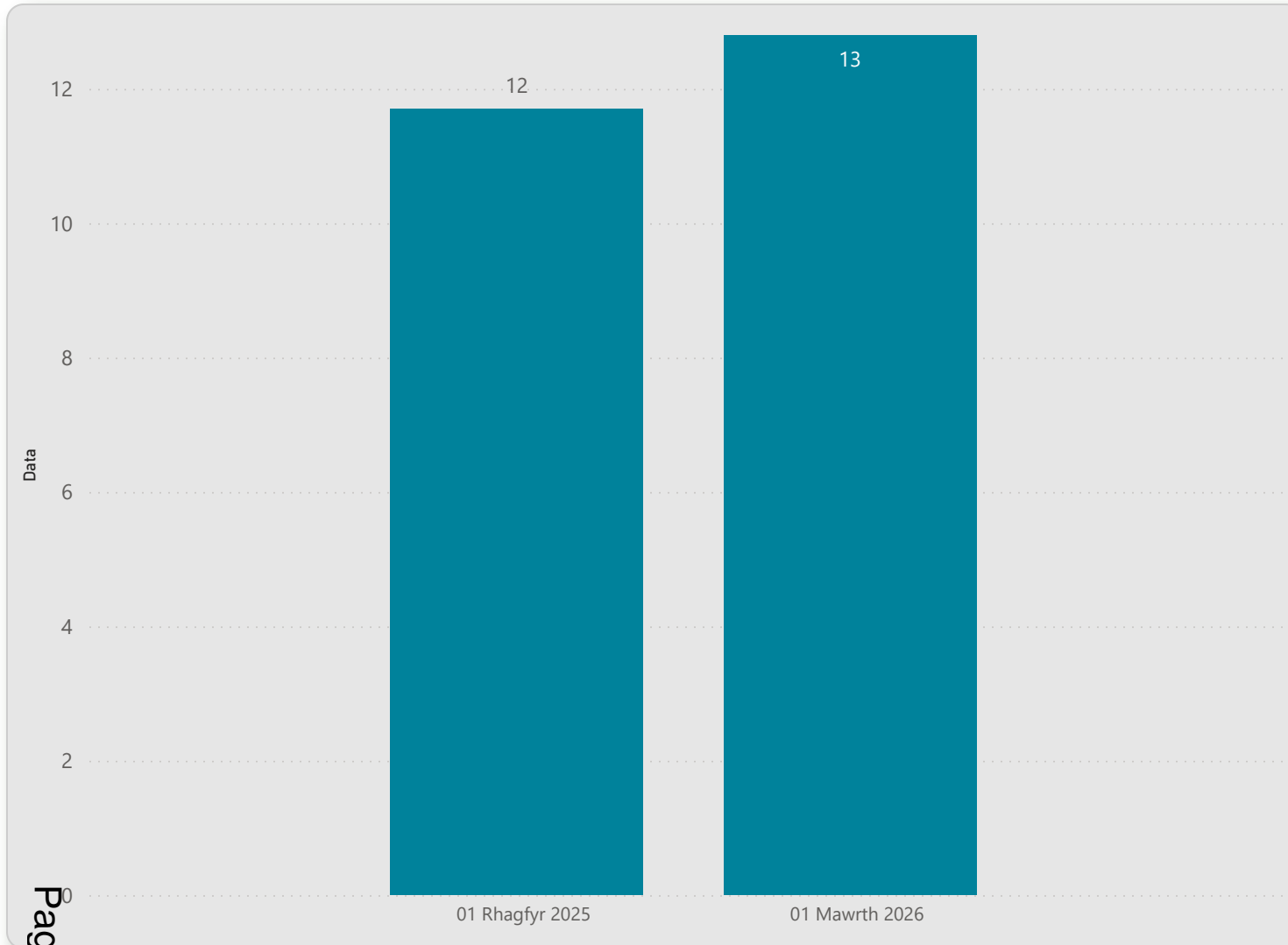
Monthly

Alison Halliday (ADDYSG)

School Standards

Purpose: Support the effective management, leadership and governance of Gwynedd schools

Indicator: % of schools without a permanent headteacher



This is equivalent to 12 primary schools being led by an acting headteacher.

In addition to the acting headteachers referred to above, there are arrangements for a headteacher in charge for further 7 schools due to the long-term absence of the substantive headteacher. Therefore, acting headteacher arrangements are currently in place in a total of 19 schools across the Authority – 16 primary, 2 secondary and 1 special school. Overall, we have seen a significant reduction in the number of applications for headteacher posts over the past two years, and the challenge of attracting individuals to headteacher roles continues to grow. In response to this challenge, the Education Department has developed a 'Future Leaders' programme to offer practical support and ensure a clear developmental and succession pathway within the system. We are running the programme for the second time this year for two cohorts, with 17 participants from the primary sector and 7 from the secondary sector.

During 2024–25, 14 participants from both primary and secondary completed the programme.

Since January 2026, we have developed a programme offering targeted support for new headteachers and acting headteachers, which also provides mentoring and networking opportunities. At present, 22 headteachers are engaged as part of this programme, with very positive feedback to date.

Our next steps will involve working with our schools to ensure that practitioners are encouraged to attend middle-leader and senior-leader development programmes delivered by DYSGU, as well as developing a programme to build the confidence of deputy heads and members of senior leadership teams in preparation for the next stage of their career or for applying for the NPQH – the National Professional Qualification for Headship.

Monthly

Alison Halliday (ADDYSG)



School Standards

Purpose: Support the effective management, leadership and governance of Gwynedd schools

Indicator: Number of schools in an Estyn statutory category



There are currently 5 of the Authority's 94 schools in an Estyn statutory category:

- 1 school – Significant Improvement
- 4 schools – Special Measures (3 of these schools are part of the same federation)

A school placed in a statutory category remains in that category until Estyn determines that it has made sufficient progress against the recommendations. This process can take between eighteen months and three years.

Schools in a statutory category receive an enhanced level of support from the Authority through an agreed support plan, which includes input from School Support, Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion, and Safeguarding Services. A School Support Board is established, consisting of the headteacher and senior leadership team, governors, and officers, to scrutinise the school's progress against the milestones set out in the Post-Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) and to agree any further actions required.

Since September 2025, 14 schools have received a core inspection to date.

Monthly

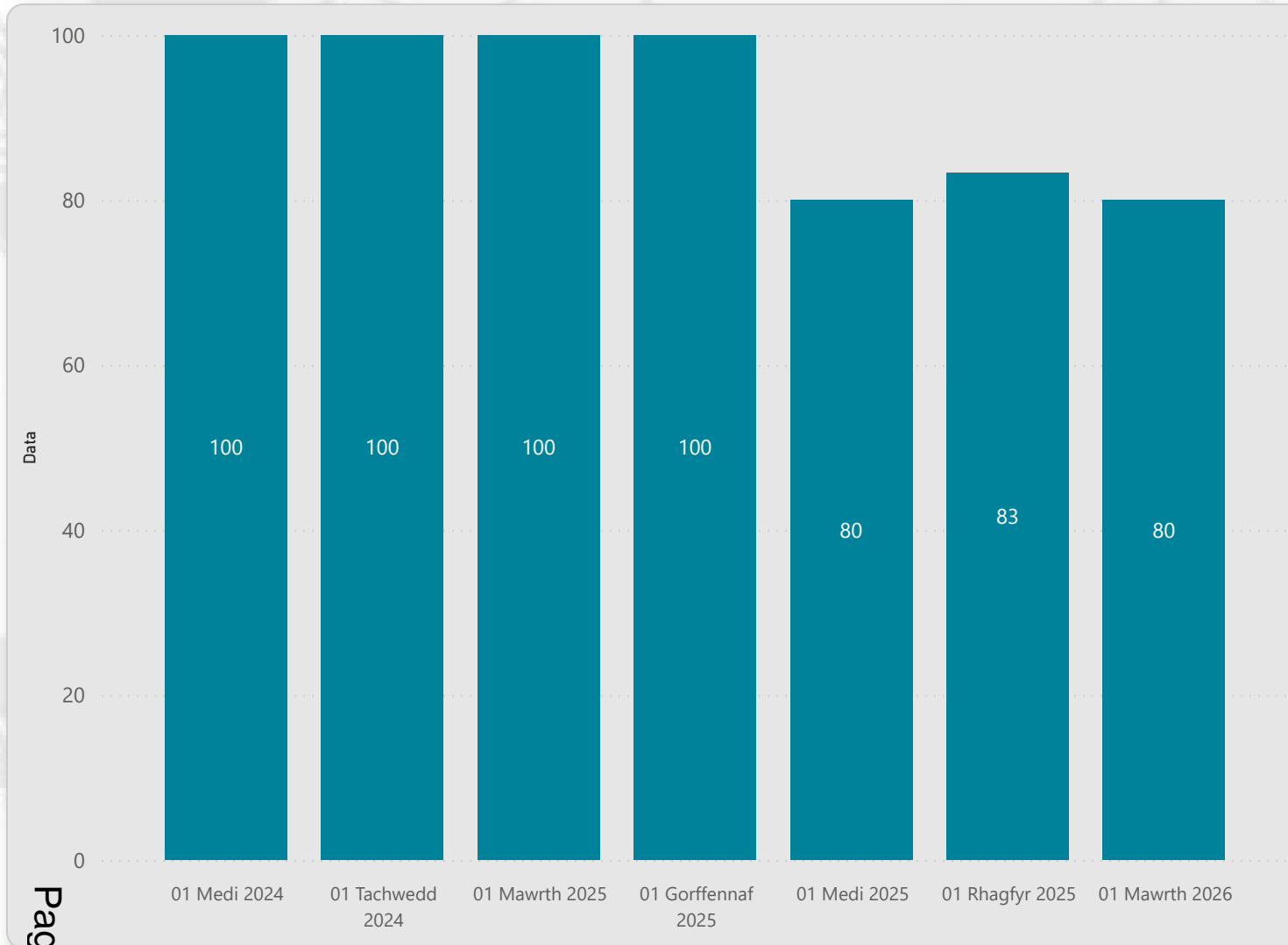
Alison Halliday (ADDYSG)



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



Eight questionnaires were sent to customers during the period, and five were returned. Of these, four stated they were very satisfied with the standard of work received from the Unit, while the remaining response indicated they were satisfied. No written comments were provided. Although there has been a slight decrease, performance levels remain acceptable; however, it is important to note that the sample size is once again relatively small. Looking back over the year, the comments received have been very encouraging regarding the standard of work. Nevertheless, there is scope to improve certain elements of the service provided, and these will be included in the Unit's 2026/27 Business Plan.

Monthly

Kenny Norgain (ADDYSG)

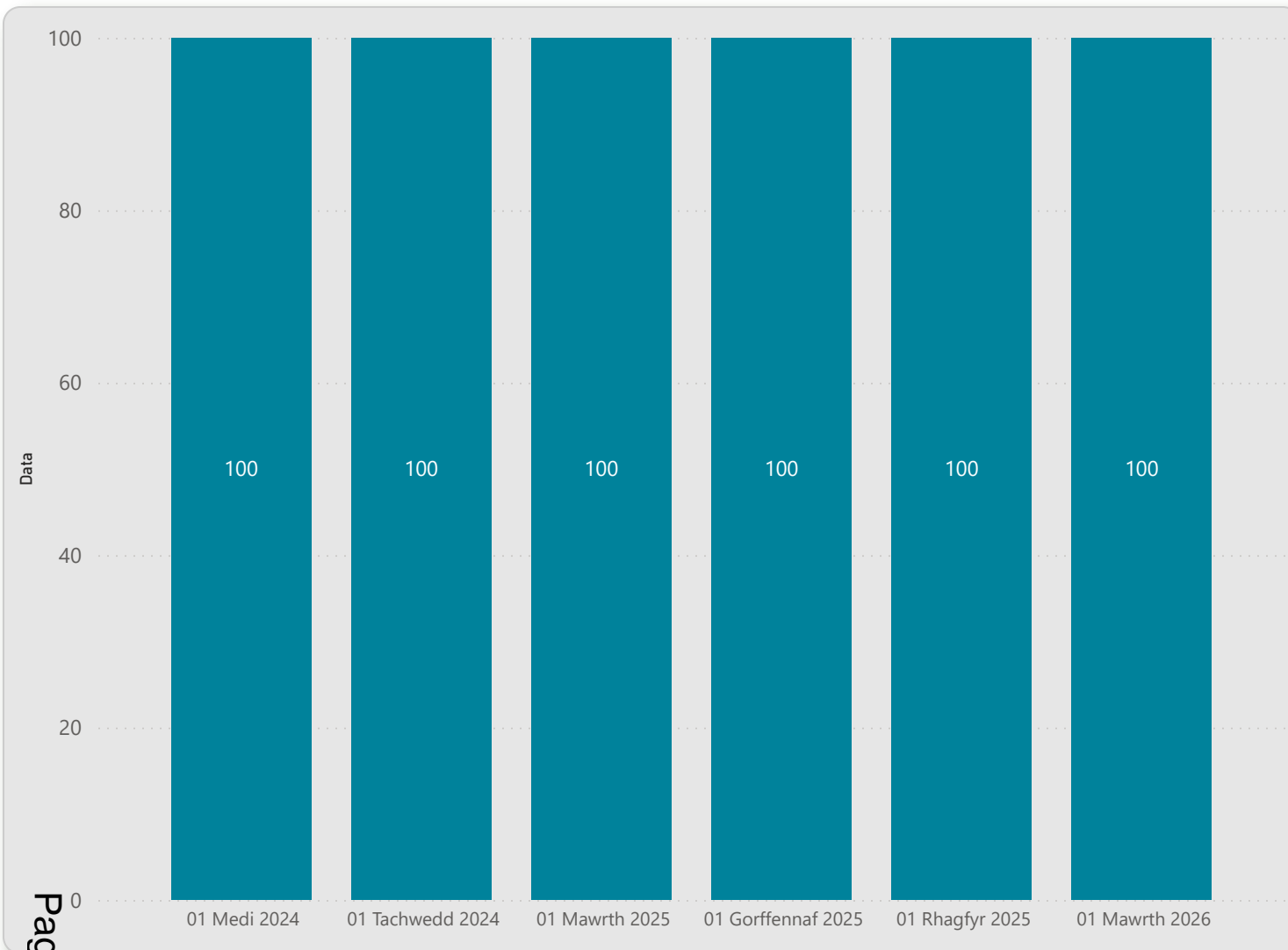
ABC

Purpose:

Preparing young children for the world of education and to be well-rounded and independent learners and supporting school and setting staff for them

Indicator:

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



With the intensity of needs we are seeing in mainstream schools increasing, the demand for the expertise of the ABC team is also increasing. Schools value the team's guidance and support early in the nursery phase, recognising how important it is for a child to get the best possible start.

Increasingly, a number of schools are expressing their desire to have more ABC centres so that we can target and support more children – clearly showing that they recognise the need and value the impact of the provision.

Although the team does not receive a response to every questionnaire, they do receive very positive comments during outreach visits, meetings, and when parents come to the Centre.

Four questionnaire responses were received.

One school's ALN Co-ordinator shared:

"I am more than happy with the service we receive from the ABC Unit in our school. Thank you."

Parents also shared:

"Very happy with the service. All staff very kind and helpful."

"Staff at the ABC are amazing and so helpful. My little boy loves attending. I'm so thankful to them. Service is excellent, I can't think of a way it can be improved."

The feedback confirms that the team's input is effective

Monthly

Einir Rees Jones (ADDYSG)

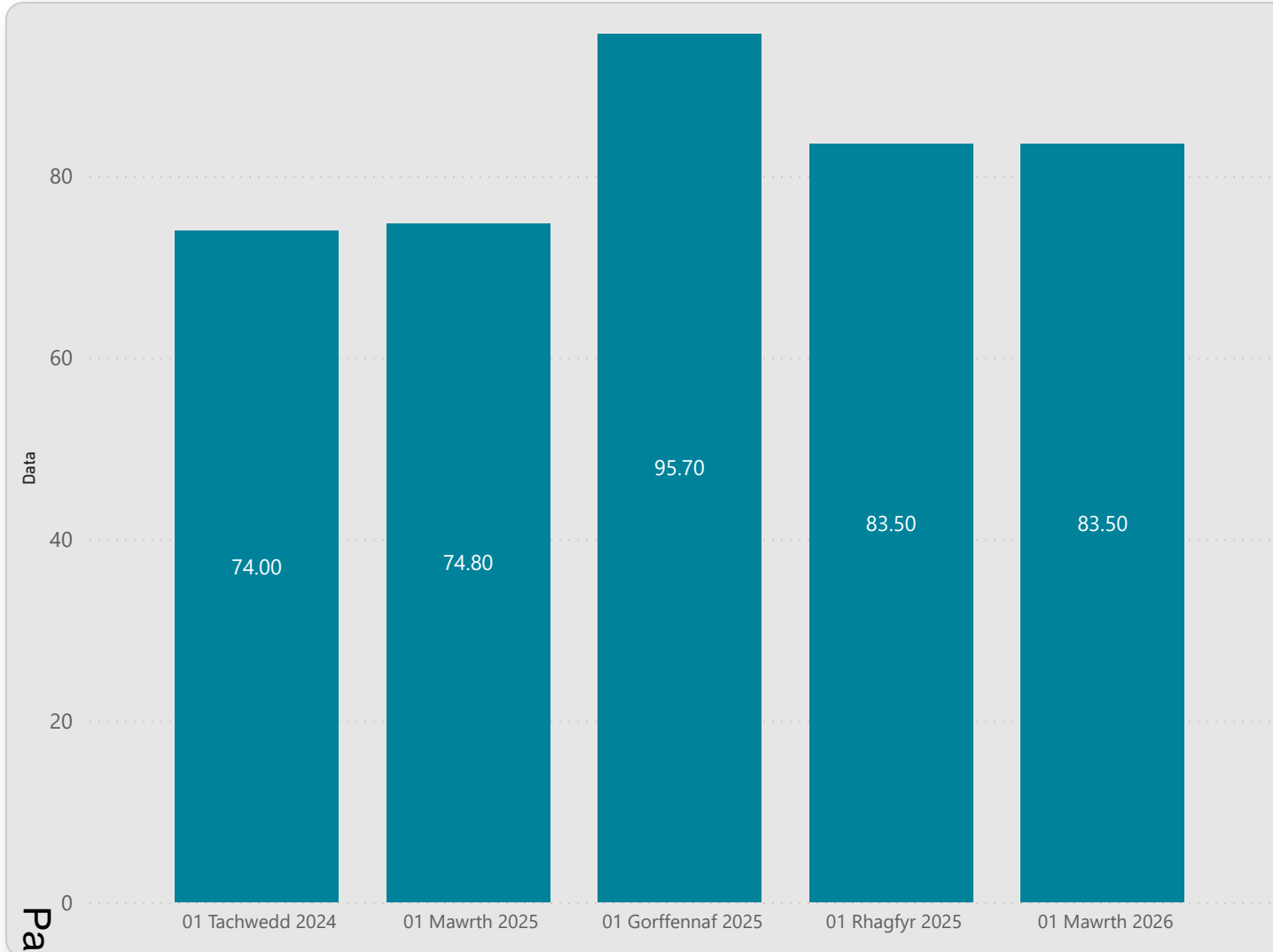
ABC

Purpose:

Preparing young children for the world of education and to be well-rounded and independent learners and supporting school and setting staff for them

Indicator:

% of children and young people receiving input and making progress



The data shows an increase in the number of nursery-aged children with ALN (Additional Learning Needs) who are receiving support from the ABC service through Centres and Outreach. A Progress Tracking Profile is used at the start of the year to assess the child's initial developmental level, based on Early Years milestones broken down into small, measurable steps.

In Term 1, five children made significant progress as a result of early intervention, leading to transition to the school's IDP (Individual Development Plan) or increased support in mainstream. Following this, four INSET training sessions were delivered, and Outreach children who had not made progress were moved to ABC Centres in Term 2, where promising progress was seen.

In Term 2, no progress was seen in 16.5% of pupils due to a lack of following school strategies, low attendance, the intensity of needs, new referrals, and an increase in significant behavioural and sensory needs.

In response, the service will continue to work collaboratively with schools, Quality Officers and other agencies, ensure alignment between the Tracking Profile, IDP and Additional Learning Provision, develop inclusive practices, review service access criteria, and continue with INSET training arrangements.

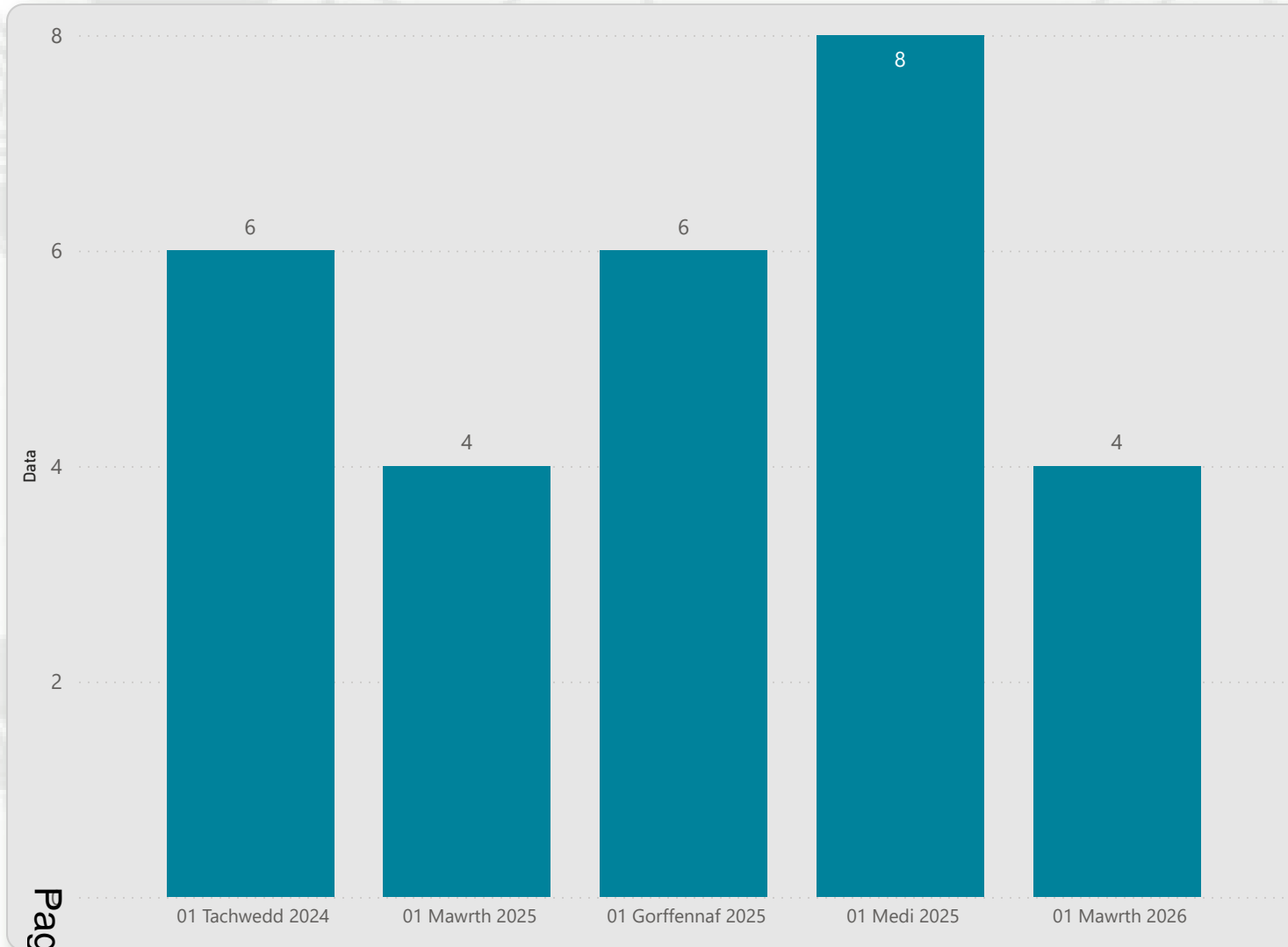
Monthly

Einir Rees Jones (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



The Education Authority promotes avoiding and resolving any disputes with parents as early as possible. In the vast majority of cases (over 95%), this is achieved. During this period, the Quality Officers have resolved 6 cases and prevented them from progressing to tribunal appeal.

Tribunal appeals relate to specific aspects of the Individual Development Plan that are set out in statute. A high proportion of appeals relate to educational placement or Health Board provision within schools. Every parent has the right to submit a tribunal appeal, and such cases are relatively rare. However, there has been 1 new appeal case during this period, and 3 remain open. One of the four is close to being resolved, with the expectation that the parent will withdraw the appeal. Hearings for the remaining 3 will take place before the end of July 2026.

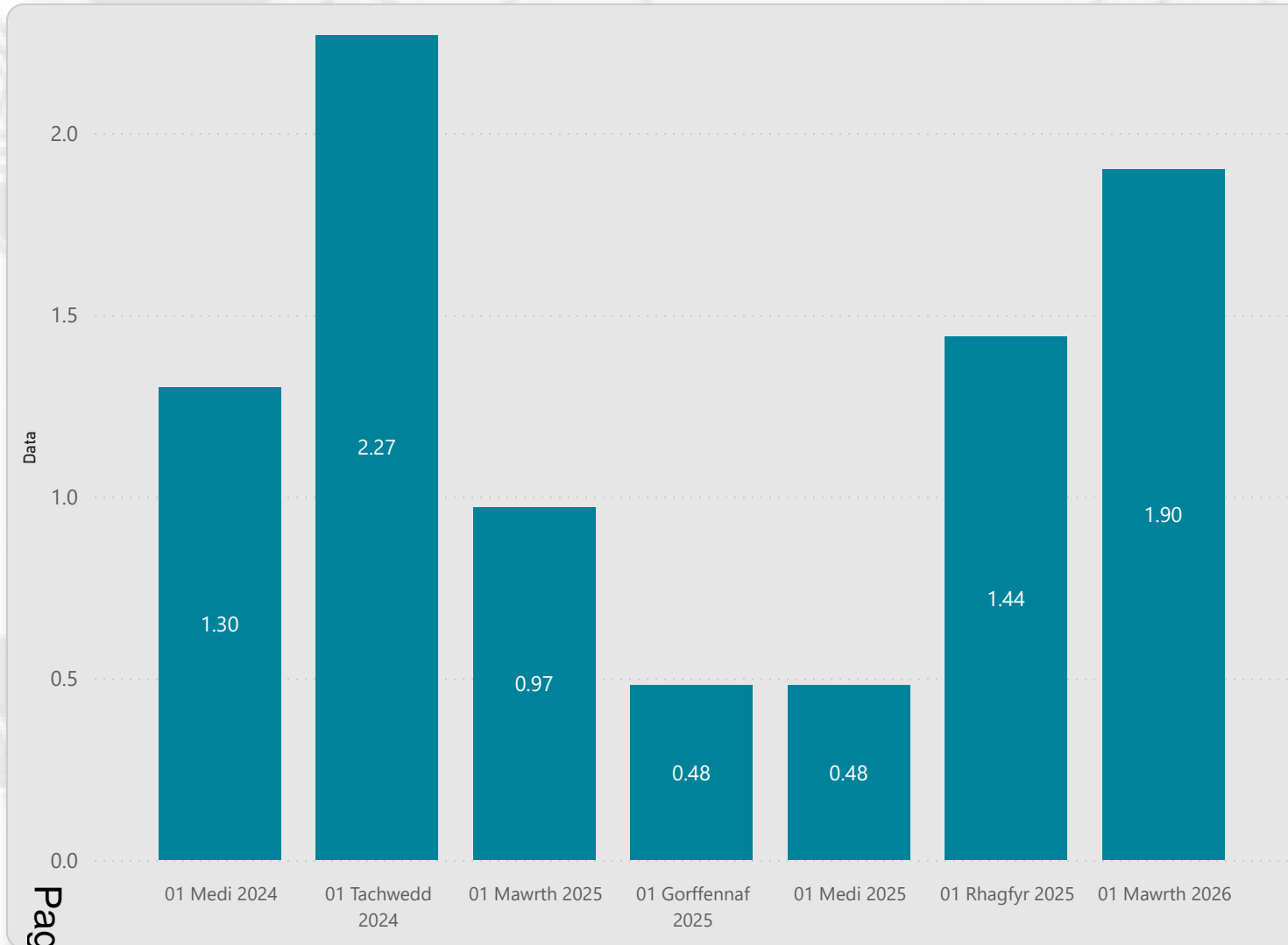
Quarterly

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)



Graduated support to schools from the Quality Service ranges from a termly visit as the lowest level of support to weekly support that is jointly planned and delivered as part of the highest-level support plan.

Schools that had been receiving weekly input from quality officers have now all been downgraded.

During the reporting period, 3 new schools have moved to a higher level of support, with one school continuing to receive high-level support. The four schools are receiving a high level of support either due to strategic absences or because they have a new Additional Learning Needs Coordinator. Individual support packages have been tailored for the four schools, with cross-department collaboration taking place with two of the schools.

Quarterly contact continues to be maintained with the four schools that had been receiving higher-level input until the end of the academic year, before withdrawing fully to normal support.

Monthly

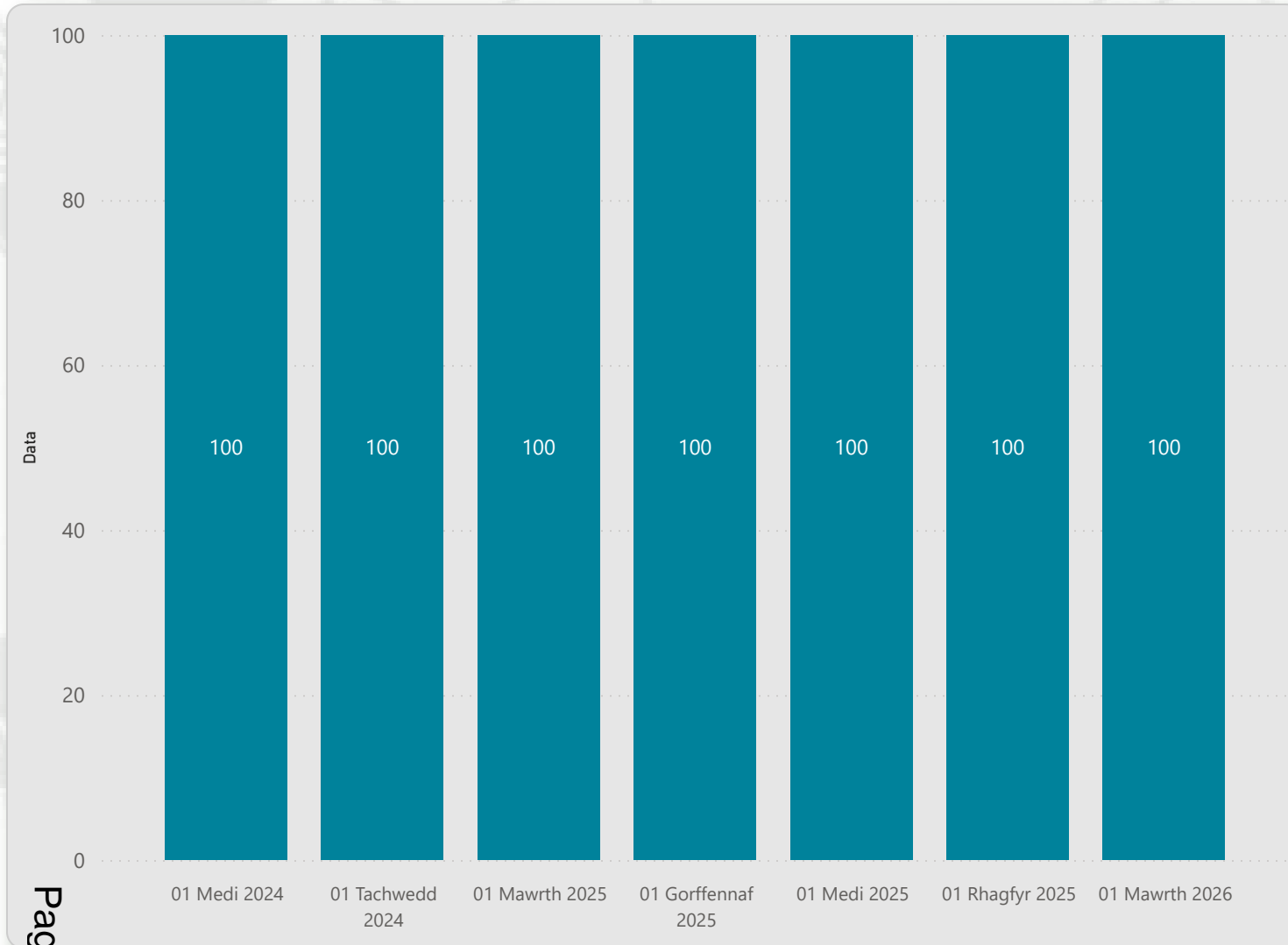
Einir Thomas (ADDYSG)



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



Eight responses were received during the last period, all indicating that they were very satisfied with the support provided by the team when completing the ALN enquiry process, which is a statutory process to determine whether a child has ALN or not, or when reviewing the IDP.

Here is an example of some of the feedback received:

*"I have received a lot of support and information since starting working with *. She has also been exceptional with my daughter and gave me a lot of peace of mind and confidence with what happens next for."

" has been amazing and as a family we really appreciate everything that this service provides to families like mine."

"We are very grateful and my son has definitely benefited from the early learning ALN service."

The questionnaires confirm that the team's input is effective and ensures that young children going through the statutory process in Gwynedd receive the best possible start on their journey through the education system. The team also ensures that the professional support they provide to families leads to a positive experience, even though the process can be challenging for some of them.

Although the responses represent a small sample, we can confirm that no parent has contacted the Early Years Lead ALN Officer to discuss any dispute, and therefore no tribunal cases have been recorded in the Early Years.

Monthly

Ellen Mai Jones (ADDYSG)



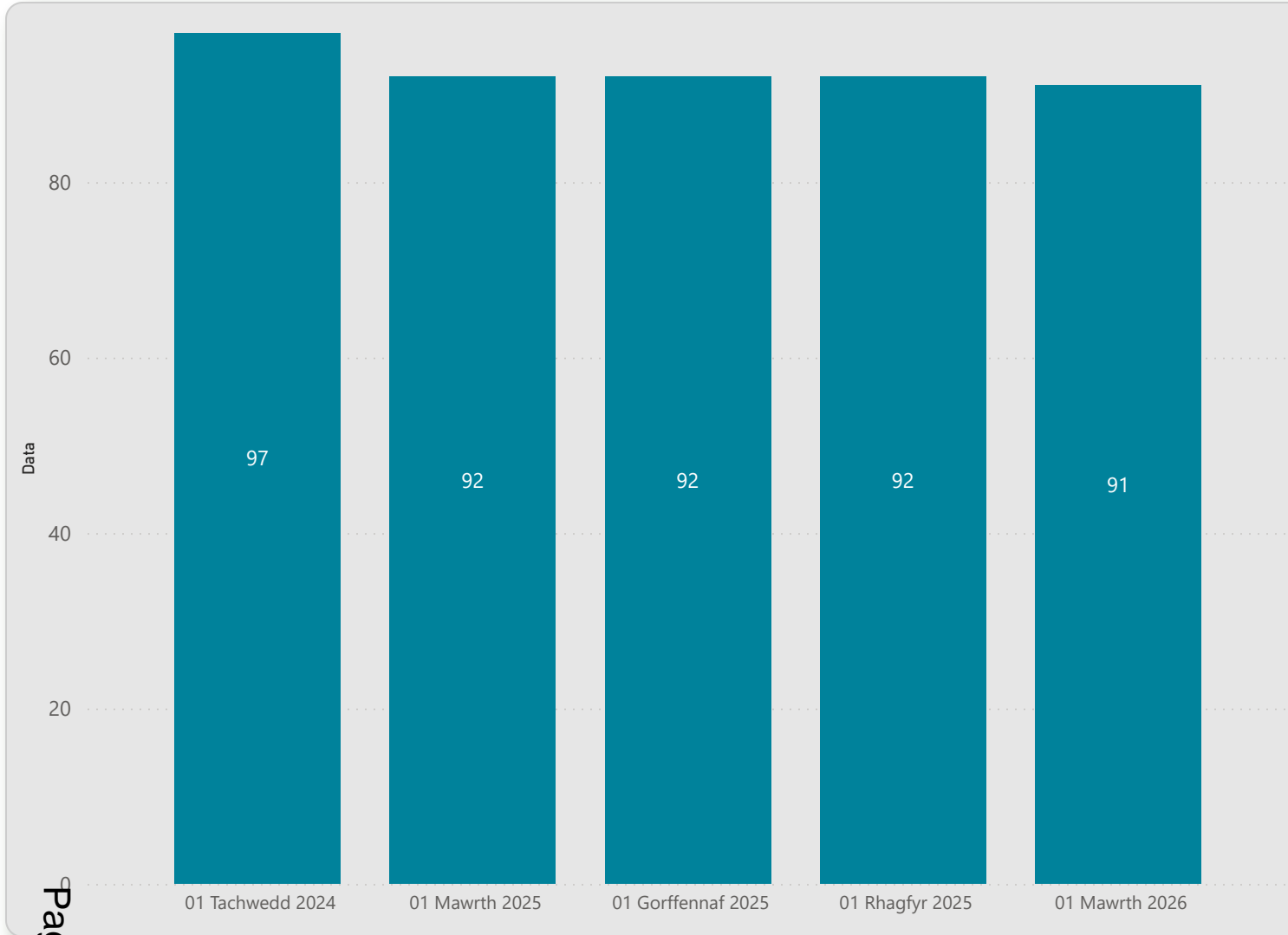
Early Years ALN

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 children and young people receiving direct input and making progress



Progress against targets was reviewed in 64 Individual Development Plans (IDPs – statutory documents). The findings show that the majority (91%) of children have made good or better progress, with a minority (27%) making very good progress. This confirms that the provision and support offered to settings and families by the Early Years ALN team is having a very positive impact on outcomes for children aged 0–3. Of the 9% (6 children) who made slower progress, quality-monitoring procedures show that the provision within the settings is very good. The reasons for slower progress include factors such as settling into a new setting, low attendance, home circumstances, inconsistency across developmental areas, or the fact that good progress had already been made in the previous term.

Quarterly

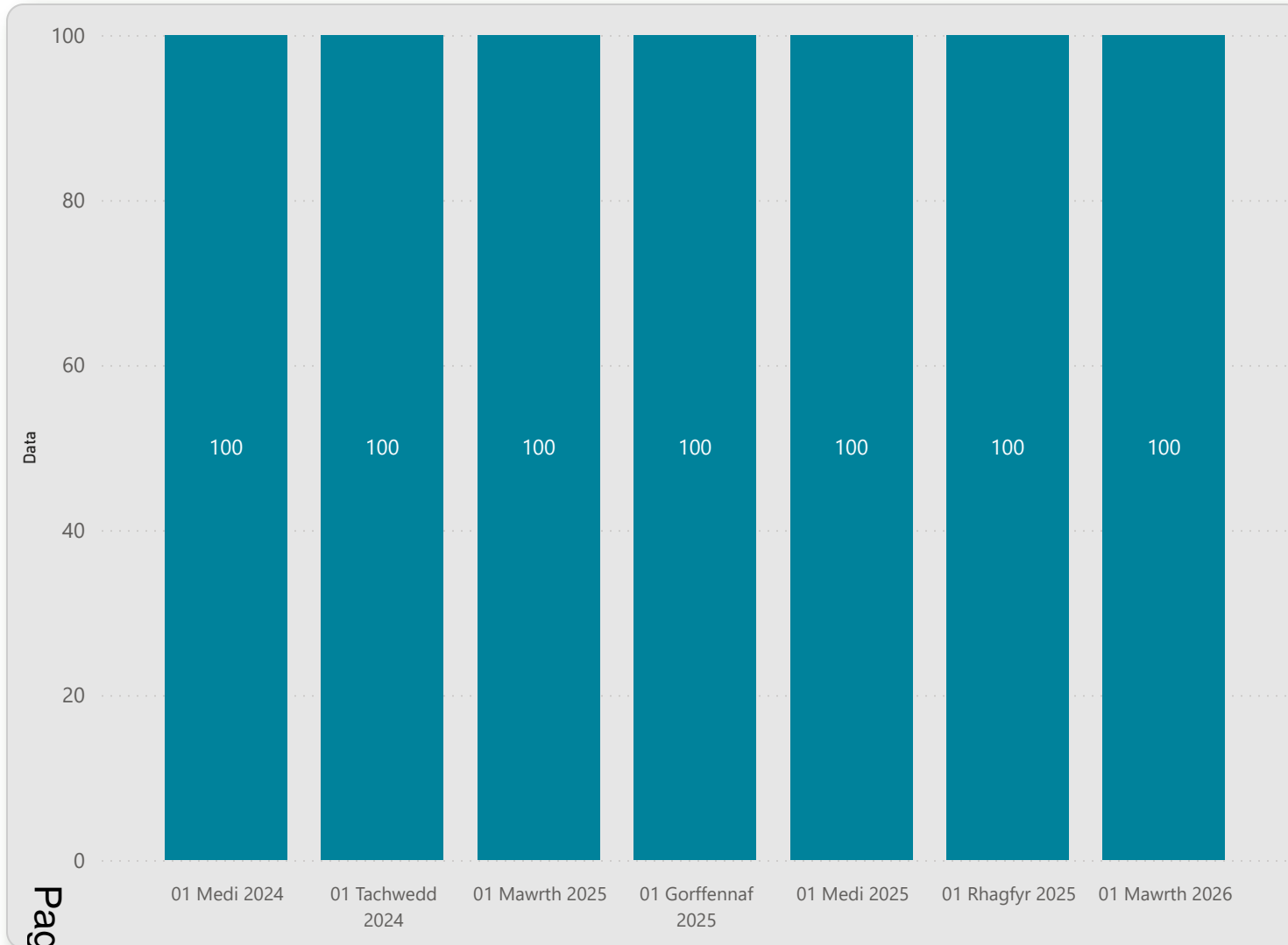
Ellen Mai Jones (ADDYSG)



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



During the last period, 30 referrals were received to begin the statutory 'ALN Enquiry' process in the Early Years, representing a 20% increase compared with the previous period, but consistent with the usual seasonal pattern for the Spring term. During the same period, 33 ALN Enquiries were completed, with 18 resulting in an Individual Development Plan (IDP) being put in place. Twenty-six of these enquiries were completed within an average of 6 weeks, which is significantly quicker than the statutory 12-week timescale. It was necessary to pause the timescale in 7 cases to ensure that full and relevant information was available, and in these cases clear, timely and consistent communication was maintained with parents. It should also be noted that the number of "no ALN" decisions is significantly higher than in the same period last year. A closer analysis of the data shows that over half of these cases originate from one specific area.

Monthly

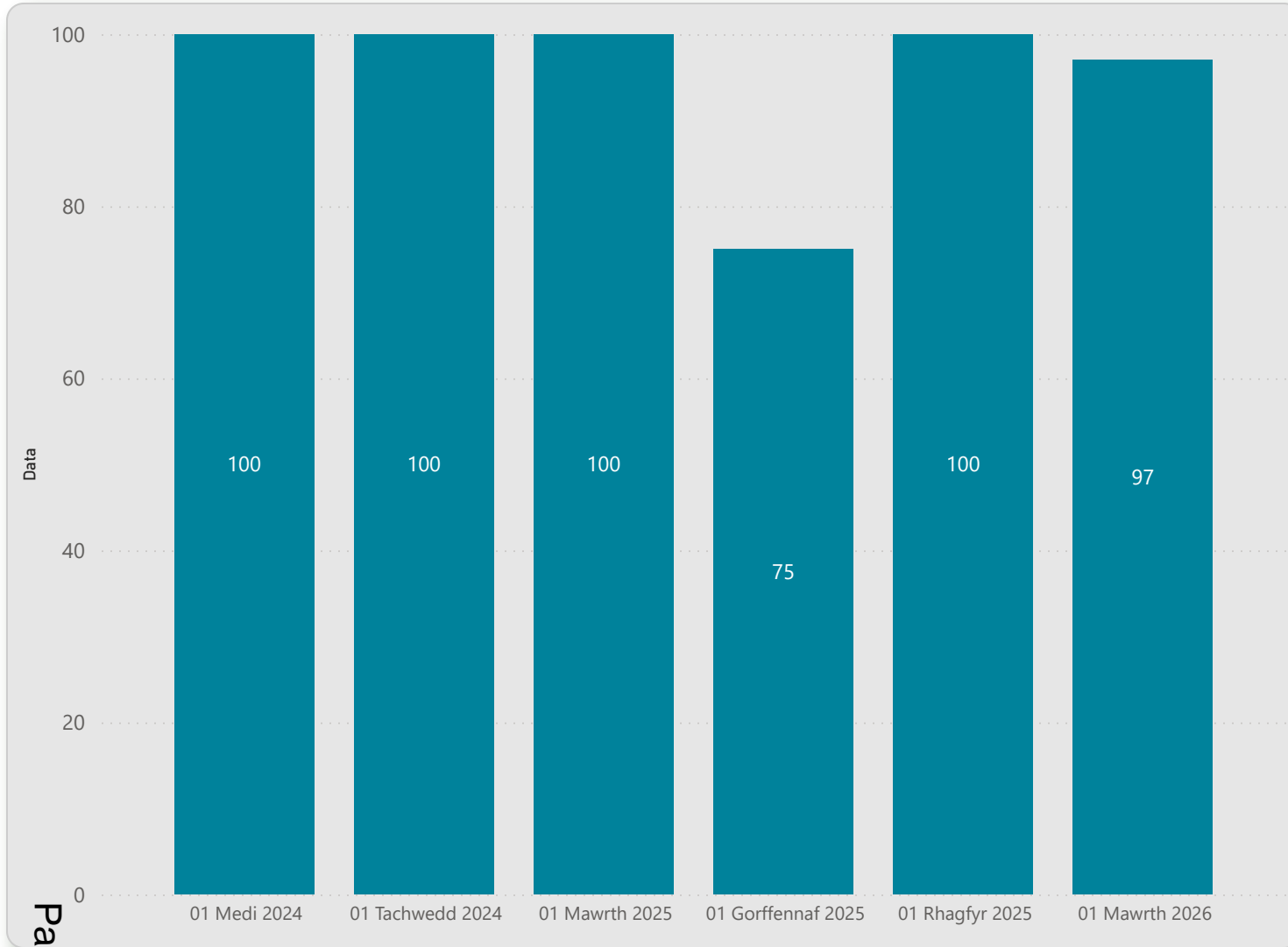
Ellen Mai Jones (ADDYSG)



Specific ALN

Purpose: Supporting children and young people who have significant difficulties in literacy and numeracy to access education

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



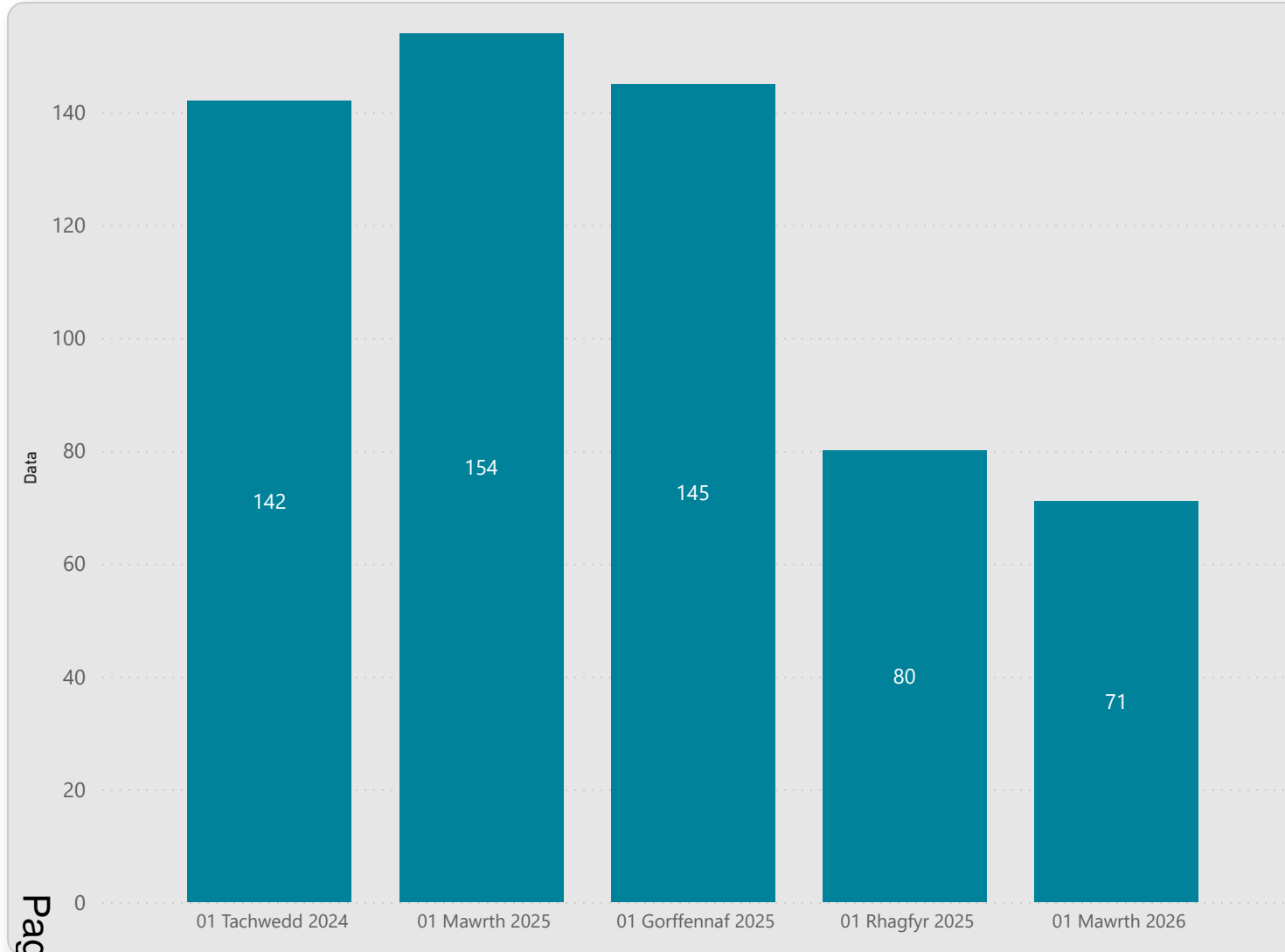
Ten questionnaires were sent out during the term, with 3 responses received. It appears that 2 of the users were very satisfied with the service and 1 was satisfied. Users expressed that they were very happy with the resources created and shared by the team. Another user felt that they had received timely feedback and a report on a pupil's progress and, following this, were grateful for the training provided to upskill school staff when planning support for these pupils. The service will continue to support schools by creating resources and training staff on approaches to supporting pupils who experience significant difficulties in the areas of literacy and numeracy.

Monthly Einir Thomas (ADDYSG)

Specific ALN

Purpose: Supporting children and young people who have significant difficulties in literacy and numeracy to access education

Indicator: Number of children requiring direct input from the service



There were 71 pupils receiving input from the specialist Additional Learning Needs service during the term, which is an 11% decrease compared with December 2025. It is likely that the reduced demand for the service is a result of recent successful INSET training, with school staff now able to meet needs and support pupils independently. The service continues to deliver training as well as develop specialist ALN resources for pupils who experience significant difficulties in the areas of literacy and numeracy

Monthly

Einir Thomas (ADDYSG)

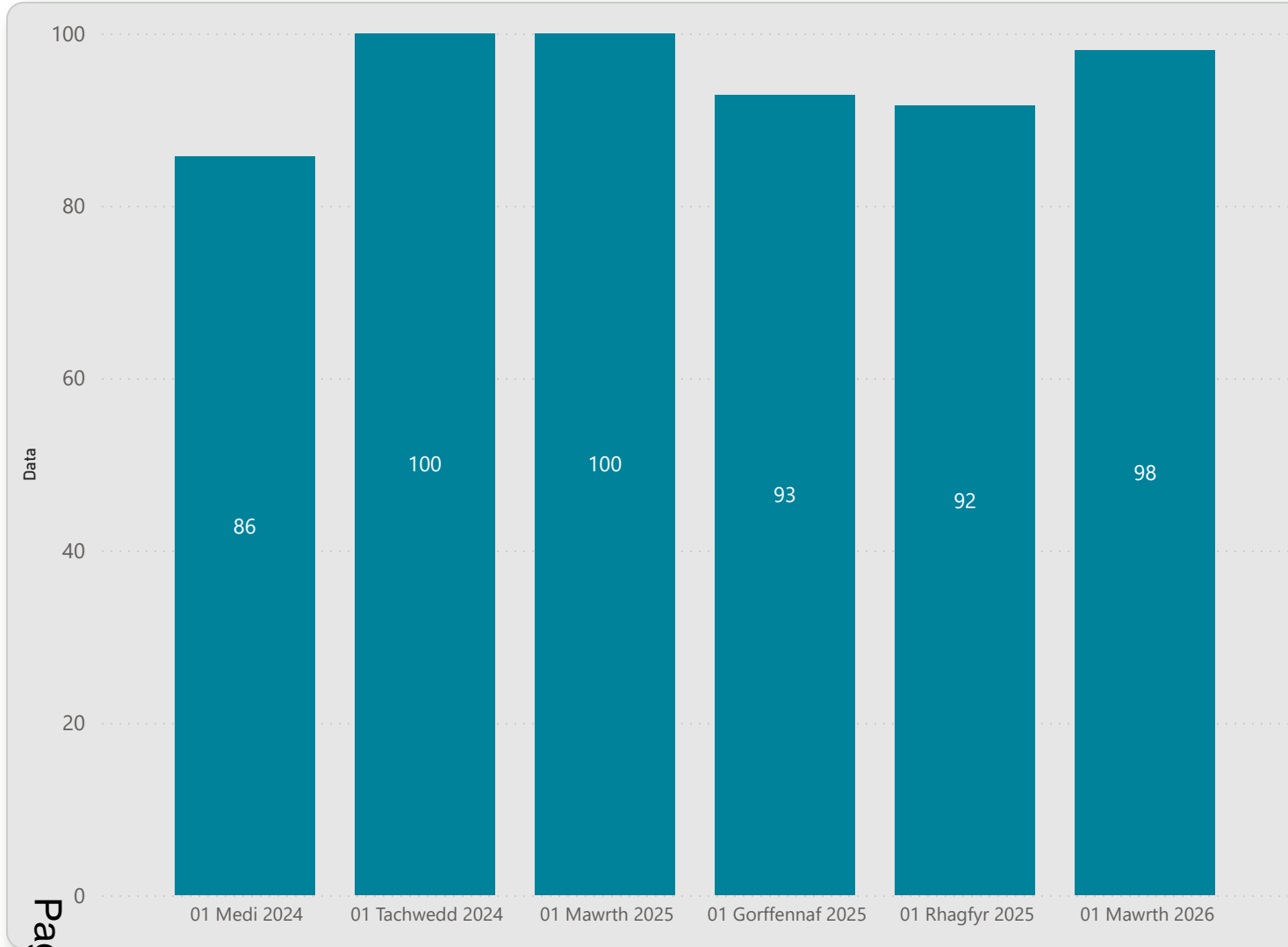
Physical, Medical and Sensory

Purpose:

Supporting children and young people with a medical/physical/sensory condition to access education

Indicator:

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



Twenty-four questionnaires were sent out during the term and 9 responses were received. Eight respondents were very satisfied with the service and one was satisfied. The comments were positive, noting that specialist staff respond as quickly as possible to requests for support and that this input is considered highly valuable. One user expressed that recent training had been extremely beneficial for school staff when supporting a pupil with a sensory impairment. Another user commented that there had been very effective collaboration between the school and the specialist teacher through joint meetings with parents and by providing further guidance and advice on risk assessment.

Monthly

Sara Llwyd Davies (ADDYSG)



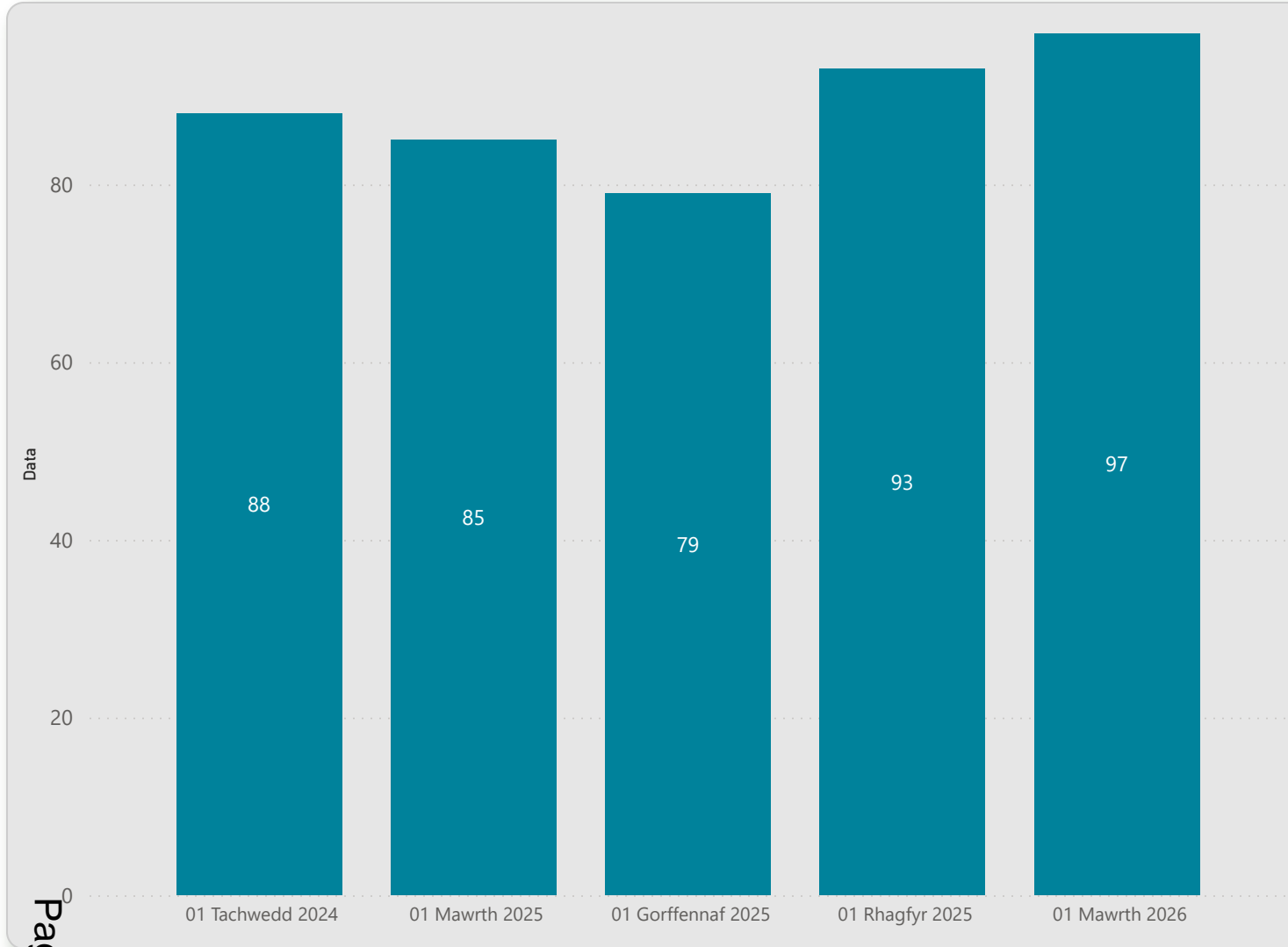
Physical, Medical and Sensory

Purpose:

Supporting children and young people with a medical/physical/sensory condition to access education

Indicator:

% of children and young people receiving direct input and making progress



The data shows progress among pupils who received regular support from specialist sensory teachers. During the last term, pupils received direct support to develop specialist skills such as touch-typing, Braille, signing (BSL/Makaton) and using hearing equipment. 97% of pupils made progress.

No progress was seen in 3% of pupils due to reluctance to use specialist equipment following diagnosis, or because of a shortage of trained support staff able to consistently assist pupils with hearing loss in school.

To address attendance concerns, meetings were held to improve pupil engagement, which led to improved attendance and increased uptake of support from the sensory service.

To support the pupils who did not make progress and to plan for the next term, the intention is to:

- Support a gradual transition to secondary schools by ensuring specialist training for new staff.
- Allow pupils time to familiarise themselves with new equipment and strengthen communication between parents, schools and the specialist service.
- Continue working with schools that are experiencing difficulties in appointing specialist staff.

Quarterly

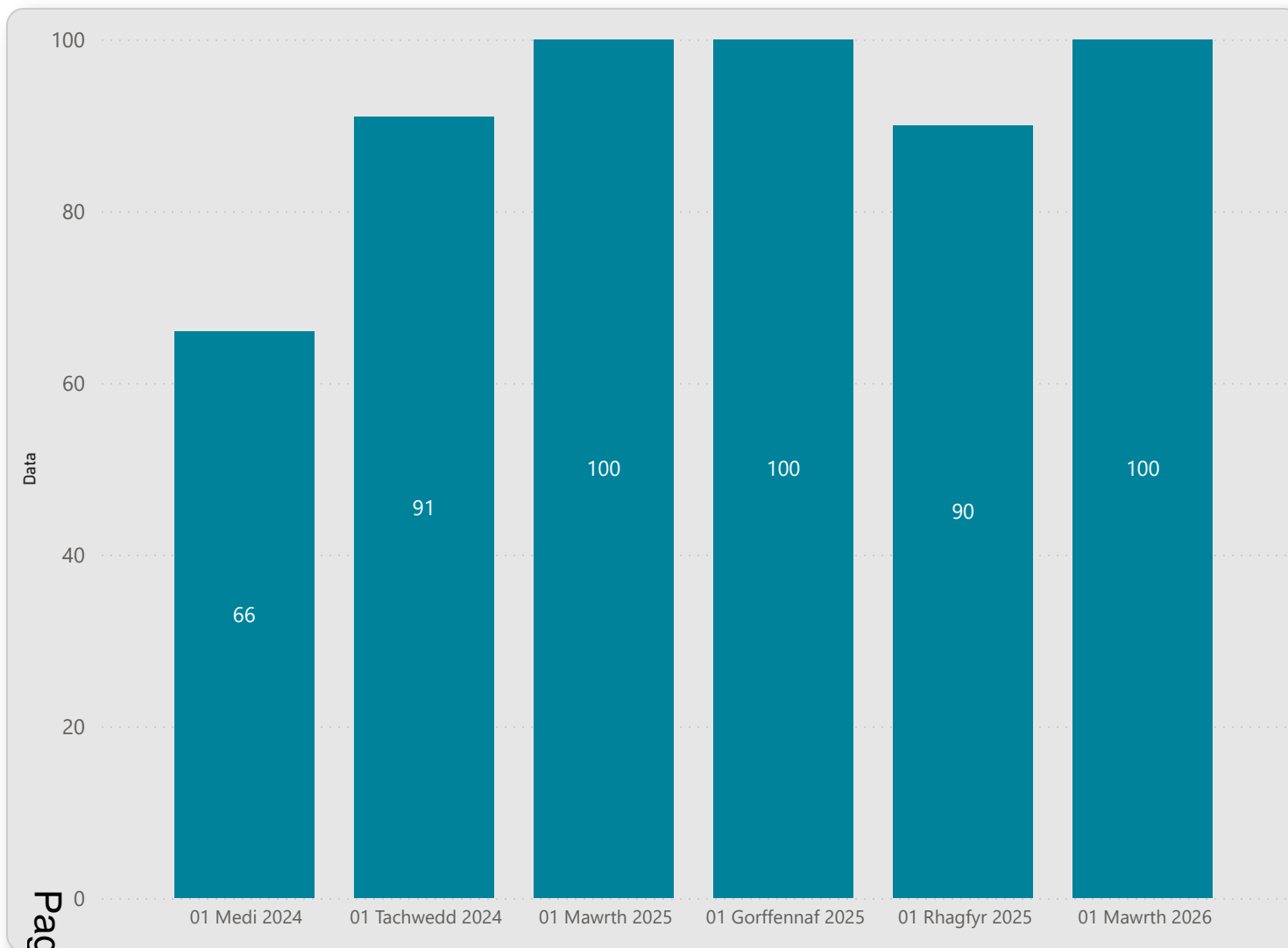
Sara Llwyd Davies (ADDYSG)



Communication and Interaction

Purpose: Improve the communication and interaction skills of pupils who are on the Autism Spectrum or with communication difficulties so that they can thrive educationally and so...

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



We take pride in the fact that 100% of the satisfaction feedback from schools this time indicates that they are very satisfied with the service we provide. It is also great to see that the comments we have received from parents are very positive. Specific comments:
“I have no suggestions as I am extremely satisfied with the service my son is receiving.”
“Nothing really — you are doing a great job with the children and I am extremely proud of XXXX, he has made such good progress with you.”
“Nothing comes to mind — everything about the centre and the staff is 100%. He comes home happy and I can see a big change in him since he has been there.”
“Cannot fault the service at all. All the staff are wonderful.”
“My daughter has made incredible progress since being at the centre and that is all down to the hard work of the staff.”
“We are very grateful to you all. You are amazing! Thank you.”

Monthly

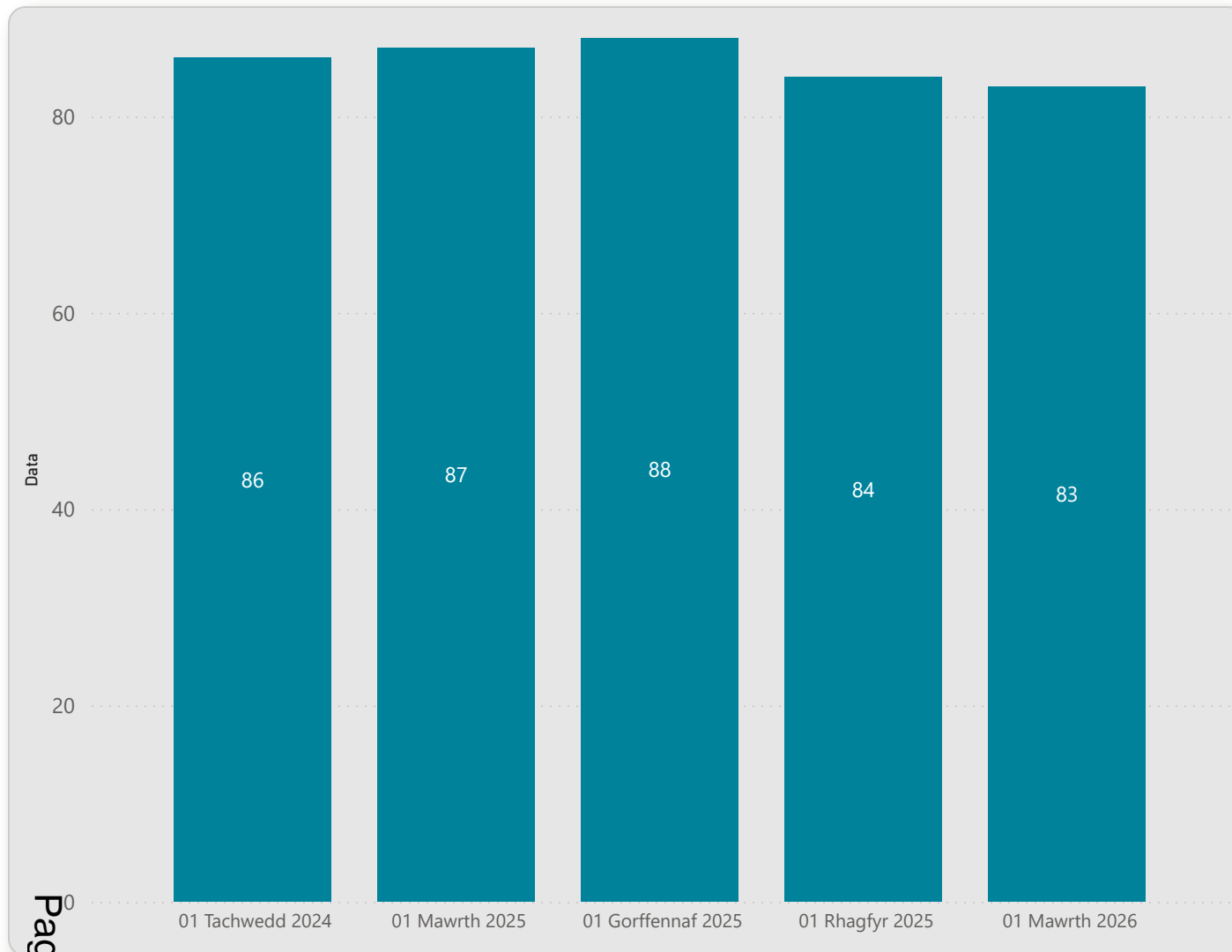
Delyth Gibbard (ADDYSG)



Communication and Interaction

Purpose: Improve the communication and interaction skills of pupils who are on the Autism Spectrum or with communication difficulties so that they can thrive educationally and so...

Indicator: % of children and young people receiving input and making progress



We measure the progress of mainstream primary and secondary pupils who receive direct input from us as a team, either through a placement in a specialist centre or through regular input from a Specialist Assistant. Our indicators show that 83% of those pupils have made good progress.

We use a Progress Monitoring Record, which is a holistic tool for measuring pupils' communication and interaction skills. We collect the information for the record by carrying out assessments and observations in different situations. Every pupil open to us receives an initial assessment which is used as a baseline, followed by a termly assessment to measure progress.

There has been a decrease in the number of pupils who have made progress this quarter, and several factors have influenced this reduction:

- Absences within the team — several team members have been absent from work for extended periods, which affects our ability to support schools as we must ensure adequate staffing in our centres.
- An increase in the number of pupils being referred to us.
- The intensity of pupils' needs — this is a clear pattern, with the needs of pupils in mainstream schools becoming more complex.
- A shortage of Speech and Language Therapists, which impacts us as a team as we often have to fill the gap ourselves.

What are we doing to try to improve further?

- We have funded training for primary and secondary schools through grant funding to raise awareness of sensory needs.
- The team is working closely with special schools in Gwynedd to ensure that the right children gain access to Special School provision.
- Working with primary and secondary schools to establish small groups offering a specialist curriculum for those pupils who find it difficult to engage with more formal, desk-based learning.
- Working with pupils who struggle to attend school in order to build relationships and strengthen links between home and education.
- Supporting mainstream schools to make the best use of interventions and resources after staff training.

Monthly

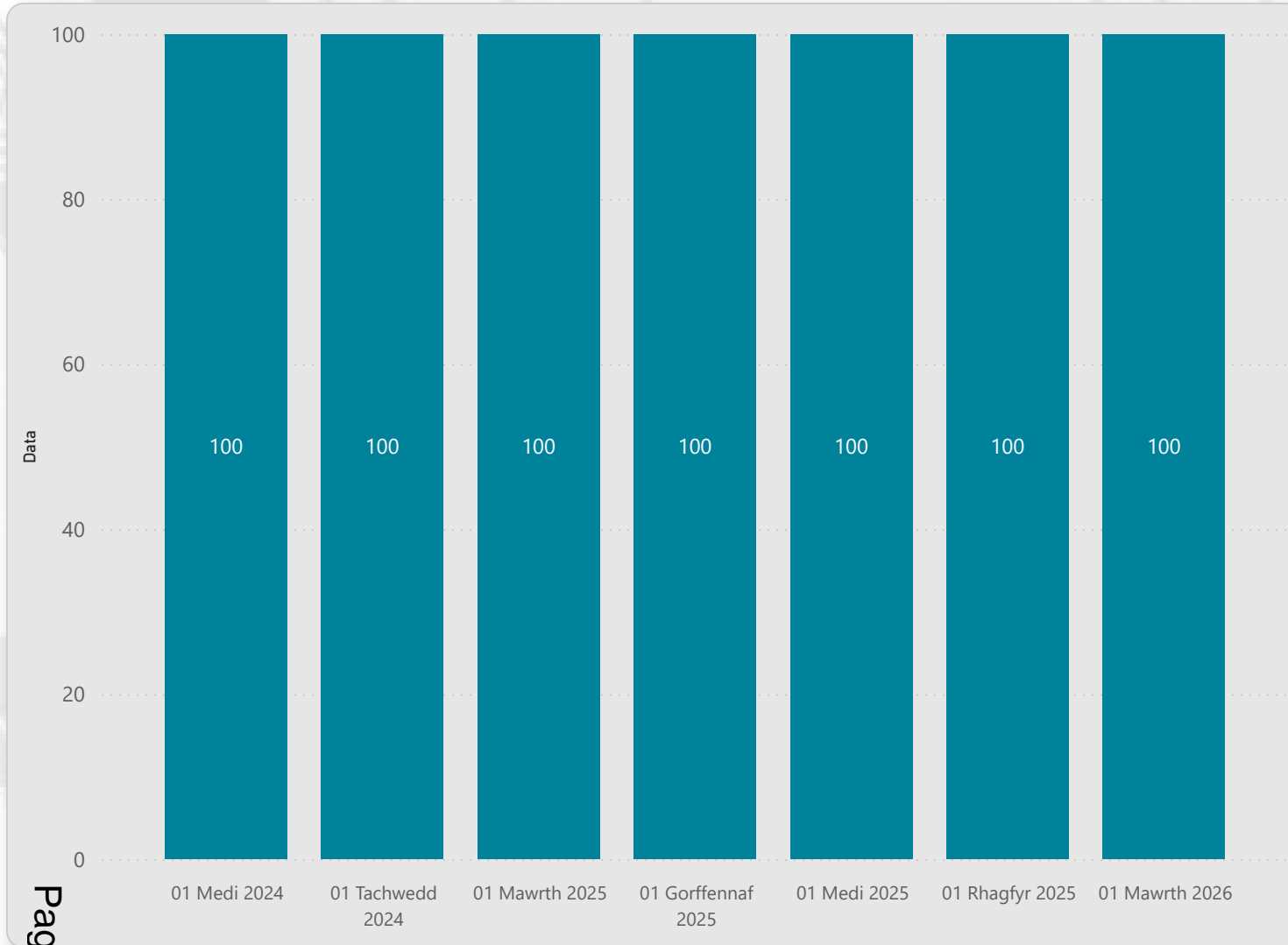
Delyth Gibbard (ADDYSG)



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



Following each forum/panel, the administrative team inputs the decisions onto the online IDP system within two weeks of the decision-confirmation date.

During this period there were:

- 4 Intensive Forums
- 4 Enquiry Panels
- 3 Area Forums
- 2 Exceptions and Special Schools Panels
- 11 Early Years Panels

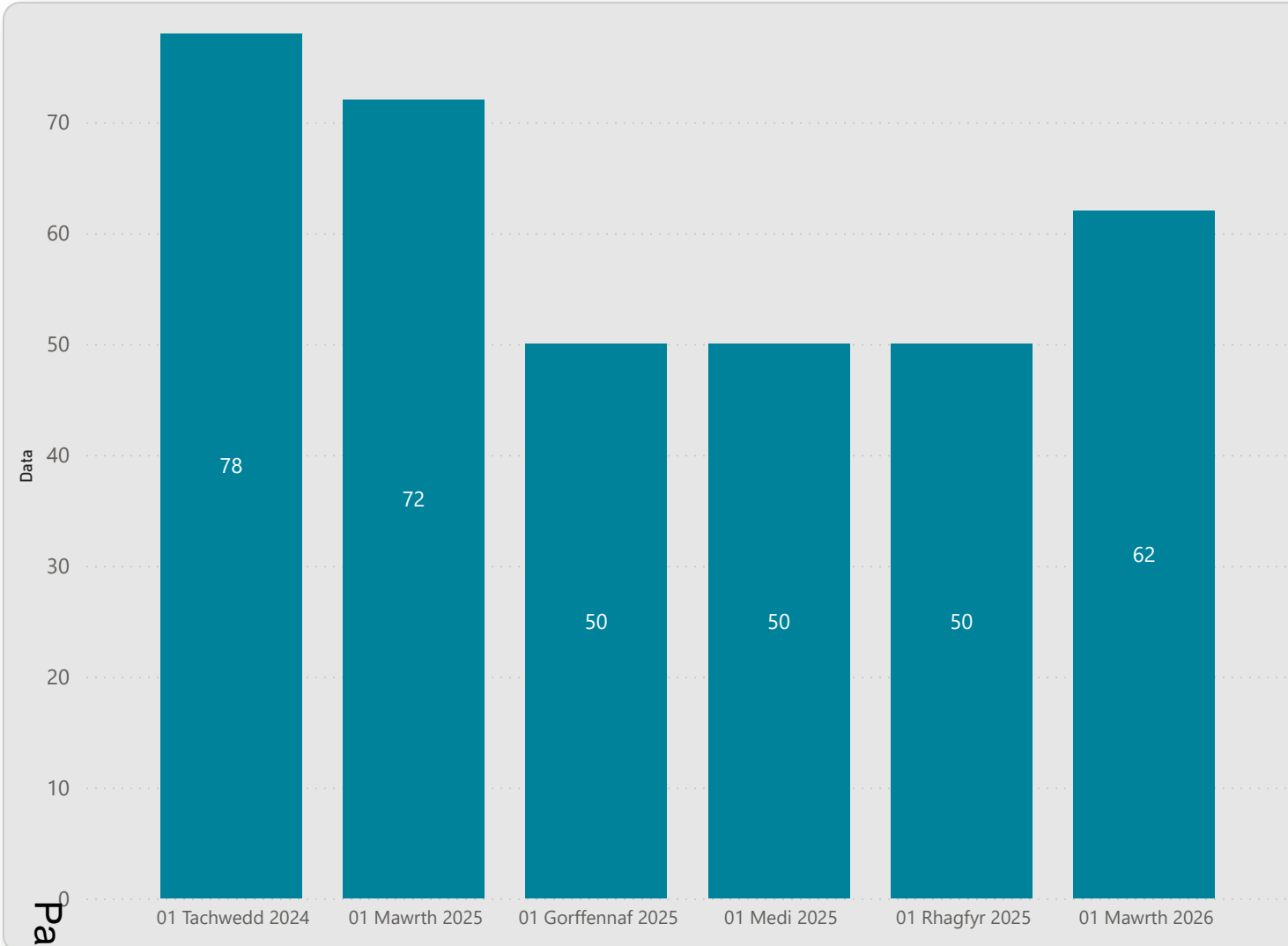
Monthly

Ellen Mai Jones (ADDYSG)

Psychology

Purpose: Using Psychology based information and interventions to promote positive change for children and young people

Indicator: % of children and young people making progress following input from the psychology service



The Educational Psychology Service is a school-based service operating on a consultative model, where strategies to support progress are discussed in partnership with key school staff, other agencies (where relevant), and parents. This is followed by a process of implementation and review. We also have a key role in training, delivering interventions, and running projects. In addition, we work with groups of pupils from time to time and, of course, with individual pupils.

Measuring the progress of individual pupils following work by the team can be challenging, as the progress a child makes often depends on factors such as whether the strategies recommended in reports or through training are implemented effectively and consistently within schools, or changes in the child's life that may reduce the impact of interventions.

The psychology service intends to refine our data-collection approach by September 2026, but at present we rely on schools responding to our questionnaires, reporting on the progress of pupils who have received direct input (through observation, therapeutic work, or assessment) or indirect input (through consultation with staff or through training). This data is based on 33 responses, and we are pleased to see that schools feel more children are making progress in response to the psychology team's involvement this quarter.

As we often work with the people (the system) around the child in school (ALN Co-ordinator, class teachers, and teaching assistants), progress is often dependent on the school implementing the recommendations. In cases where direct therapeutic work is carried out with a pupil, it is easier to say that the progress (or lack of progress) stems from the psychologist's input.

Quarterly

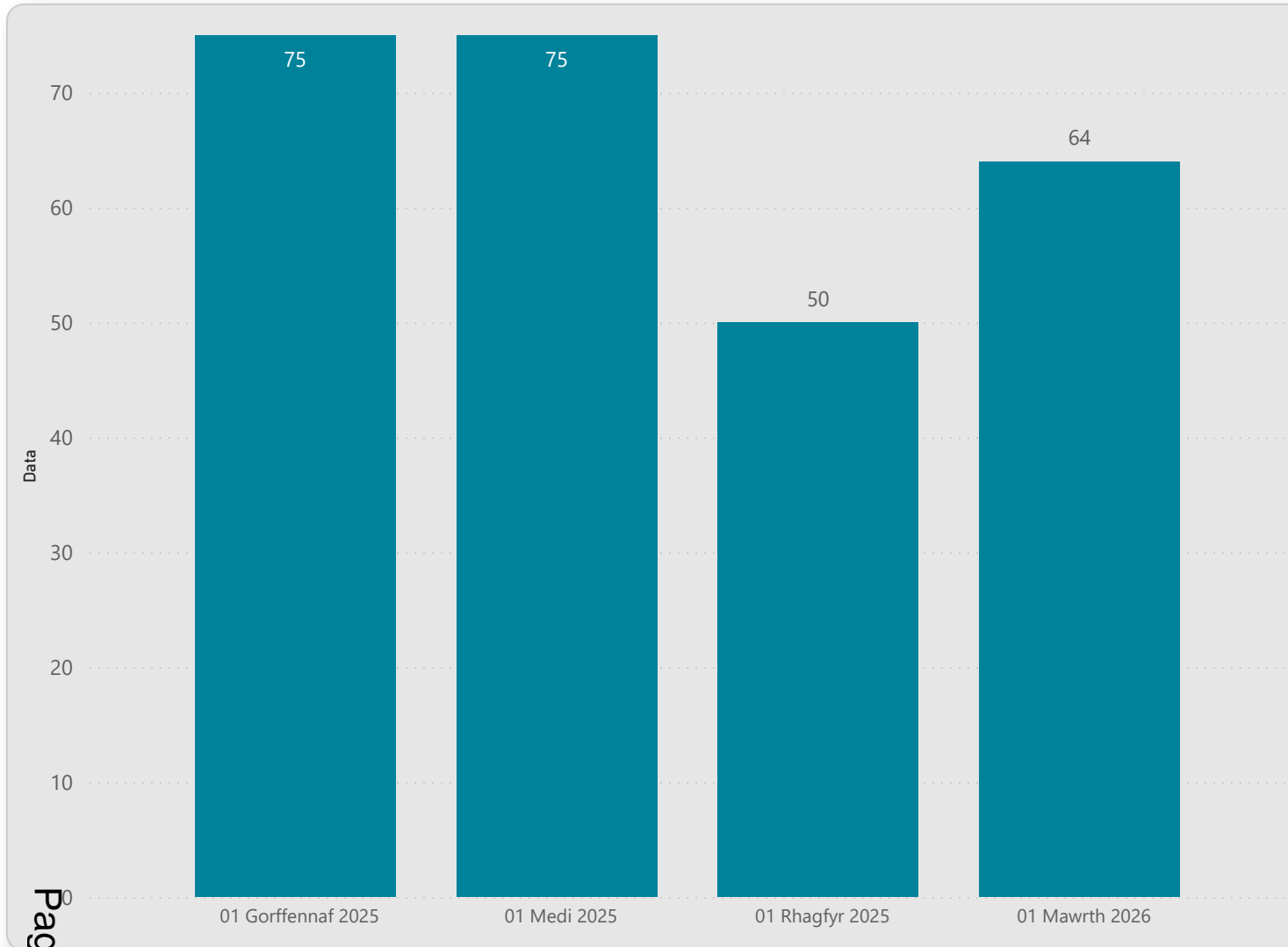
Elenid Glyn (ADDYSG)



Psychology

Purpose: Using Psychology based information and interventions to promote positive change for children and young people

Indicator: % of the qualified ELSAs who attend supervision every half-term



The ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants) project is a major part of the work of the educational psychology service throughout the year. The educational psychology team trains assistants to deliver wellbeing interventions in schools for children who are emotionally and behaviourally vulnerable, under the ongoing supervision of Educational Psychologists. Through this project, a high number of children receive timely intervention from an adult who is familiar to them. To ensure the quality of this important provision, and to ensure that the work is based on current psychological evidence, ELSA assistants are required to attend regular supervision sessions with the team.

During a period when the psychology team has been operating under capacity for an extended time (due to national recruitment challenges), we have often had to adapt our way of working to meet the needs within schools, and the ELSA project is something we see as an element that cannot be compromised.

Since the last report, there has been an increase in the number of ELSA assistants attending supervision sessions, but it is still not sufficient. In order to maintain ELSA accreditation, and for the psychology team to monitor the quality of this important provision in schools, attending supervision every half term is ESSENTIAL. It is not clear what has enabled more ELSAs to attend this time, but the team takes every opportunity to emphasise the importance of attendance in any conversation we have with ALN coordinators (ALNCos). We have also sent an email to schools to reinforce the importance of releasing ELSA assistants from their duties to attend supervision.

To respond further (as noted last quarter), we have arranged to discuss the ELSA project with Gwynedd headteachers in May, in the hope that this will improve their understanding of the requirements of the ELSA Network—namely that the work must be supervised by educational psychologists, and therefore that assistants must be released to attend the sessions.

Quarterly

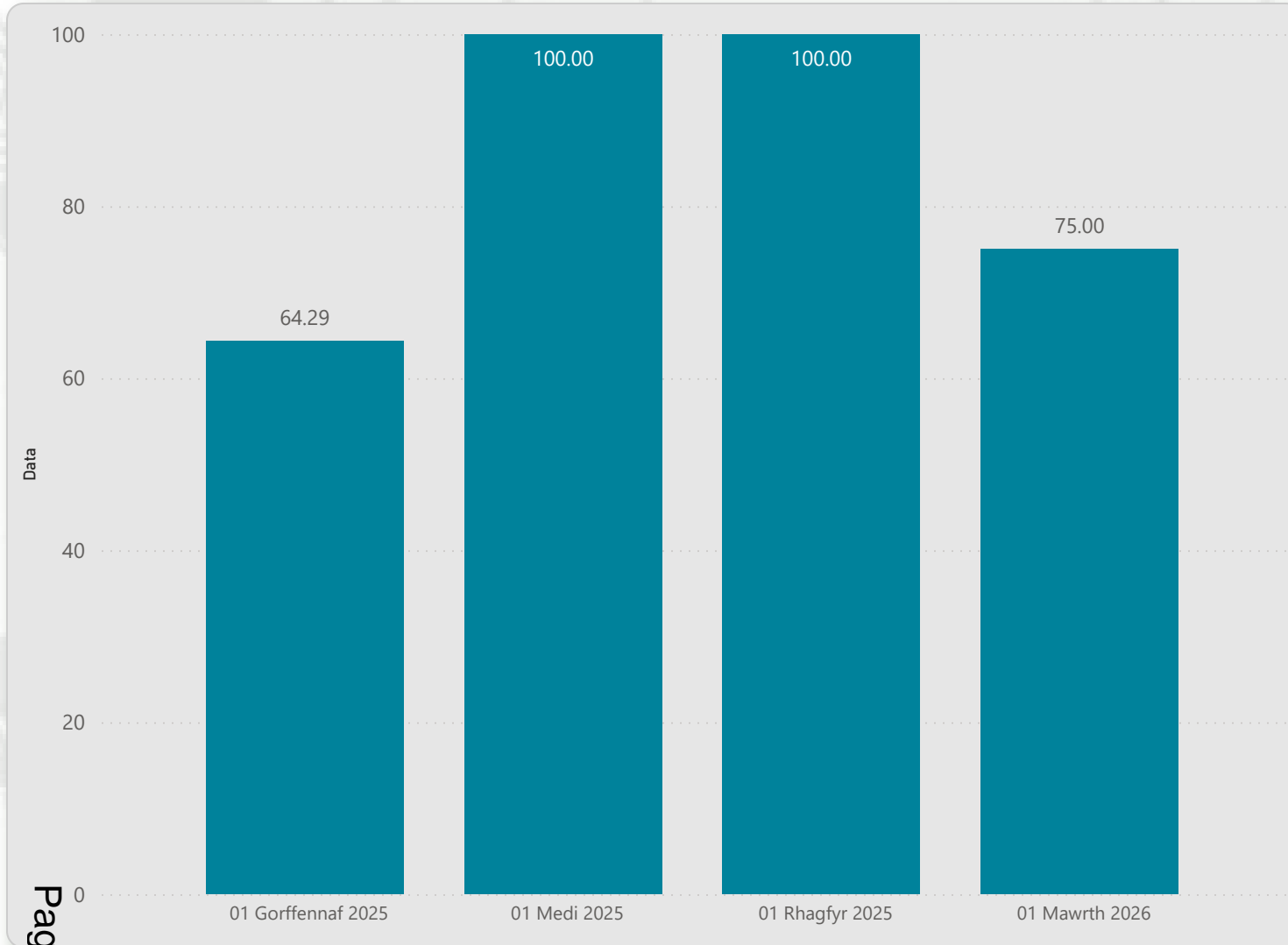
Elenid Glyn (ADDYSG)



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



During the reporting period, visits were carried out with 32 families who educate their children at home. Of these, it was identified that 24 children (75%) are receiving an education considered suitable for their ability. The data shows that 25% of the children visited are not currently receiving an education that meets statutory criteria.

The findings highlight that:

- 75% of the pupils who received a visit are receiving an education considered suitable for their ability.
- 25% of the children assessed require support or improvement in their home-education provision.
- The figures do not represent the full register, as visits take place annually; therefore, the data reflects only the families assessed during this period.

This information draws attention to the need to:

- Strengthen monitoring to ensure that inadequate provision is identified promptly.
- Target support towards those families where concerns have been identified.
- Review visiting arrangements to ensure that the picture obtained is representative and sufficiently robust for policy-making purposes.

Monthly

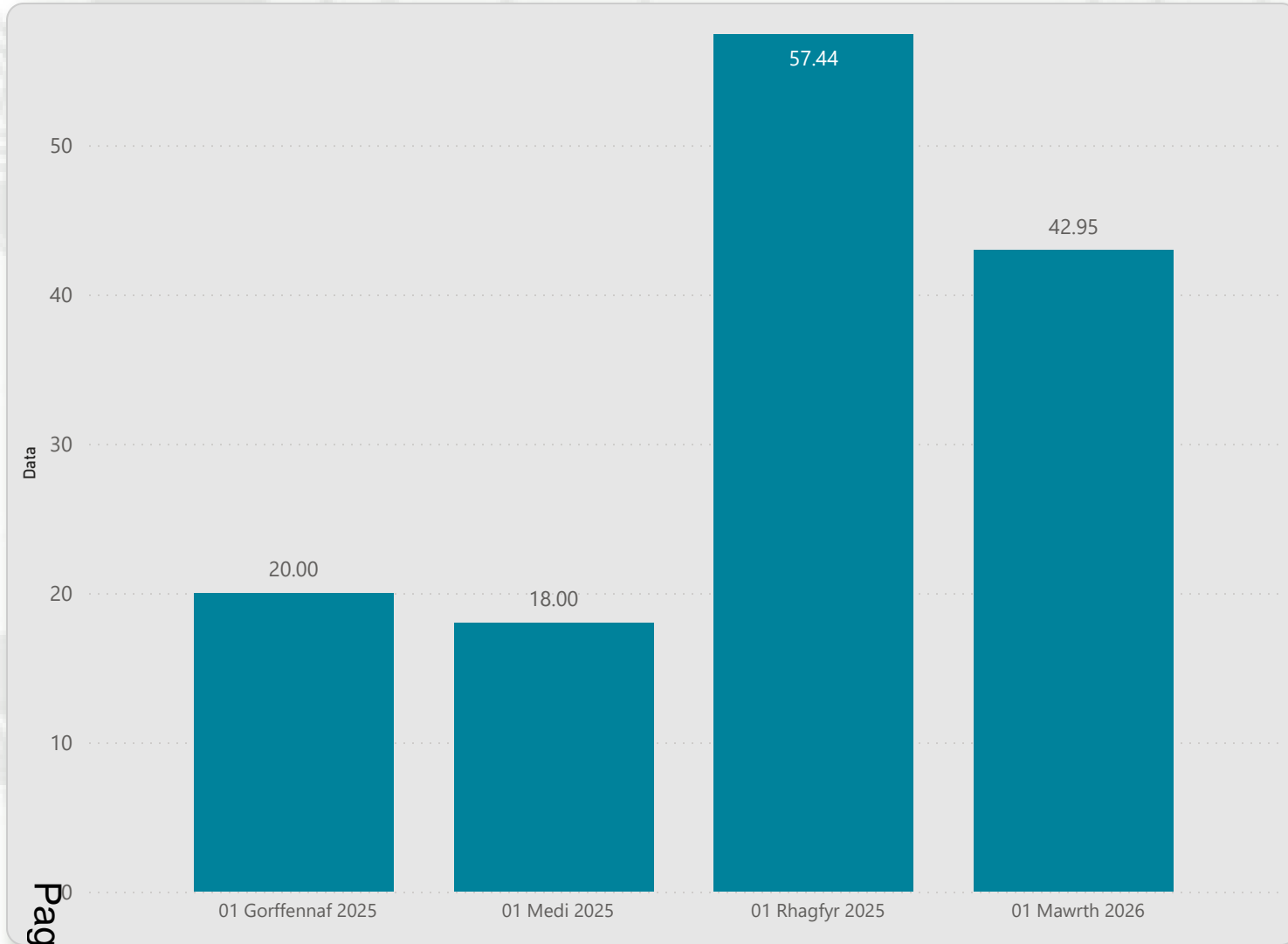
Ellen Rowlands (ADDYSG)



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



This figure reflects the fact that the team works on the basis of an annual visit schedule, which means there is no expectation to visit every family in every reporting period. This approach ensures that resources are targeted appropriately and allows the team to focus on families who require more intensive or more regular support.

- Of the visits scheduled during the period, 42.95% were completed.
- The annual schedule means that some families receive pre-planned visits, while others receive additional visits if needed.
- This pattern ensures a balance between regular monitoring and flexible support when circumstances change.

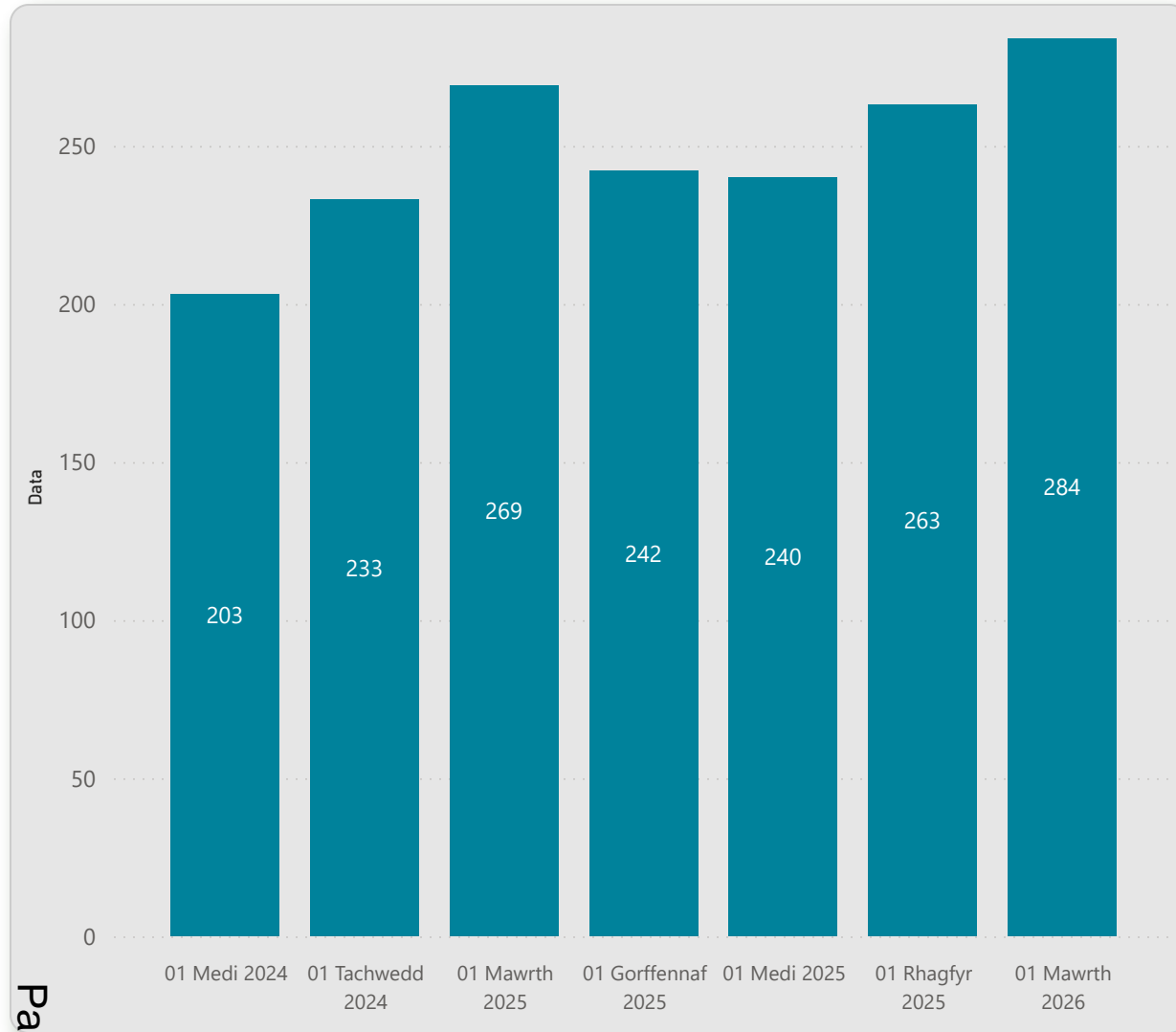
Monthly

Ellen Rowlands (ADDYSG)

Elective Home Education

Purpose: Ensure support for the Department by providing a high quality of data and information infrastructure that drives decision and performance

Indicator: Number of Elective Home Education learners



The latest picture shows that there are 284 learners on the Elective Home Education register. Since 1 January 2026, 37 pupils have joined the register, while 10 have returned to school. Compared with the same period last year, this represents a net increase of 20 individuals on the register.

This increase aligns with the patterns reported by parents, which reflect national trends and are not unique to Gwynedd.

Four key themes consistently emerge as reasons for choosing EHE:

- Mental health – anxiety, social anxiety, depression or stress affecting the child’s ability to engage with school.
- Attendance pressure – a sense that attendance expectations add stress or worsen wellbeing.
- Unmet needs – a feeling that the school cannot meet the child’s needs, particularly in cases involving ALN, sensory sensitivities or previous negative experiences.
- Lifestyle – a family preference for a more flexible or personalised learning approach, or work patterns that make EHE more practical than daily school attendance.

Of the pupils who have deregistered since September 2025, 21% are Year 11 learners. This suggests that:

- Some families choose EHE during periods of increased pressure, such as exam seasons.
- Older pupils may be more likely to move to EHE when experiencing mental-health concerns or unmet needs.
- A deeper understanding is required of the factors driving late deregistration in the secondary sector.

The reasons identified reflect trends across Wales:

- An increase in EHE linked to mental-health challenges and school anxiety.
- The impact of attendance pressures and post-pandemic experiences on learners.
- A perception that mainstream schools are not able to respond flexibly or quickly enough to individual needs.

This pattern highlights the need to strengthen the local response in several areas:

- More robust mental-health support within schools.
- More flexible attendance approaches for learners experiencing anxiety or stress.
- Open dialogue between schools and families before EHE decisions are made, to reduce...

Monthly

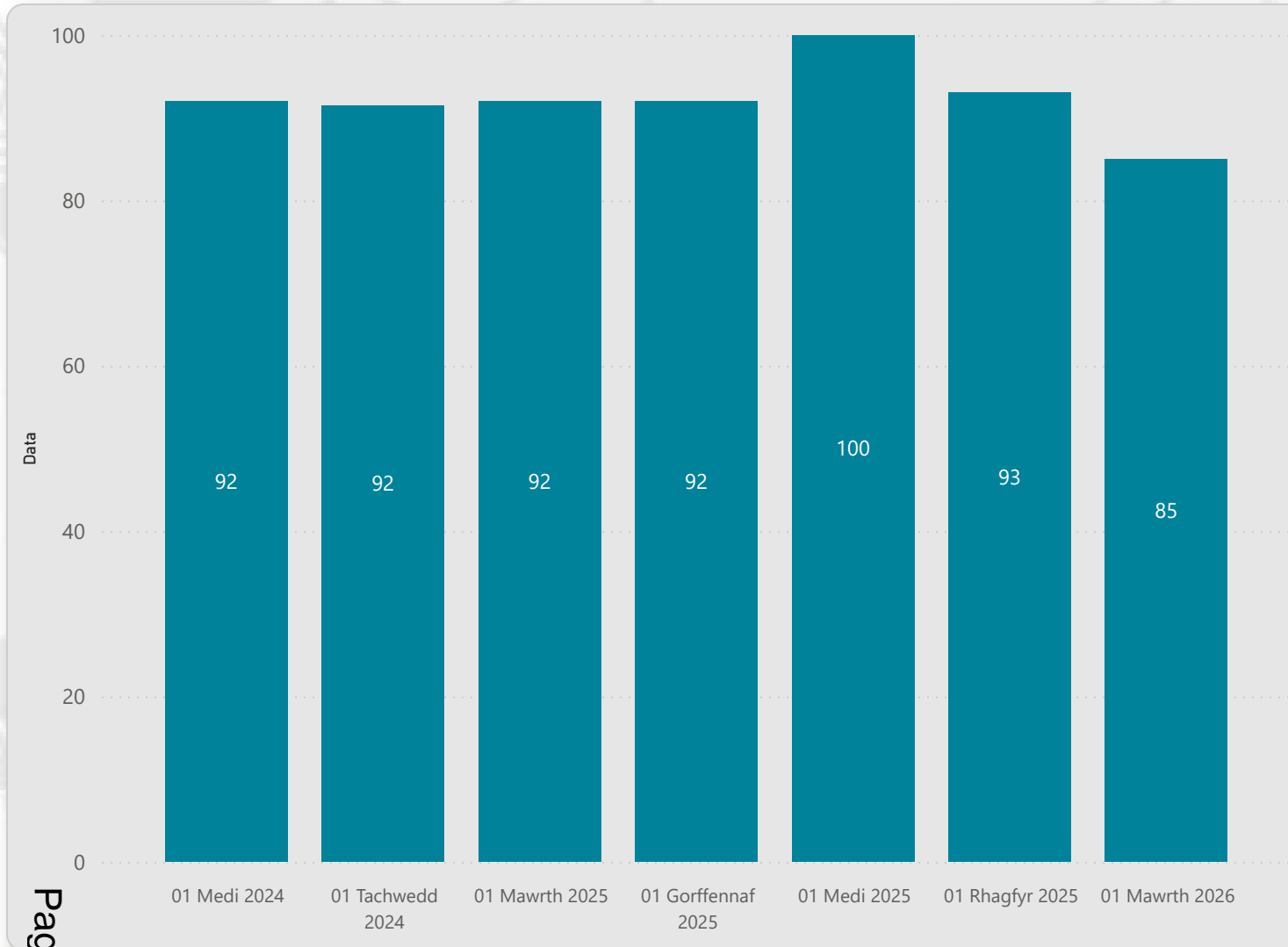
Ellen Rowlands (ADDYSG)



Counselling

Purpose: Provide a timely counselling service to pupils

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



Comments about the service are generally very positive, but young people are worried about the waiting time they have to face before receiving support, and also that the support isn't long-term enough.

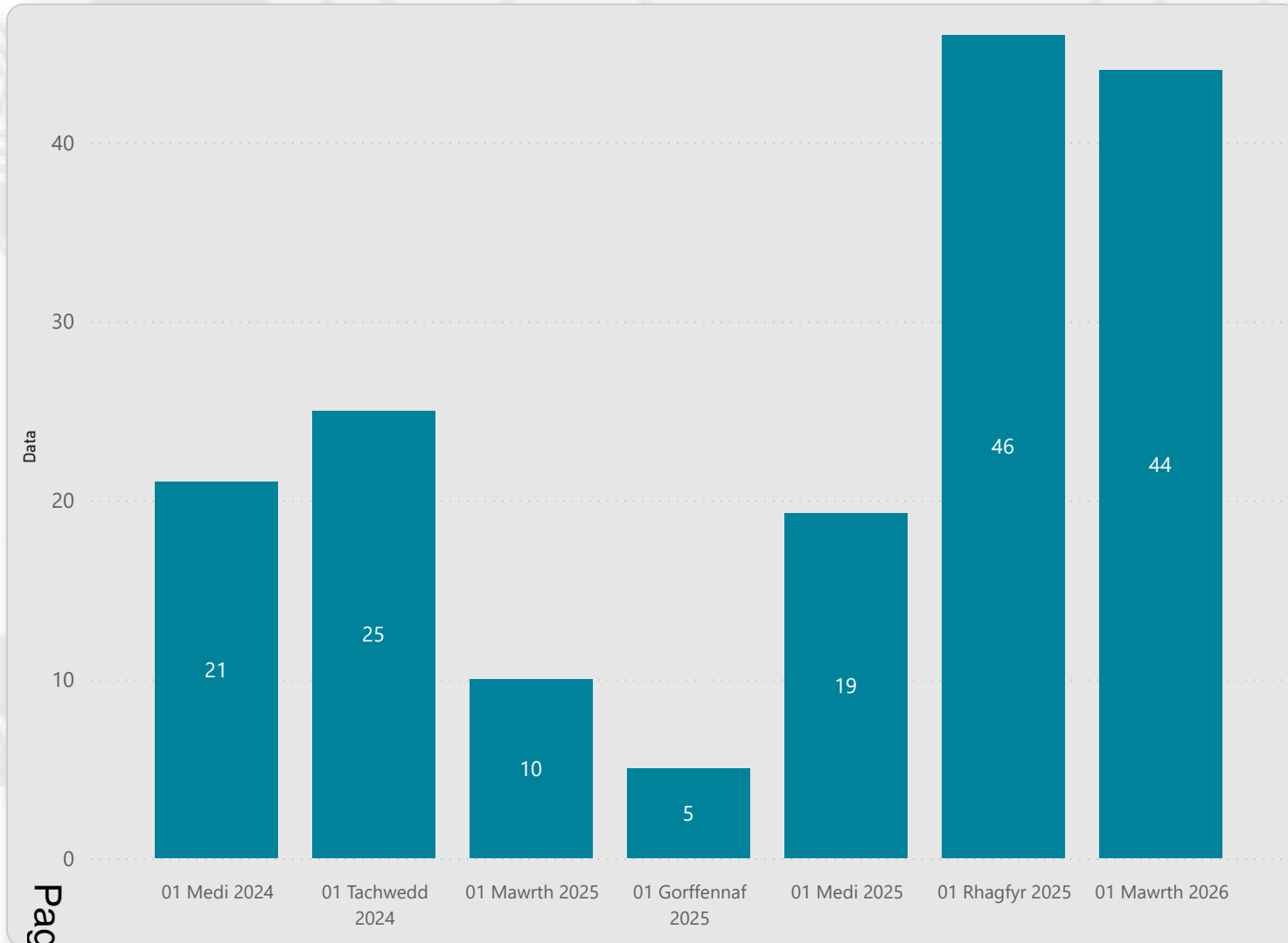
Monthly

Meleri Wyn Jones (ADDYSG)

Counselling

Purpose: Provide a timely counselling service to pupils

Indicator: Mean number of days required to wait for service



A number of factors have contributed to the increase in service waiting times during this quarter. There has been a rise in the number of referrals coming into the service, and these referrals are more complex, with an increase in young people with more intense emotional and therapeutic needs, particularly in primary settings.

As a result, the service has been responding more flexibly to the level of need, providing longer-term interventions where appropriate and ethical. Every suitable primary referral now receives a minimum of 12 weeks of Service input. While this ensures more appropriate, effective and ethical support for those individuals, it has also affected the service's ability to offer new appointments as quickly as before.

During the past three months, there has been additional focus on staff training and development, including training in therapeutic group work. Although this is an important investment in the long-term quality and development of the service, it has had some short-term impact on the team's operational capacity.

In addition, several staff members remain on maternity leave, with another member of staff on long-term absence, which has also affected the service's capacity during this quarter.

This quarter also coincides with the period leading up to the exam season, which has led to an increase in the number of individuals presenting with higher levels of anxiety and requiring additional support related to stress and emotional wellbeing during that time.

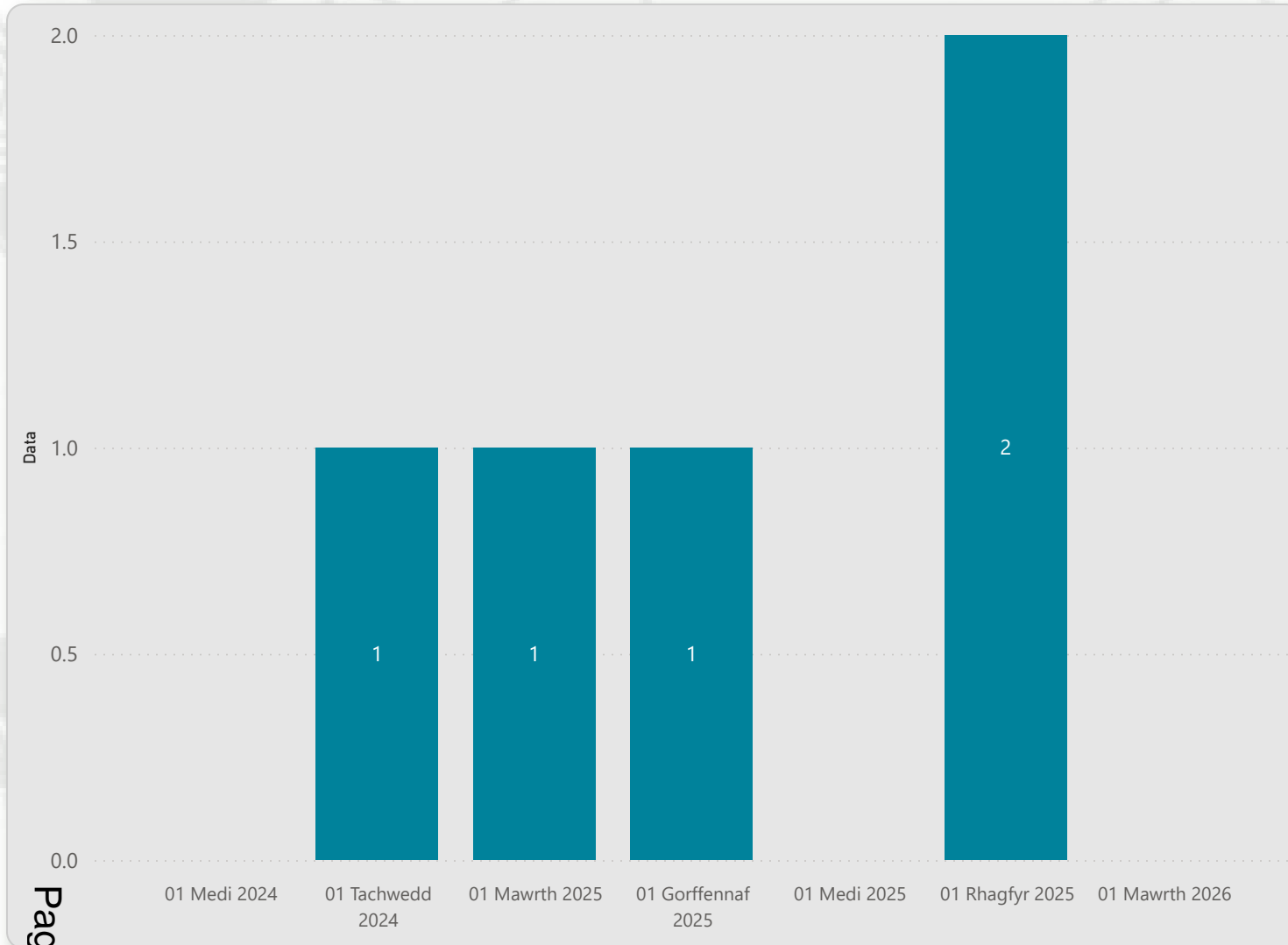
Monthly

Meleri Wyn 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



Exclusion levels in the primary sector remain very low, with only one permanent exclusion recorded during this reporting period. However, this exclusion has not been confirmed. In this case, the pupil is a child with ALN, and the Service is working to secure an alternative placement for him. This is being done in order to:

- Avoid the permanent exclusion being formally confirmed.
- Prevent the exclusion from appearing on the child's school record.
- Reduce the long-term impact on his educational pathway and future opportunities.
- Ensure that the child receives a placement that can better meet his needs.

This approach reflects a proactive and restorative ethos within the primary sector, seeking a solution that protects the child's wellbeing while maintaining safety and stability within the school.

The fact that only one case has reached this stage shows that primary schools continue to use effective preventative approaches before reaching permanent exclusion.

The work to secure an alternative placement demonstrates a strong commitment to inclusive solutions and to minimising negative impact on children with additional needs.

The situation aligns with the wider message about the importance of early referral and multi-agency support to prevent cases from escalating.

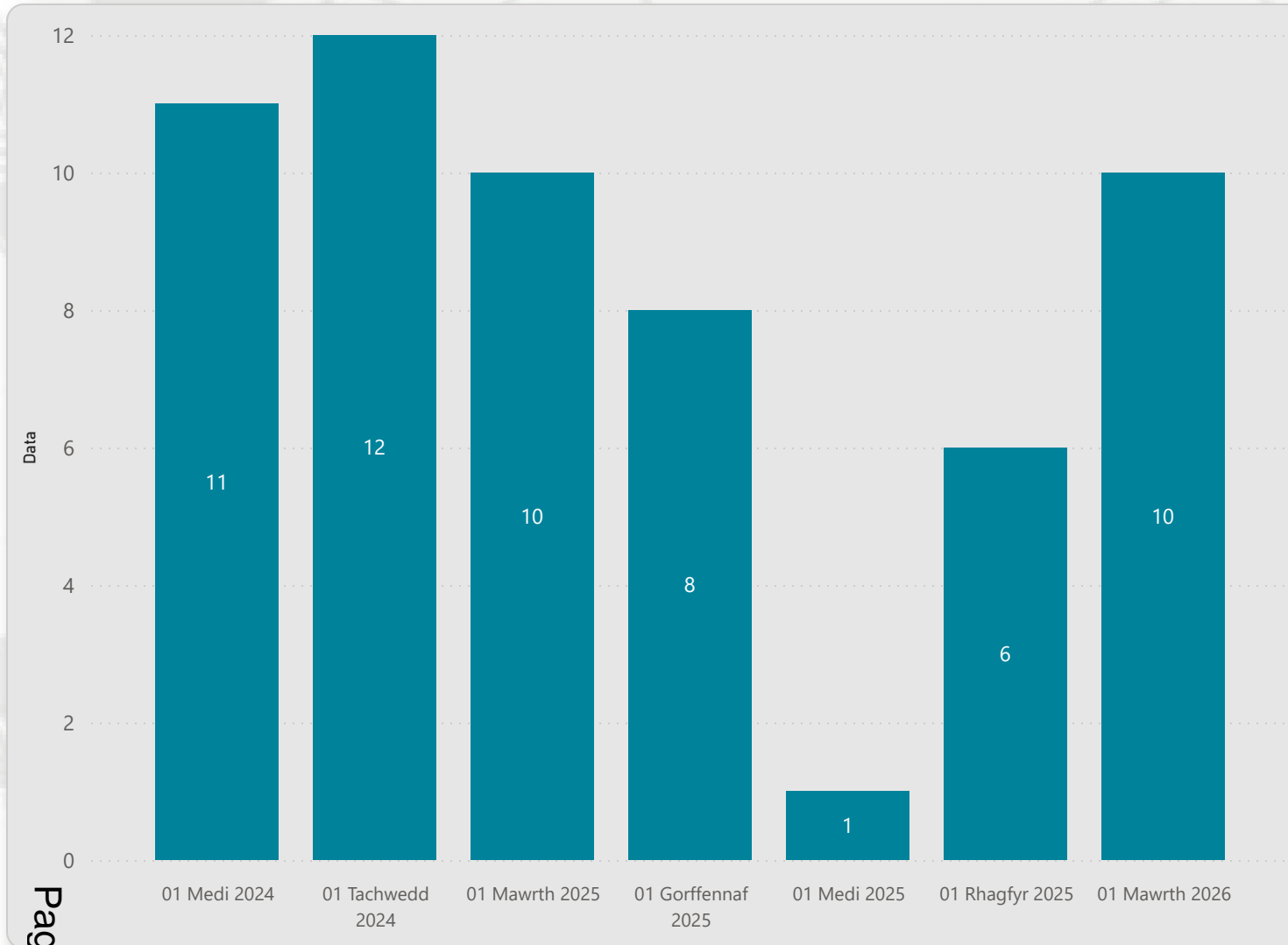
Monthly

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



Levels of exclusions continue to be a significant factor affecting attendance and progress among secondary pupils. During this reporting period:

- 10 permanent exclusions were recorded, with 4 of them coming from one school, highlighting a clear inconsistency between settings.
- A total of 537 fixed-term exclusions have been issued since September, with the number of sessions lost amounting to 4,338, equivalent to 2,169 school days. Note: Permanent exclusions are not included in this figure, so the true impact is even higher.
- Year 9 and Year 8 are the year groups that have lost the most learning time due to exclusions, indicating that these groups remain at high risk in terms of behaviour and attendance.

School patterns

- Every secondary school has excluded pupils since September.
- However, one school is excluding significantly more than the others, with 128 exclusion periods, compared with the next two schools which have 83 and 87.
- This suggests differences in policy, behaviour-management approaches, or levels of pupil need between schools.

Comparison with last year

- Permanent exclusions have reduced significantly compared with the same period last year.
- There were 33 permanent exclusions recorded between September and March last year, compared with 17 this year.
- This shows a positive trend, but the current numbers still represent a substantial impact on learning time and attendance.

Strategic implications

- The high level of learning time lost due to exclusions contributes directly to the fact that 32.5% of secondary pupils have attendance below 90%.
- The inconsistency between schools suggests a need for: a review of exclusion policies, sharing of good practice, and targeted support for schools that exclude more frequently.
- The reduction in permanent exclusions is positive, but the overall number of sessions lost remains high and continues to have a significant impact on pupil progress

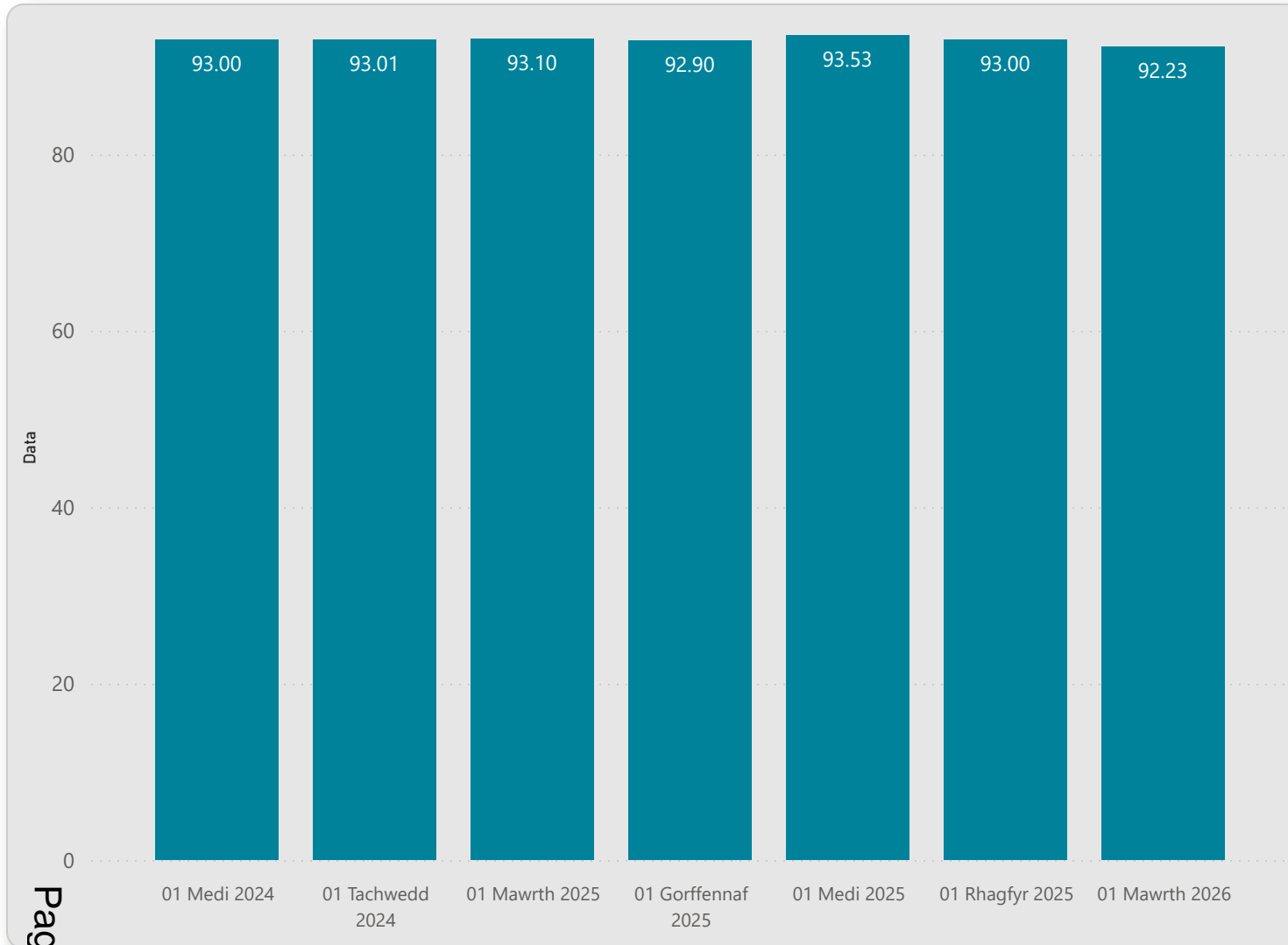
Monthly

Ellen Rowlands (ADDYSG)

Welfare

Purpose: Support pupils to ensure successful attendance at education

Indicator: % attendance of Primary pupils



The data shows that 19.9% of primary-school pupils are currently operating below the 90% attendance threshold, with illness, holidays and a number of unauthorised absences without explanation contributing to the picture. To prevent cases from escalating and to improve outcomes for pupils, two key actions are being prioritised across the primary sector.

Primary cases that remain open to the Learner Wellbeing and Behaviour Service tend to be among the most challenging, often involving families facing complex circumstances or attendance patterns. Early referral is essential to ensure that appropriate support is in place before the situation deteriorates.

This helps to:

- Prevent cases from escalating and reduce the need for statutory or intensive interventions.
 - Enable the Service to support families before poor attendance patterns become ingrained.
 - Strengthen the relationship between primary schools and the Service, ensuring a coordinated and consistent approach to attendance management.
- This approach forms part of a wider preventative strategy aimed at reducing the number of long-term cases and improving outcomes for primary-aged pupils.

Eight primary cases have shown significant improvement during the reporting period, providing an important opportunity to understand what works effectively in a primary context. These cases represent examples of successful interventions and offer valuable evidence that can be used to inform good practice across other schools. Schools and the Service will examine these cases in more detail to gain a clear understanding of:

- Which specific interventions triggered positive change, such as early family meetings, tighter monitoring, targeted wellbeing support or changes to home routines.
- Which family or school-based factors were key to the improvement, including parental engagement, additional staff support or multi-agency collaboration.
- How these approaches can be replicated across other primary schools to improve consistency, reduce variation between settings and strengthen preventative practice across the sector.

Monthly

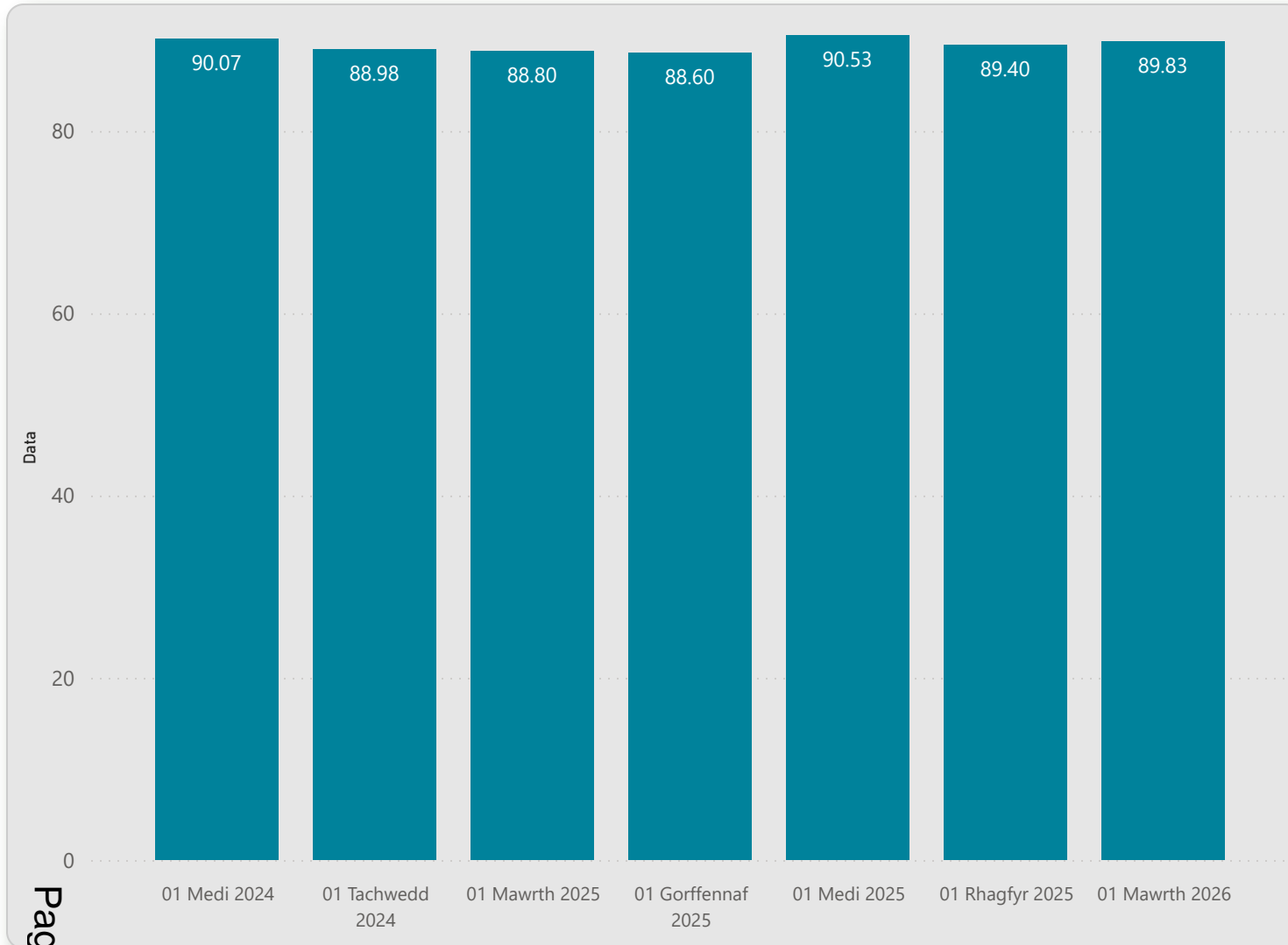
Ellen Rowlands (ADDYSG)



Welfare

Purpose: Support pupils to ensure successful attendance at education

Indicator: % attendance of Secondary pupils



Currently, 32.5% of secondary-school pupils are below the 90% attendance threshold, indicating a high level of risk across the sector. An analysis of the reasons for absence highlights a complex picture involving both authorised and unauthorised factors.

Authorised absences

The main contributors are:

- Illness
- Medical appointments
- Exclusions

This shows that a significant number of pupils are missing learning time due to health issues, wellbeing needs or behaviour-related matters. This pattern highlights the need for tighter monitoring, preventative behaviour work and clearer communication with parents regarding medical appointments during school hours.

Unauthorised absences

The main contributors are:

- Term-time holidays
- Lateness

Holidays have a substantial impact on secondary attendance and often lead to further decline. Lateness contributes to unauthorised absence and often reflects organisational difficulties or low engagement.

Priority actions

To respond to this picture, the Service will focus on:

- Developing attendance-improvement approaches for the Spring and Summer terms (awareness campaigns, weekly goals, early family meetings).
- Targeting high-risk groups with weekly monitoring and regular parent contact before cases escalate.
- Mapping successful cases to identify and share good practice.
- Ensuring Welfare Officers use qualitative and quantitative data together to fully understand cases.
- Refining the pre-prosecution process to ensure consistency and fairness.
- Strengthening monitoring of cases open for more than 12 weeks to prevent further decline.

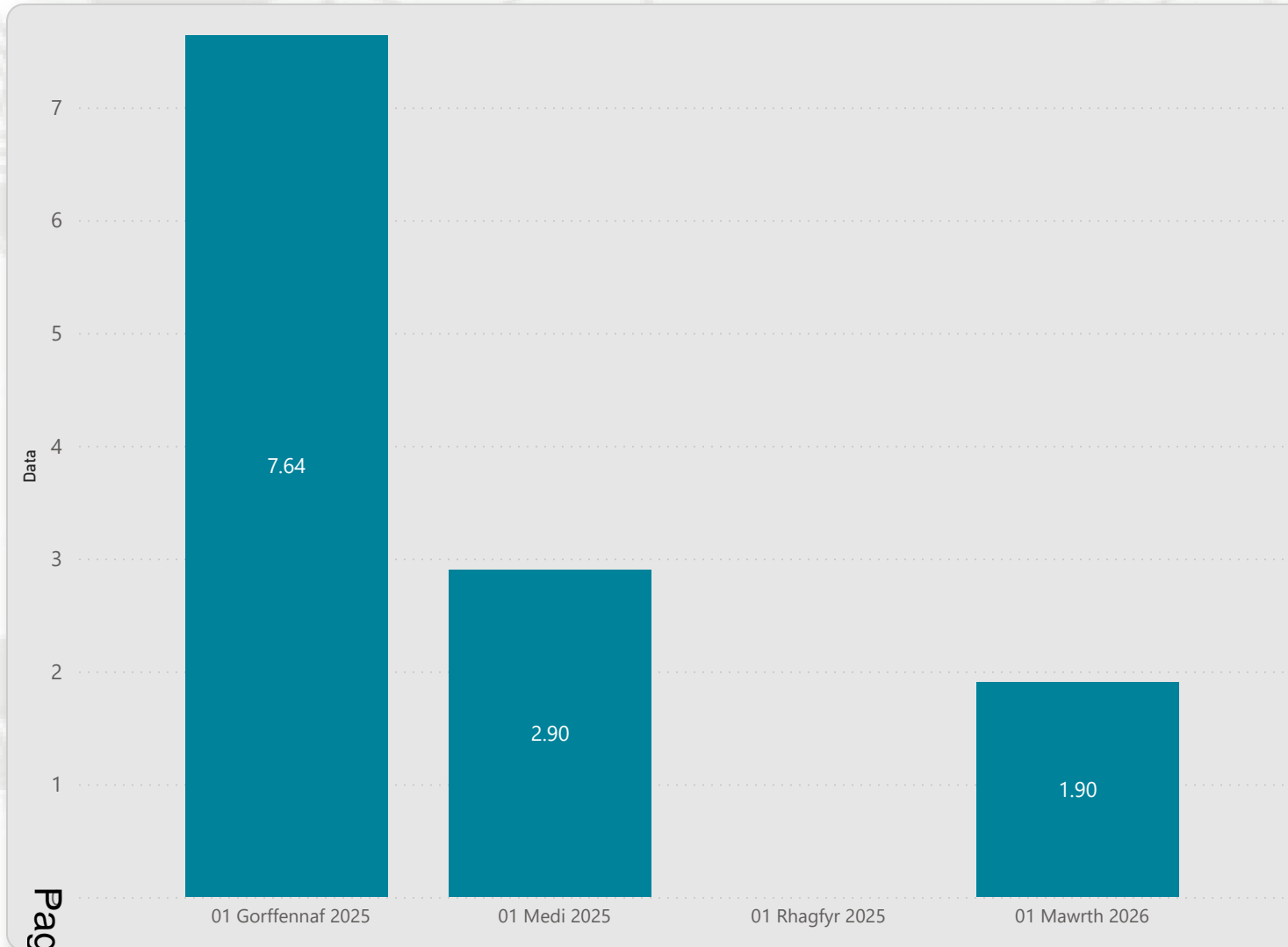
Monthly

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)



During the reporting period, 1.9% of open cases to the Learner Wellbeing and Behaviour Service resulted in prosecution under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure regular school attendance. This rate reflects the service's usual pattern of practice, where supportive interventions are prioritised before statutory action is taken. In line with this, prosecutions are relatively rare during the Autumn term, with a more noticeable increase in the Spring as long-term and more complex cases remain open.

The data shows a clear seasonal trend: early support is used as the first intervention, and prosecutions only occur when these approaches have not succeeded. Cases that remain open into the Spring term are typically more complex and less responsive, requiring additional consideration. During the period, four cases (six parents) received Final Notices of Court Action. Two cases (three parents) proceeded to prosecution, while two cases were withdrawn before the hearing, either due to significant mitigation or clear improvement in attendance. This demonstrates a proportionate and targeted approach, where only the most serious or unresponsive cases progress to court.

Analysis of individual cases shows mixed outcomes. In one case, statutory pressure led to a substantial improvement in attendance, followed by a later decline, raising concerns about sustainability. In another, the case was withdrawn due to bereavement, demonstrating the Services' sensitivity to family circumstances. Of the two cases that went to court, one showed measurable improvement but attendance remained low, while the other showed no clear improvement, suggesting resistance to intervention.

Key service risks are identified, including increasing intensity and complexity of cases, pressure on legal resources and workforce capacity, and the risk of poor educational outcomes if attendance is not stabilised. While statutory measures are effective in some cases, the data highlights the ongoing need for tighter monitoring, multi-agency approaches and sustained support to secure long-term improvement.

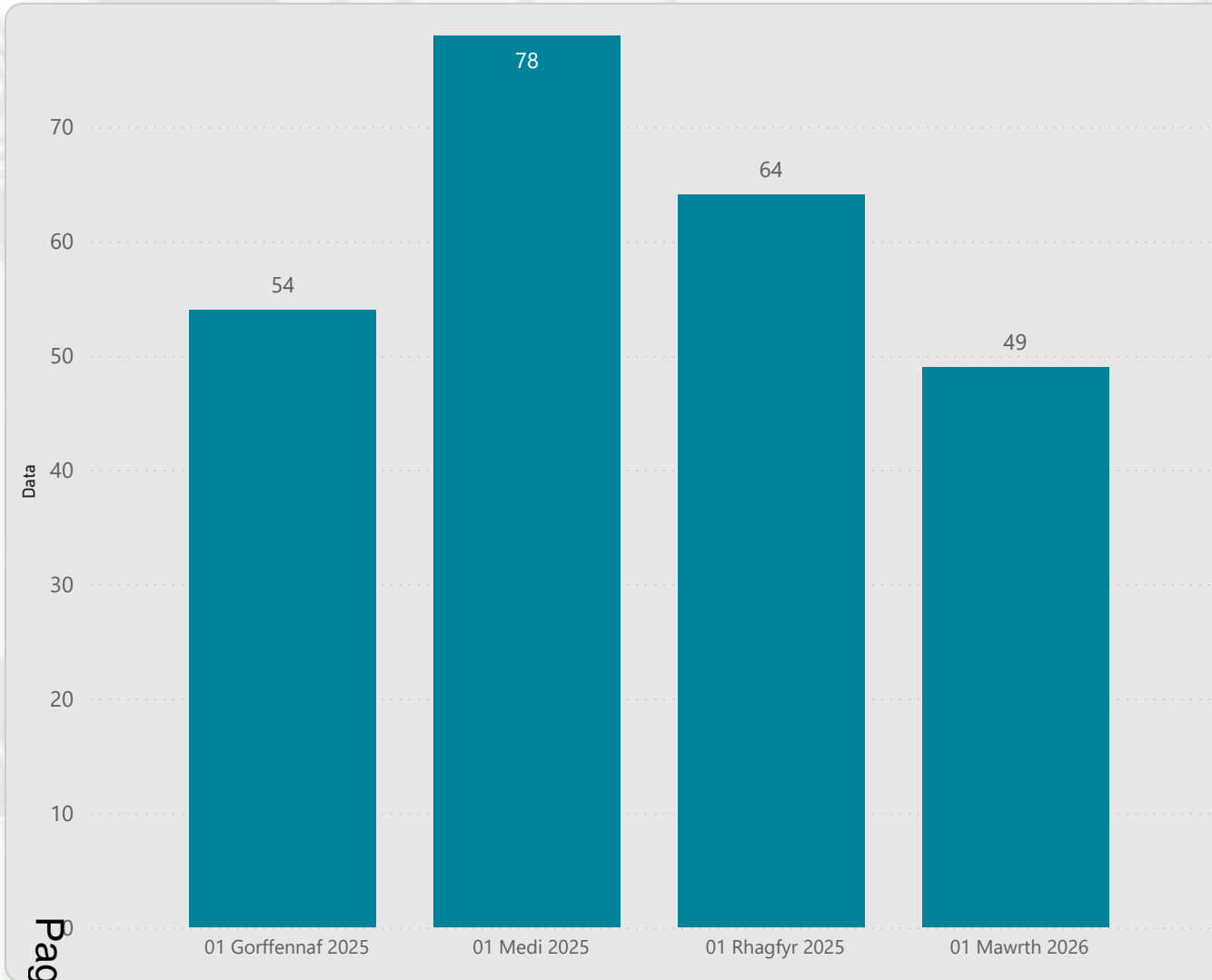
Monthly

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



Although the number of open cases for the Education Welfare Service has remained stable during the reporting period, the data shows a clear shift in the profile, creating opportunities to target support more effectively. At present, 49% of pupils with open cases are showing an improvement in attendance, reflecting the positive impact of the service's interventions on almost half of the learners receiving ongoing support. At the same time, 51% are not yet showing improvement. This group typically consists of more complex, multi-factor or long-term cases that require more intensive or specialist approaches and multi-agency support.

The shift in case distribution provides important insight:

- 90% of cases are now in the secondary sector, enabling the service to focus resources where the need is greatest.
- Cases that close continue to reach the attendance threshold of 85%, demonstrating that the closure pathway is functioning consistently.
- 93% of cases closed during this period were secondary cases, reflecting the effectiveness of interventions for this group despite their complexity.

The increase in secondary cases provides an opportunity to:

- Target more specialist support for long-term or multi-factor cases.
- Strengthen multi-agency partnerships to respond to more complex needs.
- Review workforce capacity to ensure resources align with the growing demand in the secondary sector.

Although the improvement rate has fallen to 49%, this is consistent with national trends and reflects the nature of the learners who remain open—those with the most complex needs and who are less likely to respond to short-term interventions.

The use of statutory steps shows that:

- The service acts decisively when early support is insufficient.
- Monitoring processes ensure that serious cases are managed appropriately.
- There is a need to assess the impact of statutory measures on behaviour change and attendance.

The data highlights clear opportunities to strengthen the response:

- Enhance seasonal interventions during the Spring Term.
- Develop robust early-intervention approaches in the primary sector to reduce future complex secondary cases.
- Review the 85% attendance threshold for complex secondary cases.
- Plan a targeted workforce model to respond to the changing case profile.

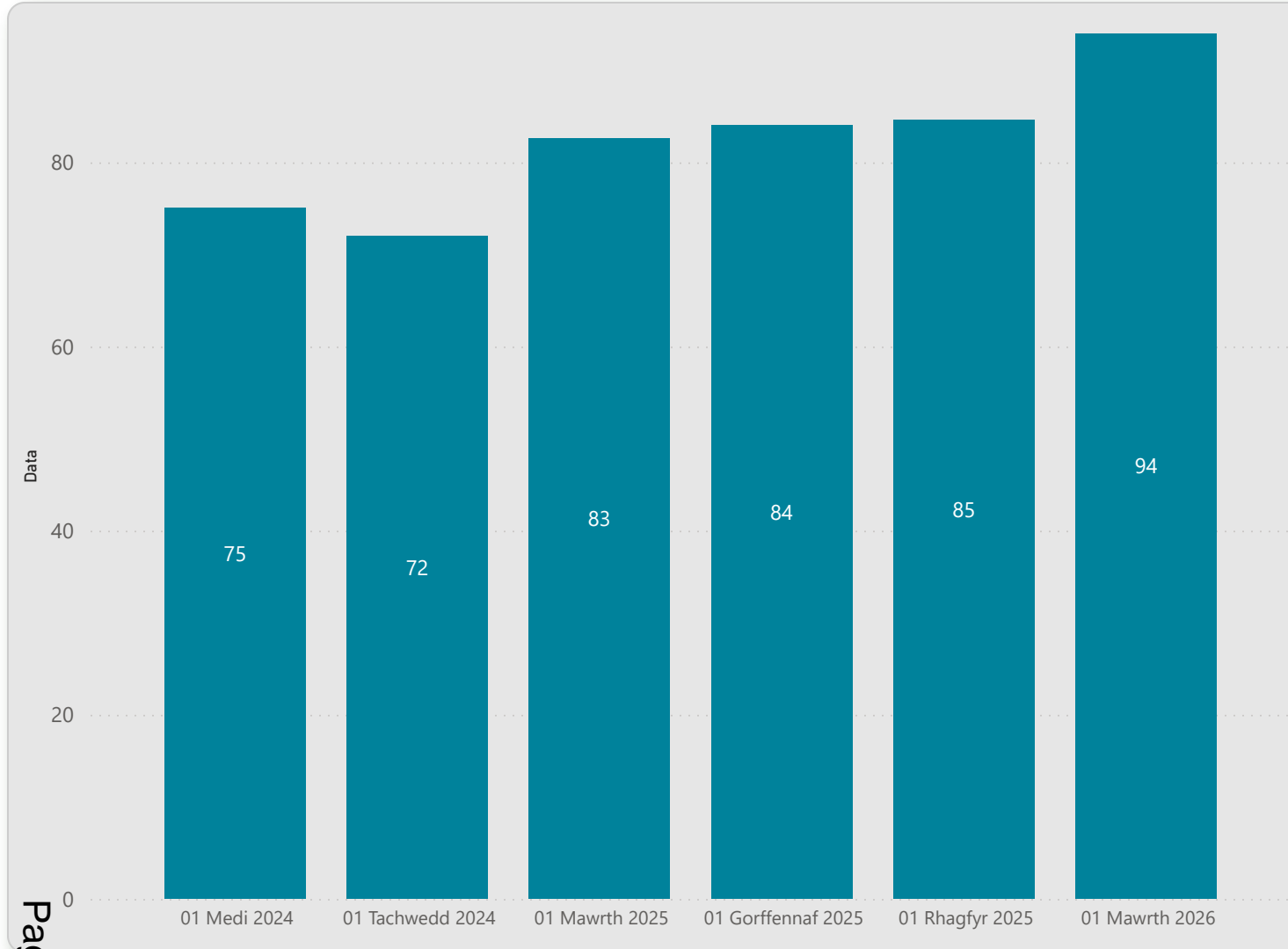
Monthly

Ellen Rowlands (ADDYSG)

English as an Additional Language

Purpose: Work with children and young people who come from ethnic minority backgrounds to enable them to have access to Welsh and English bilingual education and community

Indicator: % of children and young people receiving direct input and are progressing



The majority of individual pupils and groups have shown positive progress over the term. Some have moved forward within their current Steps, while others have made substantial progress by moving from Step A to Step B.

- As a result of this progress, we intend to end support for a number of pupils at the end of the term. This will allow us to consider new referrals during the late-April forum.
- New referrals: A total of 11 new pupils have already been referred to the Gwynedd forum (up to 25 March), even though the deadline is not until 17 April.
- Some schools have also re-referred pupils where they feel those individuals would benefit from further support

Quarterly

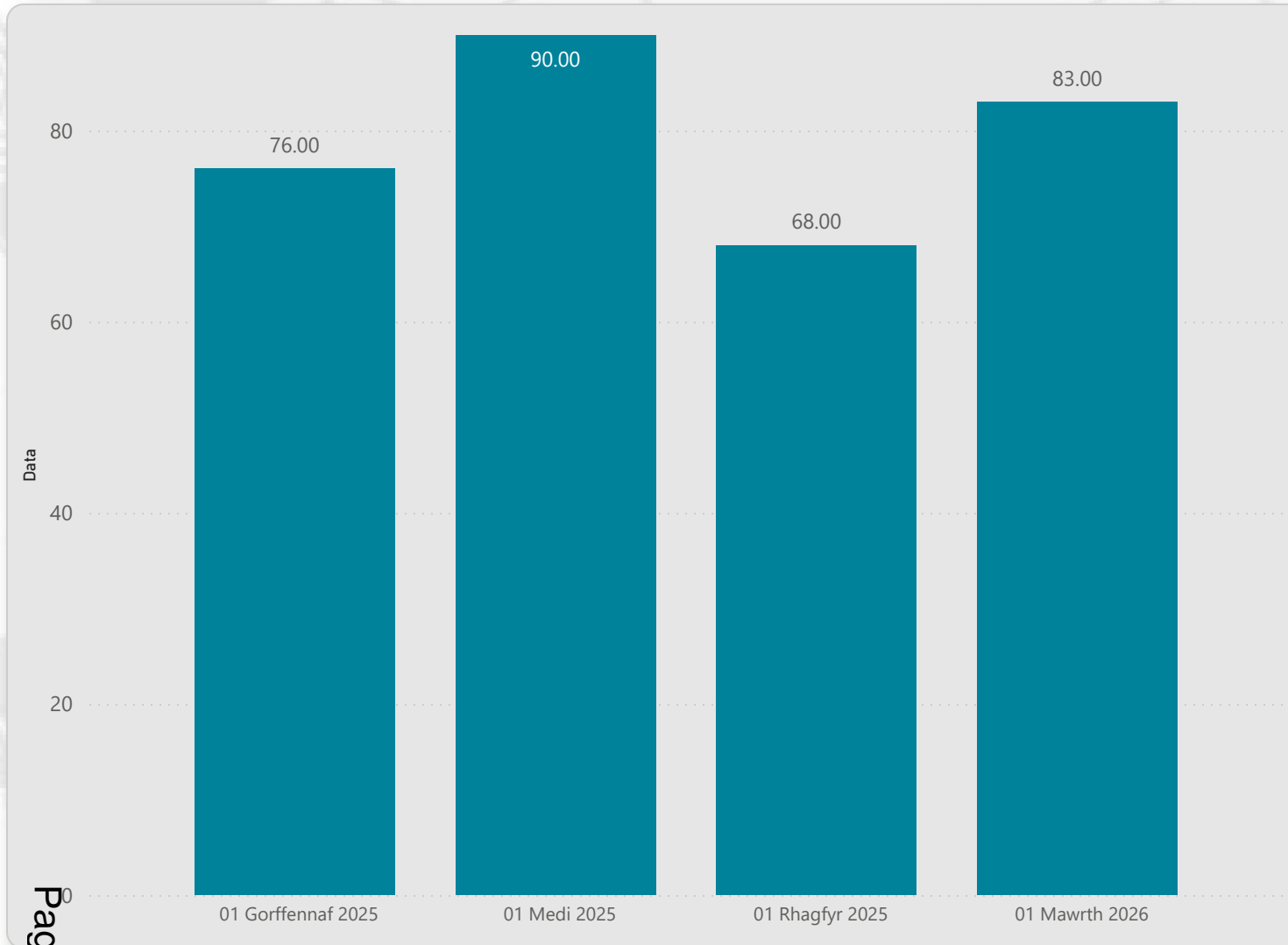
Helen Elisabeth Speddy (ADDYSG)



English as an Additional Language

Purpose: Work with children and young people who come from ethnic minority backgrounds to enable them to have access to Welsh and English bilingual education and community

Indicator: % attendance of pupils receiving support



The attendance of the pupils who have received support over the term has been positive.

No concerns: The schools have not reported any concerns regarding the attendance of these pupils.

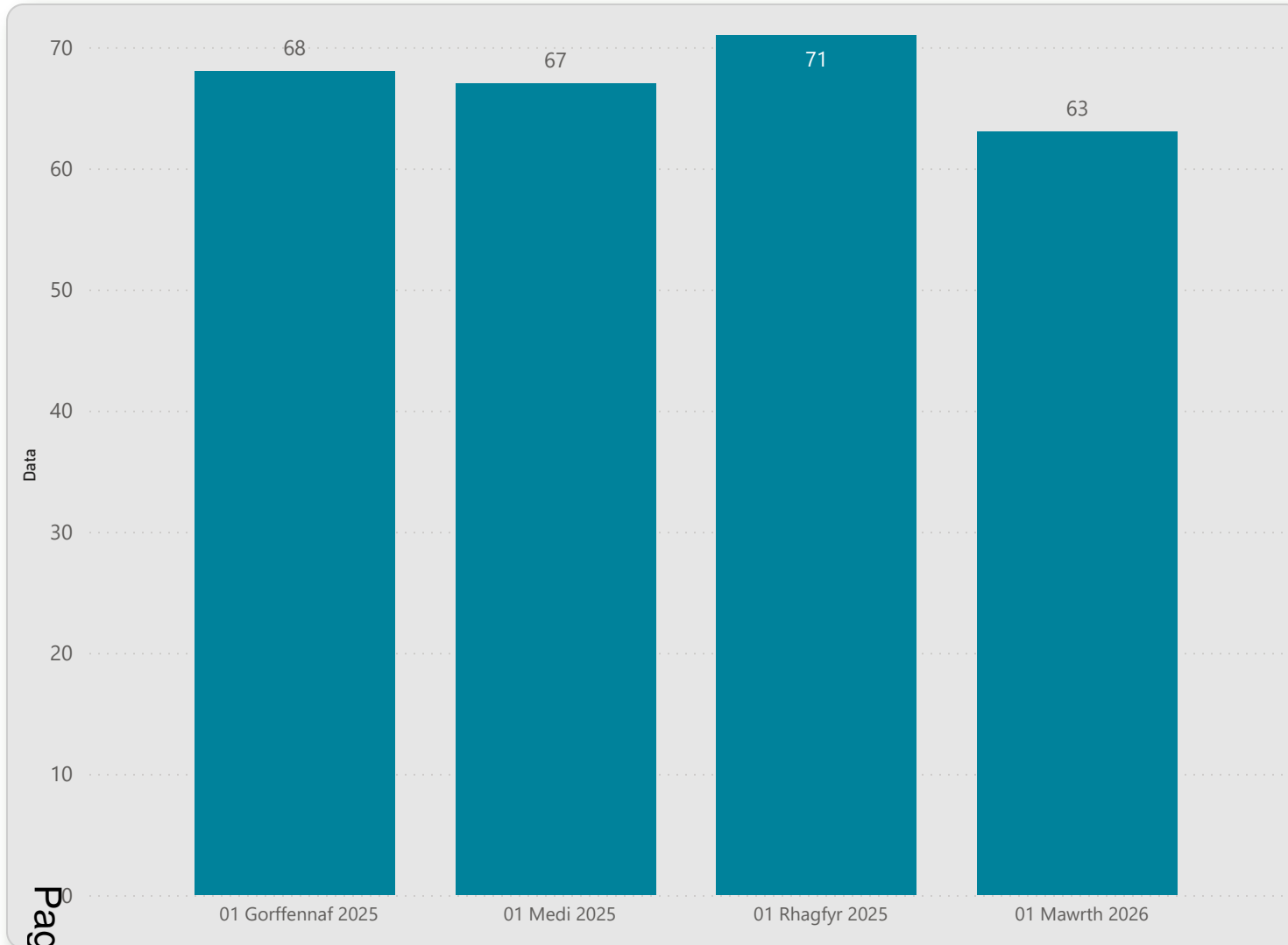
Quarterly

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 pupils who have received support and report well-being progr...



63% of the pupils open to the team have shown progress during this reporting period. This progress is assessed using a combination of sources, providing a robust, multi-source picture of how pupils are moving forward.

How progress is measured

The assessment draws on information from several sources, including:

- School reports – formal information on attendance, engagement, behaviour and wellbeing
- Feedback from pupils receiving support, capturing their own views on their progress and experience
- Feedback from parents, offering the family's perspective on changes in confidence, attendance or behaviour
- Hard data, particularly attendance and behaviour, providing an objective measure of progress

What the percentage means

- The 63% indicates that the majority of pupils receiving support are making measurable progress.
- The multi-source approach ensures that progress is understood broadly, rather than relying on a single indicator.
- The data suggests that the team's interventions are having a positive impact on a significant proportion of pupils.

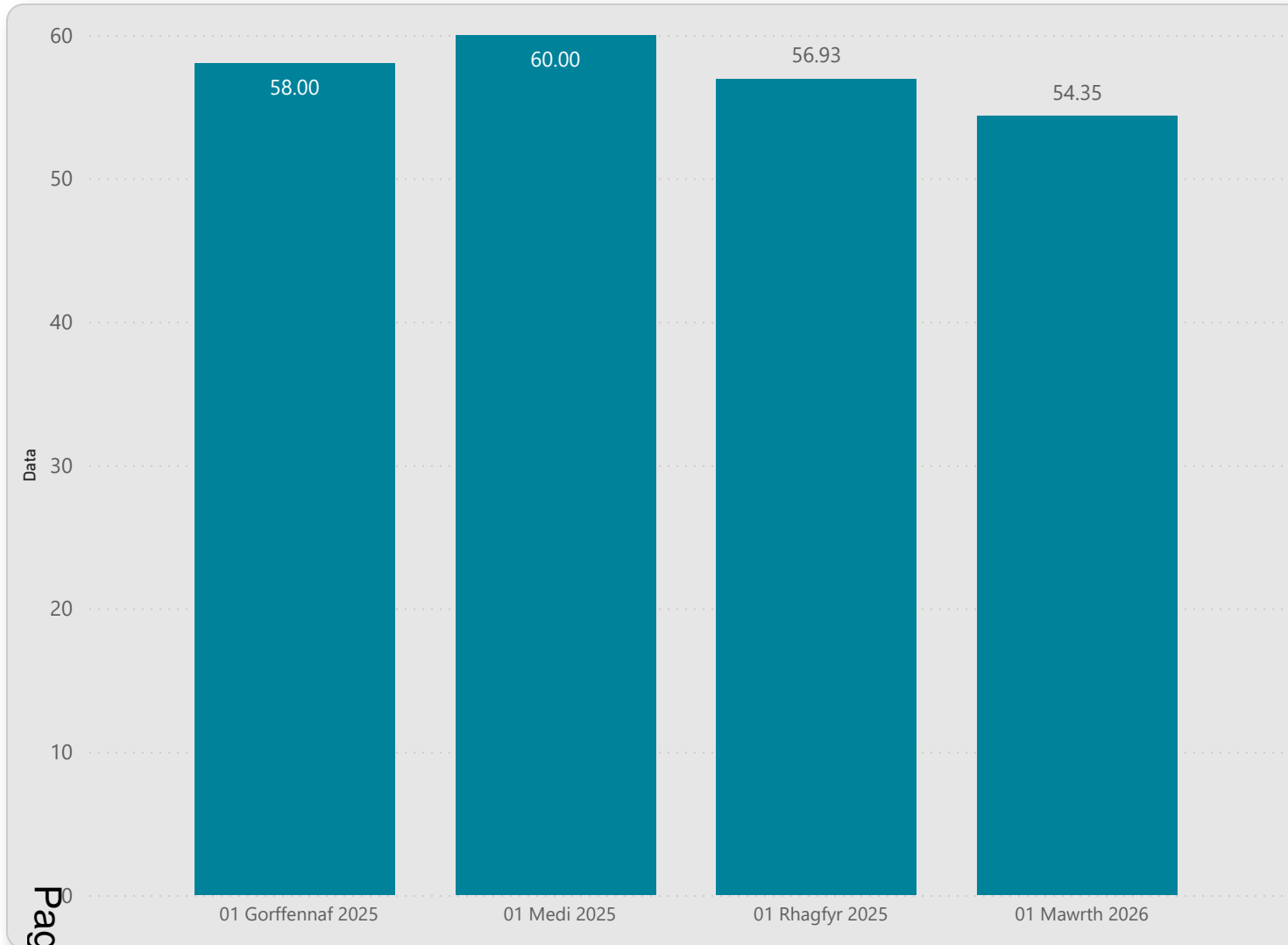
Monthly

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



54% of the pupils open to the team have taken part in community activities during this reporting period. This level of participation demonstrates a positive commitment from the pupils and reflects the impact of the support that encourages them to engage with their local community.

The activities identified are varied and offer opportunities to develop social skills, empathy and responsibility. These activities include:

- Litter picking, contributing to cleaning and improving the local environment.
- Hosting afternoon tea for older people, building intergenerational connections and promoting social wellbeing.
- Supporting in the Maesincla community shop, developing customer service skills and a sense of community responsibility.
- Intergenerational projects – activities that connect young people with older adults to foster understanding and social cohesion.

The high level of participation suggests that pupils are benefiting from opportunities to develop confidence, interpersonal skills and a sense of connection with their community, and that these activities support emotional wellbeing and can reduce feelings of loneliness or disengagement.

This pattern shows that the support offered by the team is helping pupils to take part in positive experiences beyond the classroom.

Monthly

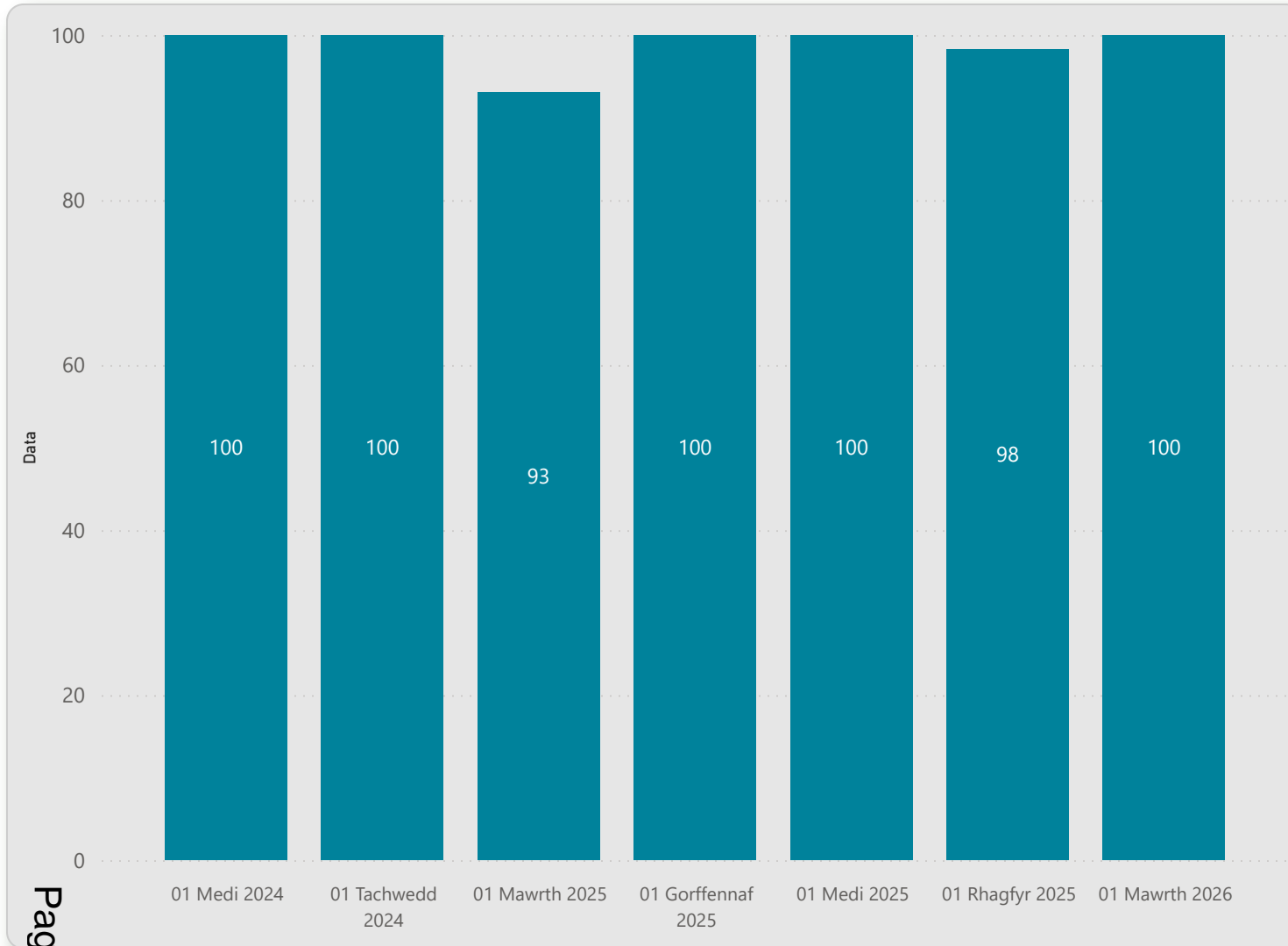
Ellen Rowlands (ADDYSG)



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)



Primary pupils acquire language at this level very successfully, are easy to understand and are able to respond appropriately to simple phrases, instructions and questions, and conveying information. Feedback from pupils at the end of the course shows that they greatly enjoyed their time in the centres and are proud of their progress.

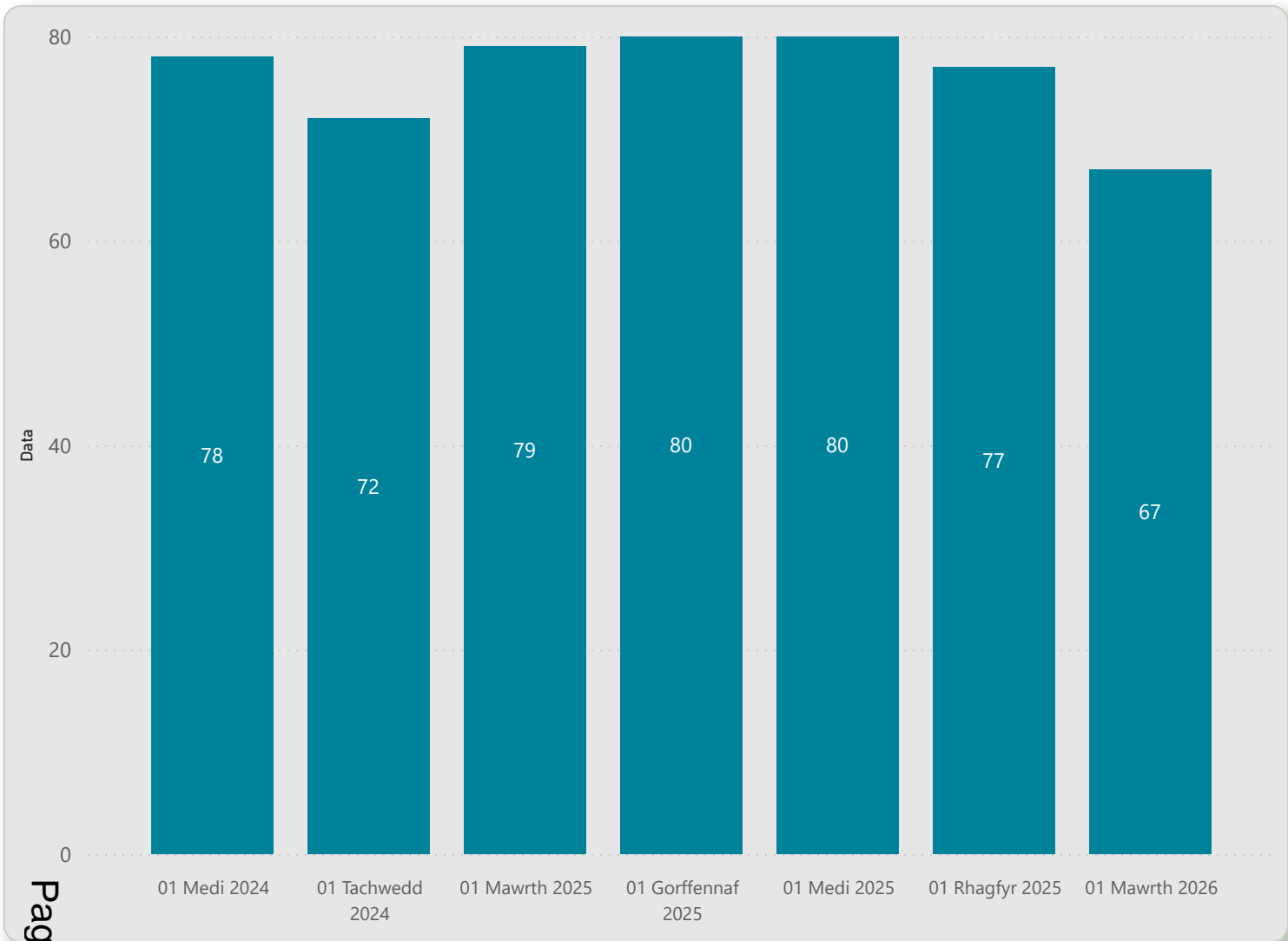
Quarterly

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)



This small decrease reflects the performance of a specific cohort with a complex profile of needs, and these results do not indicate a consistent pattern over time. Immersion system staff have worked closely with the schools to provide evidence for the IDP and to respond to the pupils' individual targets throughout the course. All learners showed clear and rapid progress, with strong evidence of several Level 2 characteristics in every case. However, a combination of factors, including specific learning needs and complex family circumstances, influenced some of the final levels. Support within the centres and schools is ongoing.

Quarterly

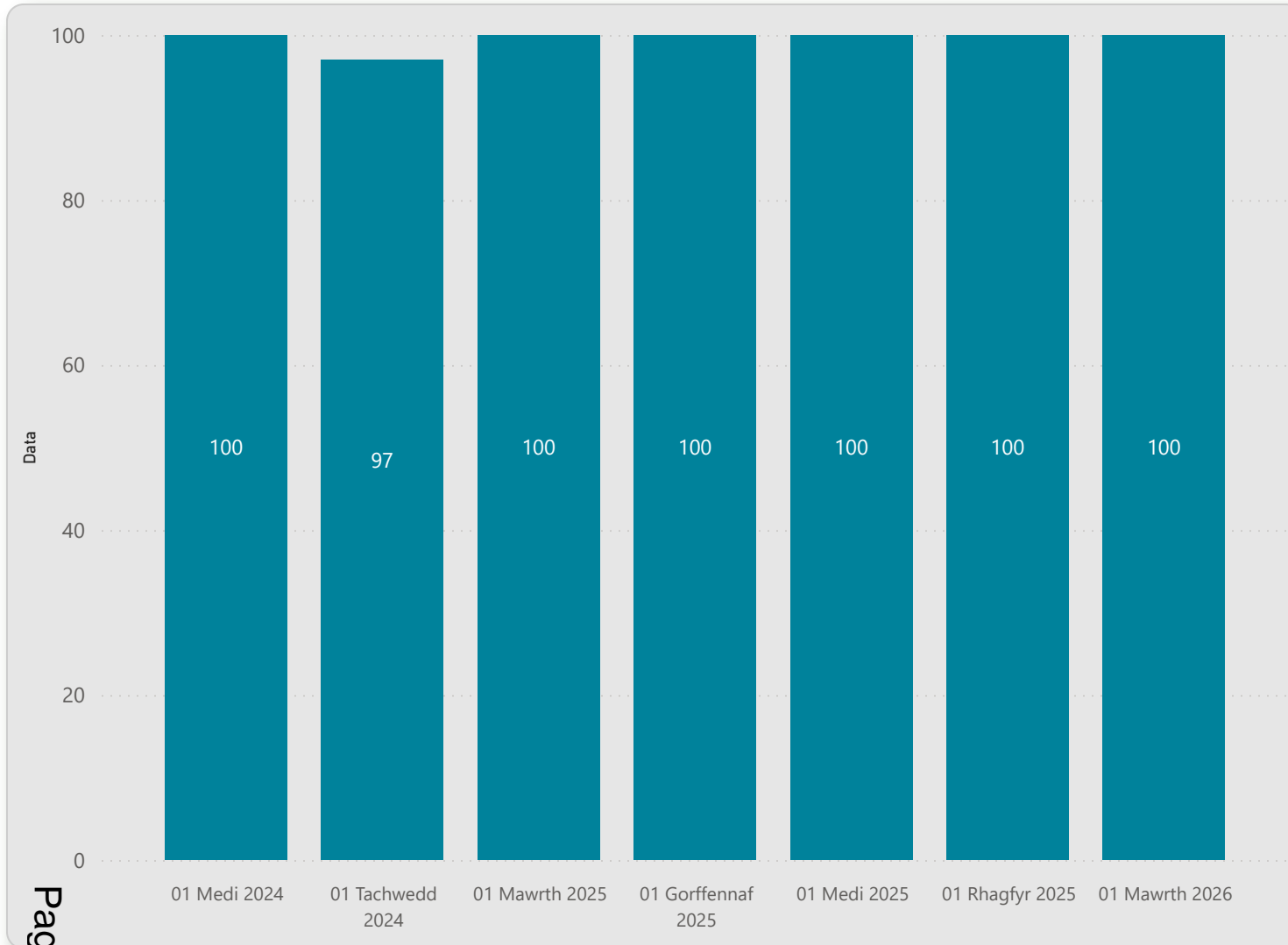
Siwan Llwyd Roberts (ADDYSG)



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 consistently excellent. Secondary pupils acquire language at this level very successfully, are easy to understand and respond appropriately to simple phrases, instructions and questions, and conveying information. Pupil responses in end-of-course questionnaires show that they enjoy their time in the centres and take pride in their success and progress.

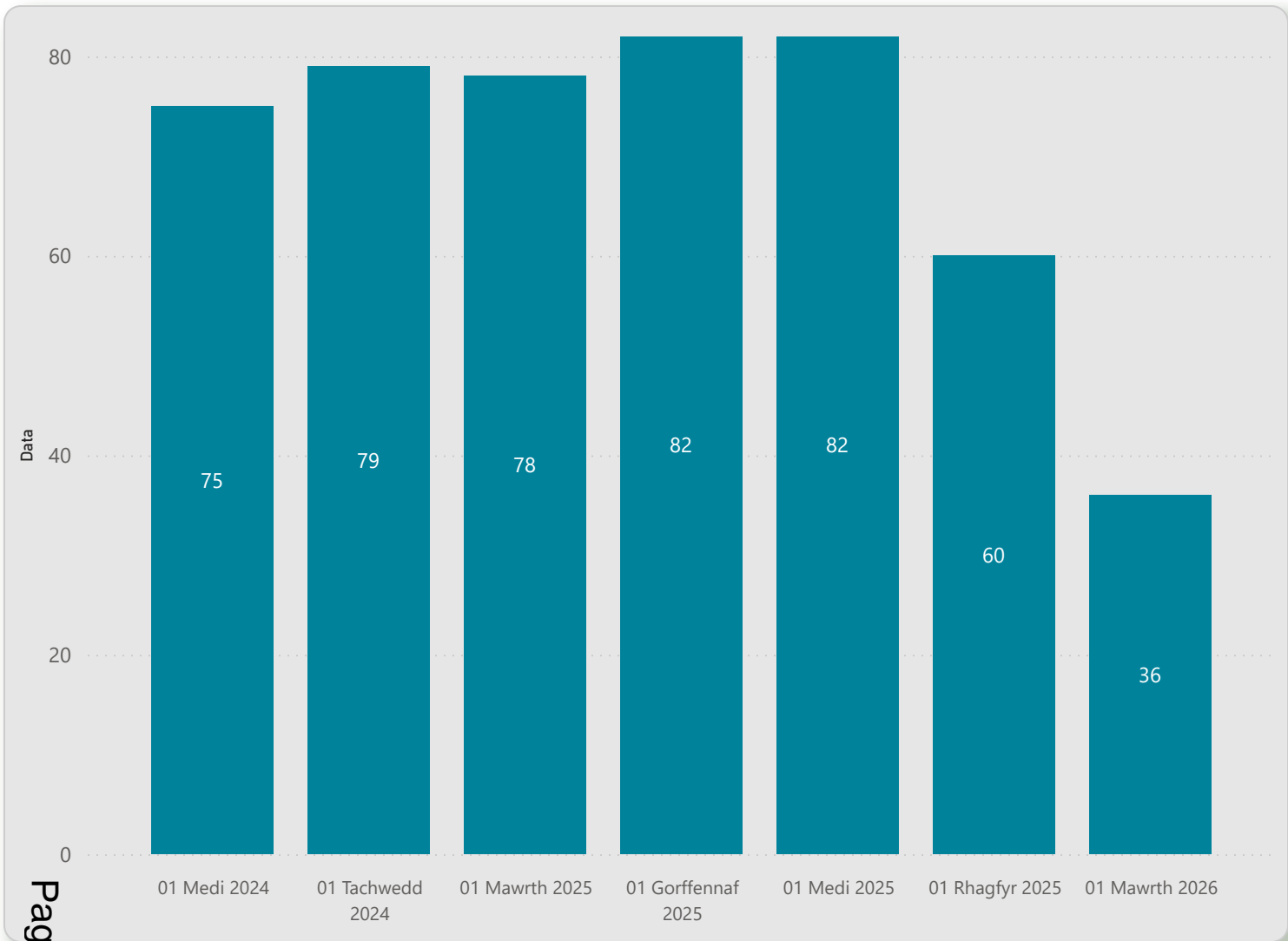
Quarterly

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)



This percentage is based on the performance of a small cohort of pupils with complex needs profiles. This was a distinct group in terms of their learning needs, and the results do not reflect a typical performance pattern nor any trend over time. In response, staff within the Immersion system have provided a series of support lessons tailored specifically to the needs of the pupils who did not meet all Level 2 requirements, and support in the centres and schools is ongoing. The performance of two pupils within this cohort was particularly strong, demonstrating all the characteristics of Level 3, and another pupil performed at the top of Level 2.

Quarterly

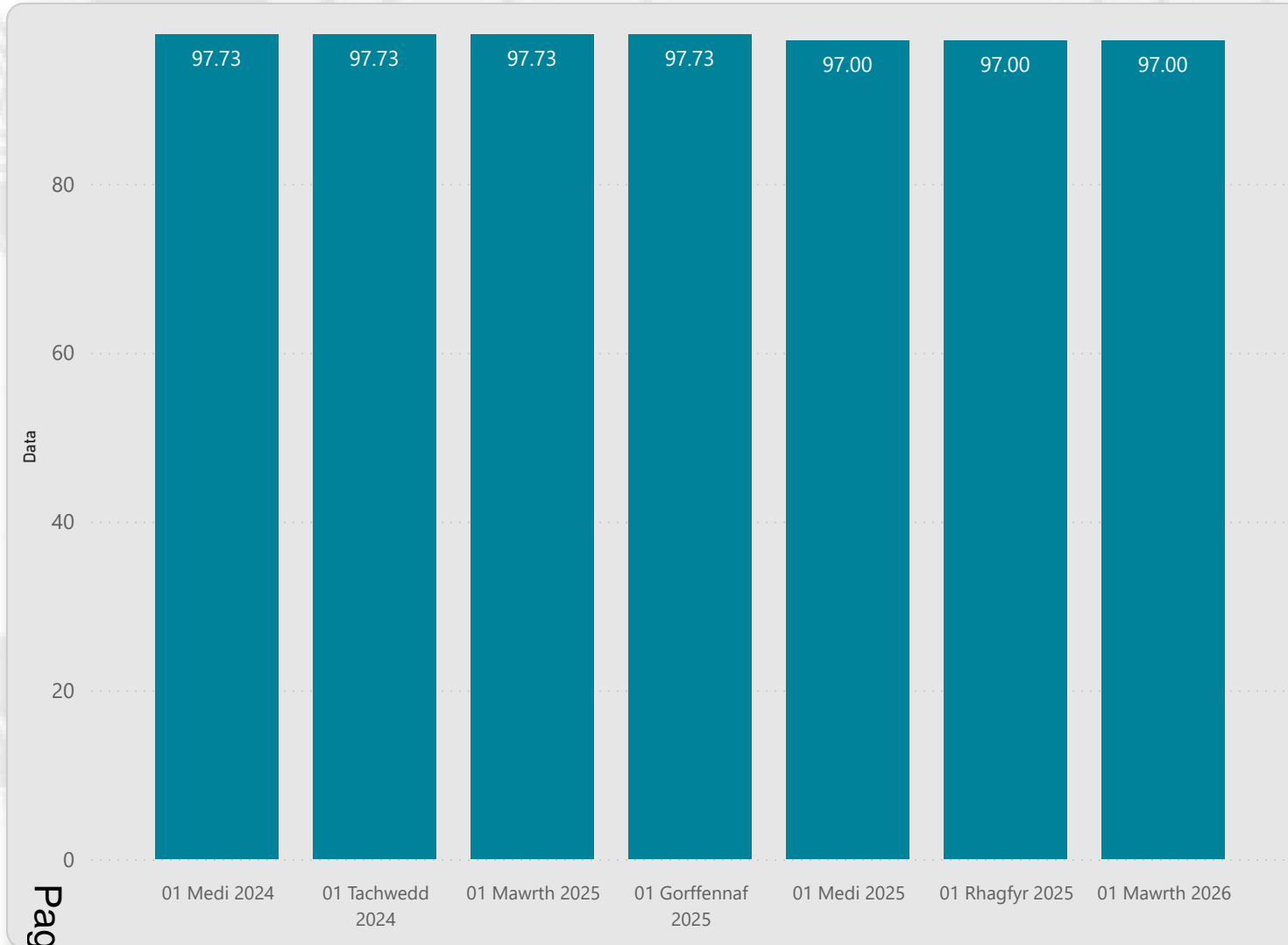
Siwan Llwyd Roberts (ADDYSG)



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



Data for this indicator is collected once a year

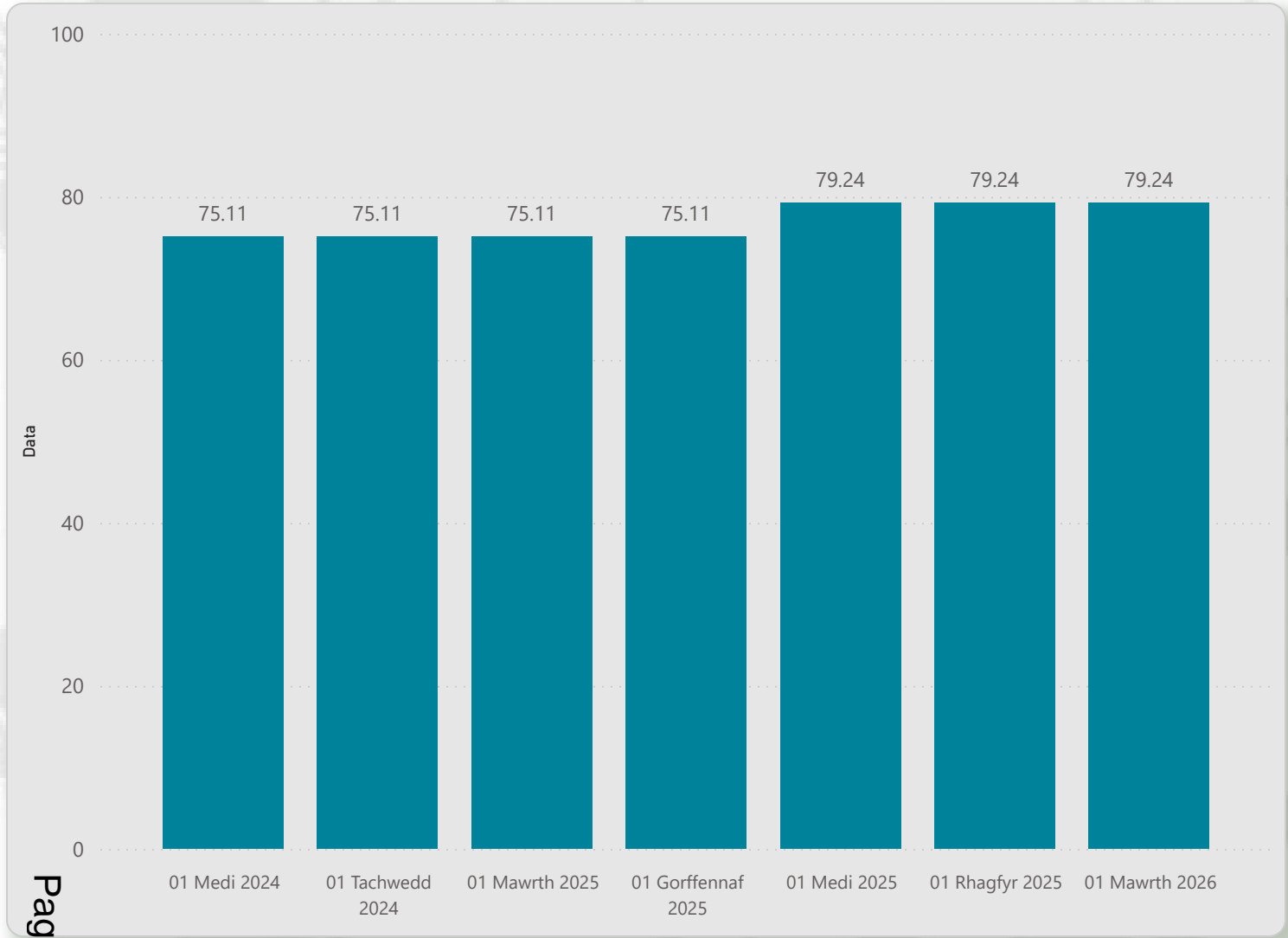
Quarterly

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



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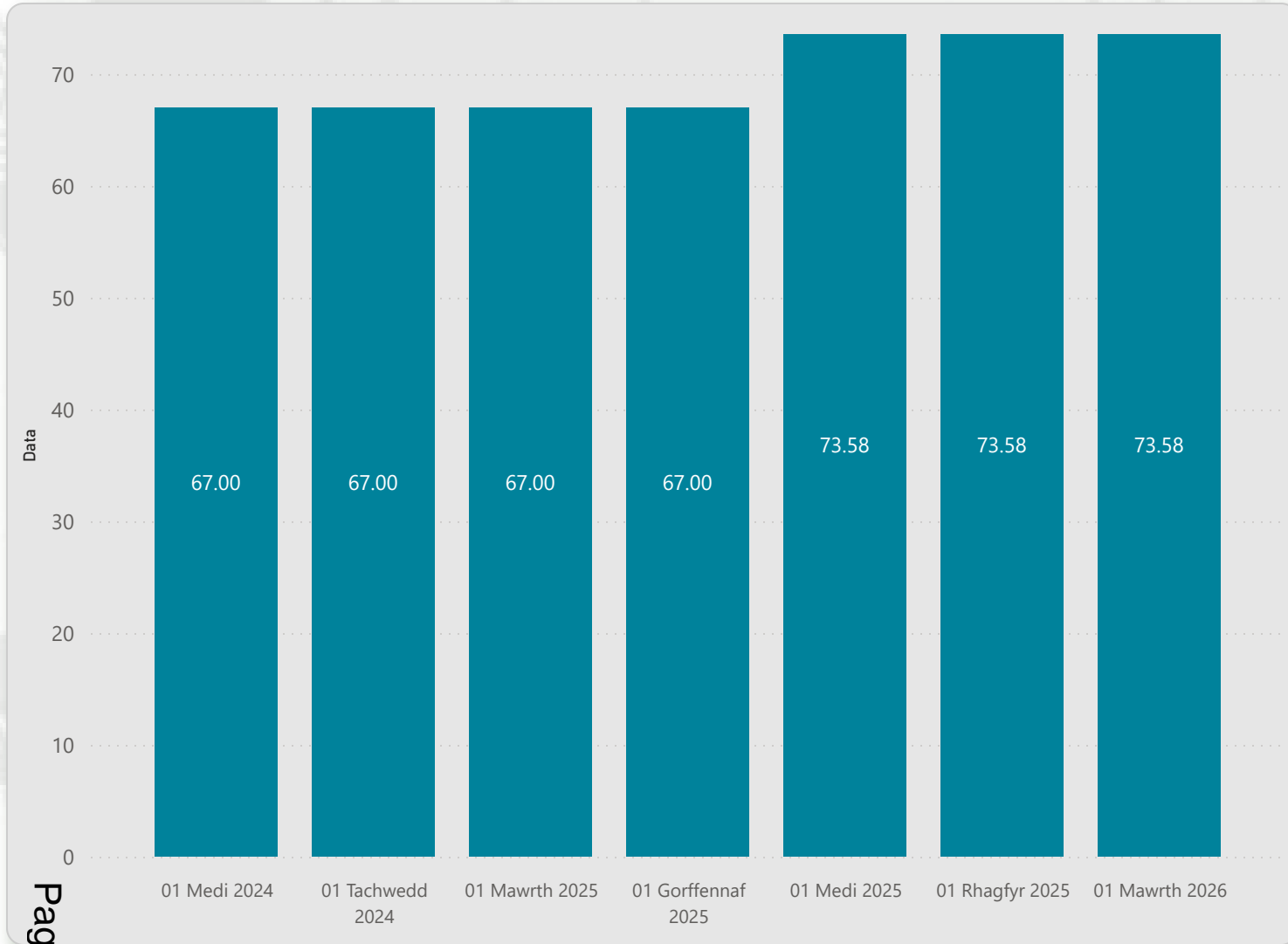
Quarterly

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



Data for this indicator is collected once a year

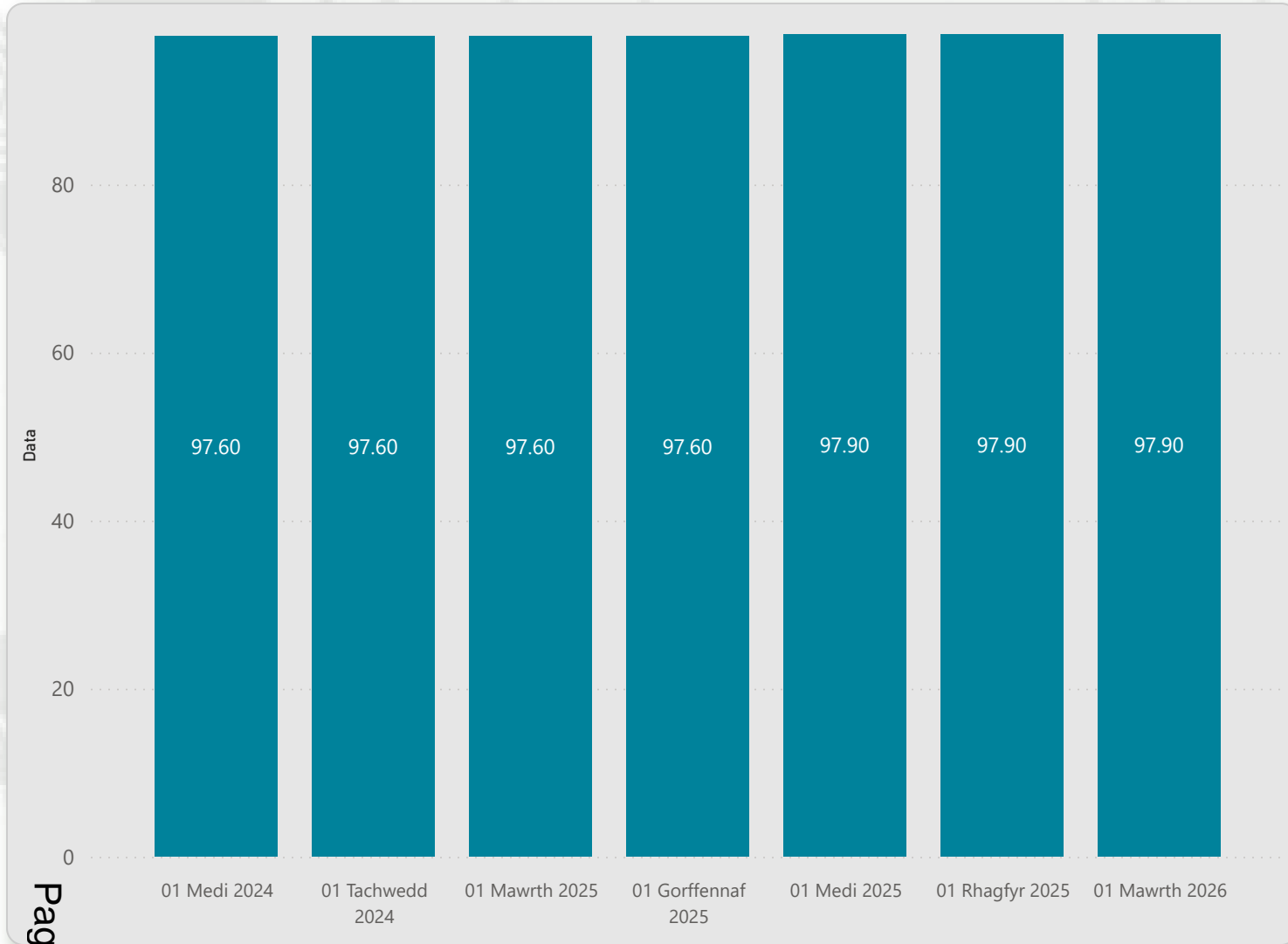
Quarterly

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



Data for this indicator is collected once a year

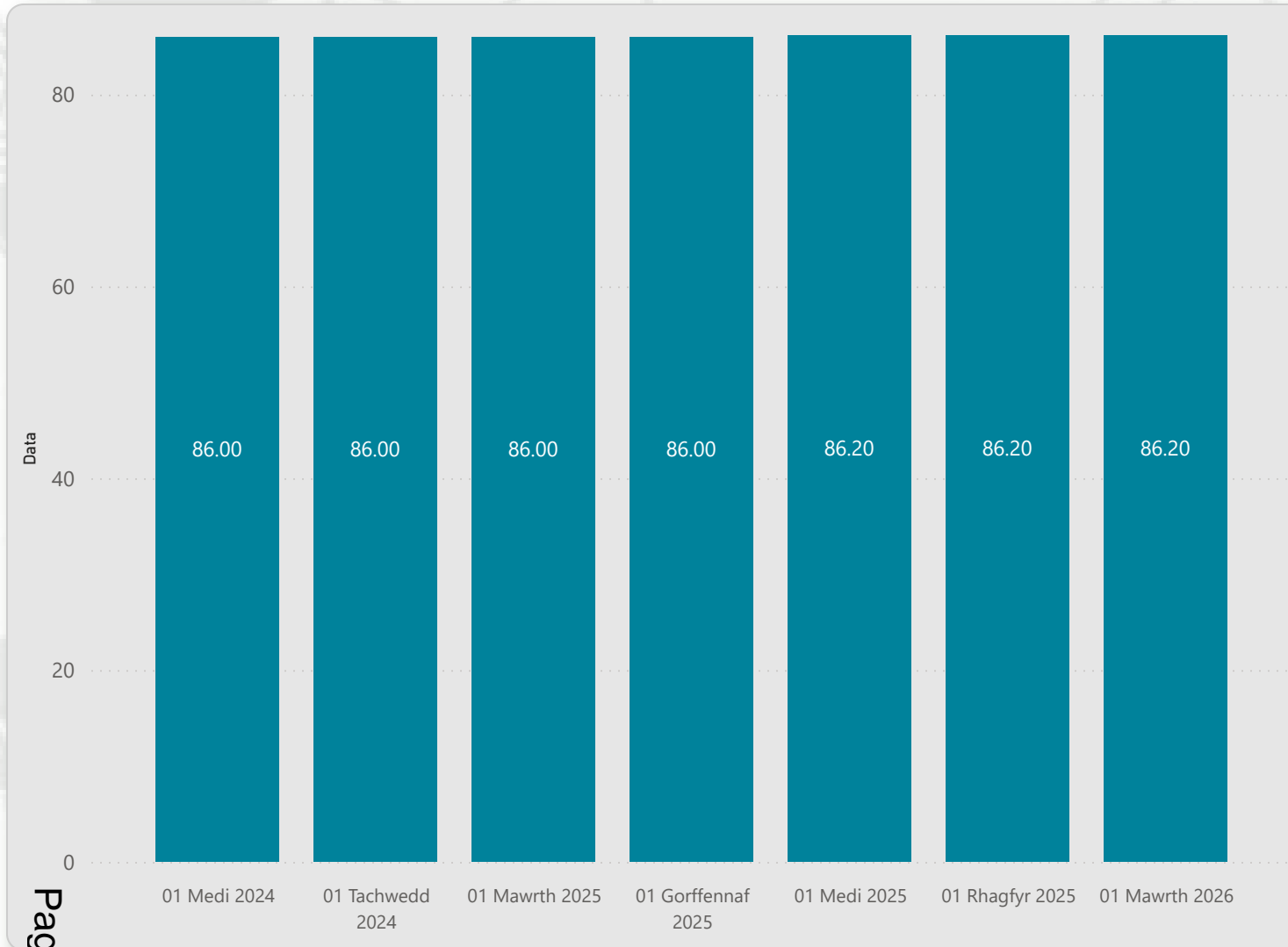
Quarterly

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



Data for this indicator is collected once a year

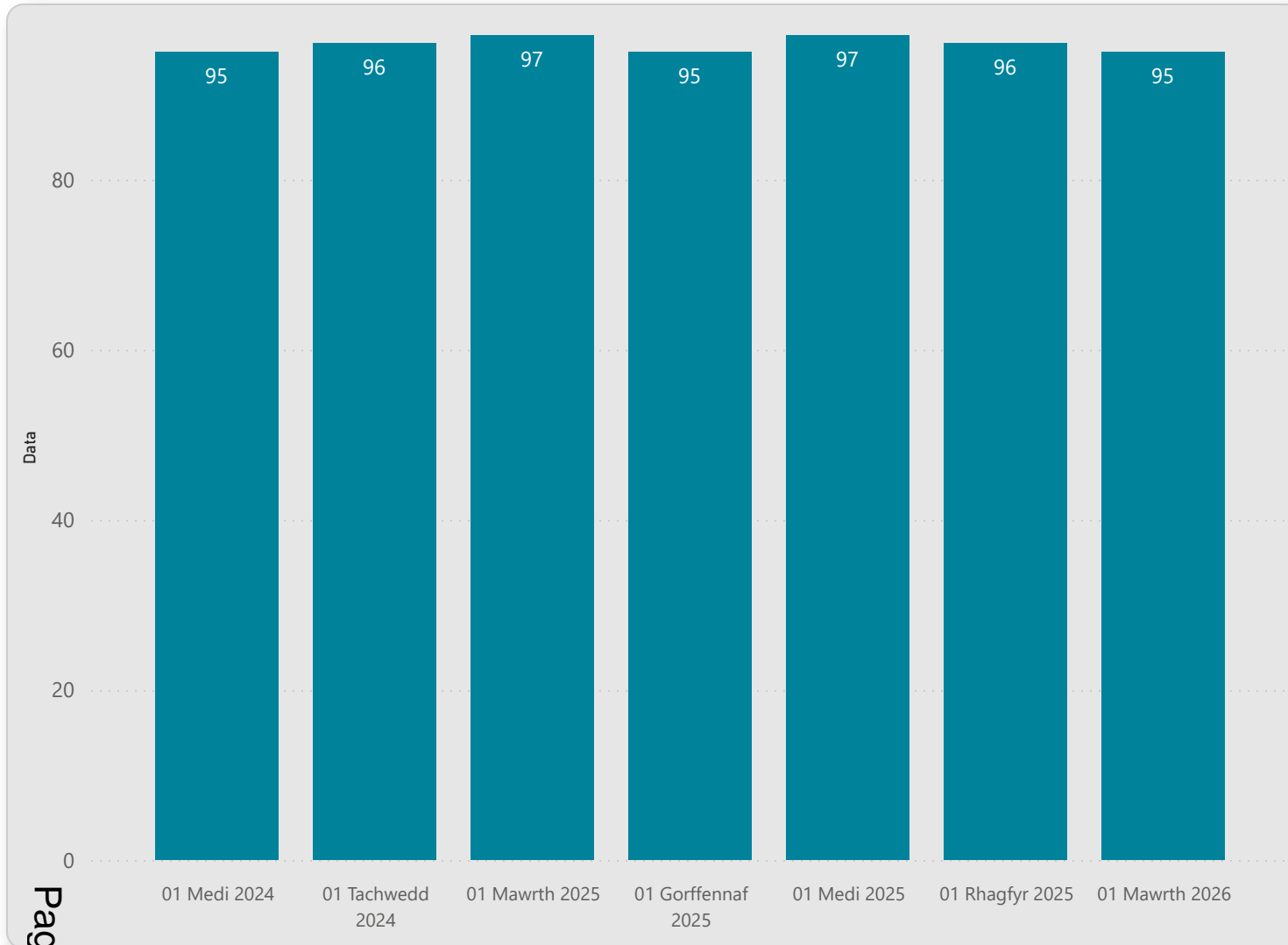
Quarterly

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.



The statistics show that a significant proportion of young people express a desire to continue attending Youth Service sessions in the future. This reflects a high level of engagement and satisfaction with the provision, and suggests that the sessions are viewed as relevant, valuable and responsive to their needs. This measure is also an important indicator of the service's sustainability and its ability to build long-term relationships with young people.

This information is collected by youth workers at the end of sessions through direct feedback, asking simple questions about young people's intention to return. Informal discussions, structured feedback methods and short questionnaires are used to gather the data, supported by input from youth-voice forums and other engagement methods to provide a broader picture of their commitment and interest.

The results are influenced by several factors, including the quality and relevance of activities, the strength of relationships between workers and young people, the consistency of provision, and external influences such as school commitments, transport issues or personal circumstances. Compared with the previous month or quarter, the figures remain stable, with a clear trend showing that young people who attend regularly or who have opportunities to influence session content are more likely to express an intention to continue participating.

To maintain and strengthen this performance, the Youth Service will continue to involve young people in planning and developing the provision, ensure a variety of activities that reflect local interests, and aim to maintain staff consistency to build strong relationships. If any decline is identified, actions will include reviewing the timing and location of sessions, improving communication about available opportunities, and using young people's feedback to reshape the provision to encourage ongoing engagement.

Monthly

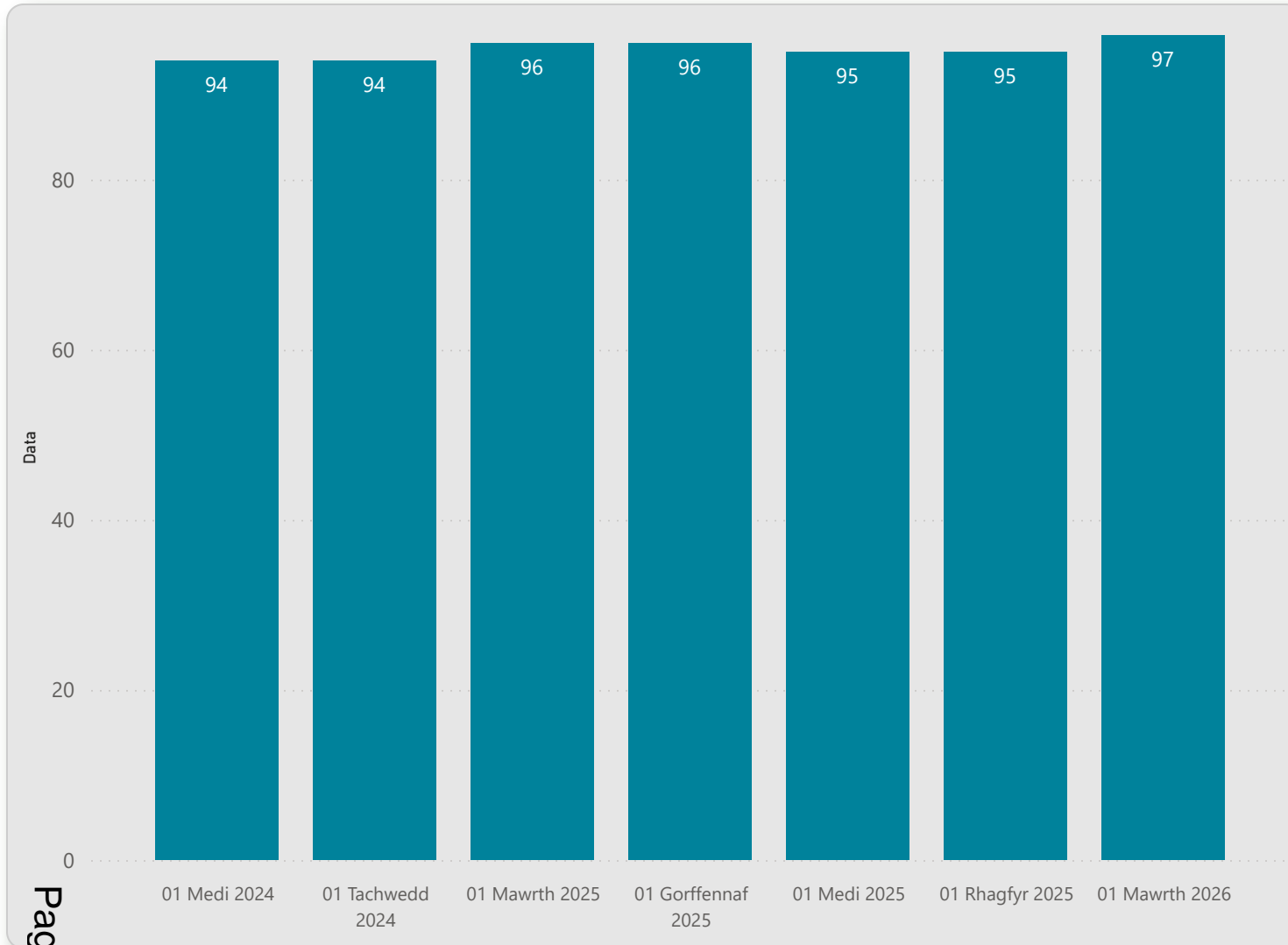
Steffan Williams (ADDYSG)



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



The statistics show that a significant proportion of young people report an improvement in their wellbeing after taking part in Youth Service sessions. This suggests that the provision is having a positive impact on their emotional, social and personal wellbeing by offering a safe environment where they can express feelings, build confidence and develop healthy relationships.

This measure is collected by youth workers at the end of sessions through a combination of formal and informal feedback discussions, along with self-assessment methods such as simple wellbeing scales (for example, how a young person feels before and after a session). This is supported by qualitative data from questionnaires, youth-worker observation notes and input from youth-voice forums, providing a broader picture of the changes experienced.

The results are influenced by several factors, including the content and structure of sessions, the quality of relationships between workers and young people, levels of engagement, and external factors such as educational pressures, family circumstances or wider mental-health challenges. Compared with the previous month or quarter, the results remain consistent, with a clear trend of more noticeable improvement among vulnerable young people or those who attend regularly over time. In particular, sessions focused on life skills, emotional wellbeing and supportive group activities tend to generate the most positive impact. To maintain and further develop this performance, the Youth Service will continue to prioritise wellbeing in the planning and delivery of sessions, emphasising relationship-based approaches, active listening and appropriate emotional support. If any decline is identified, actions will include reviewing the focus and structure of sessions, strengthening the use of wellbeing-measurement tools, and expanding opportunities for young people to help shape the provision to ensure it remains responsive to their needs.

Monthly

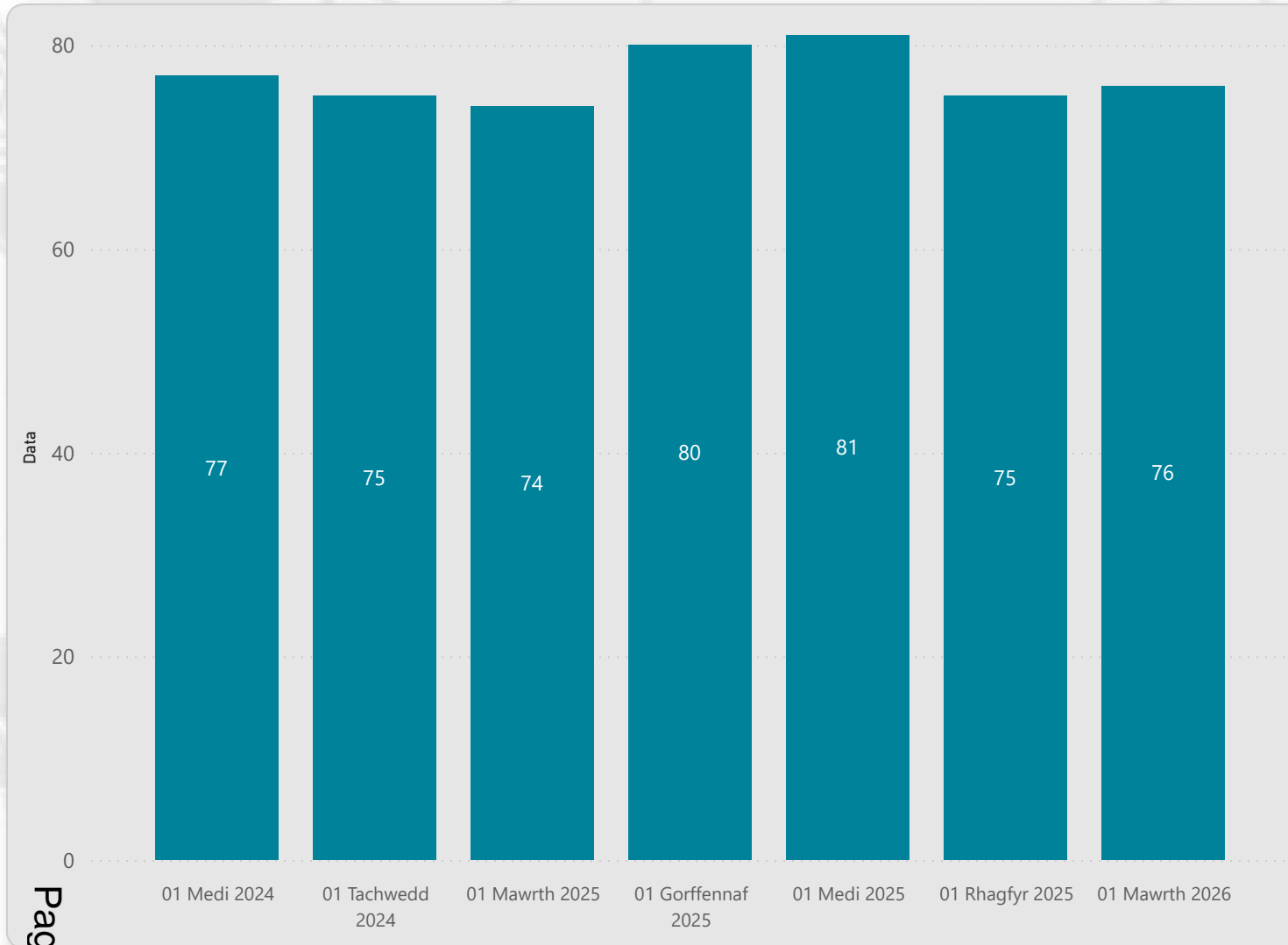
Steffan Williams (ADDYSG)



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



Over the past three months, the percentage of young people who have achieved objectives within their personal plans has increased slightly since the last meeting. This rise is a positive indication of the continued impact of the support provided and shows that the person-centred planning approach is still helping young people make measurable progress.

These personal plans are co-created with each young person, ensuring they reflect their individual needs, interests and aspirations. They include both short-term and long-term targets, enabling young people to see gradual progress and develop a sense of ownership over their developmental journey. This process strengthens motivation, builds confidence and provides a clear framework for regularly reviewing progress.

During the recent period, the Service has developed and implemented a new digital recording system, alongside a Microsoft Power BI system to analyse and evaluate the data collected more effectively. This has streamlined the process of tracking progress against individual targets, identifying patterns and trends, and producing clear reports that demonstrate the impact of the provision.

As a result, the service is now in a stronger position to present robust evidence of young people's outcomes and achievements, ensuring that planning, monitoring and evaluation are embedded within the provision and contribute to continuous improvement.

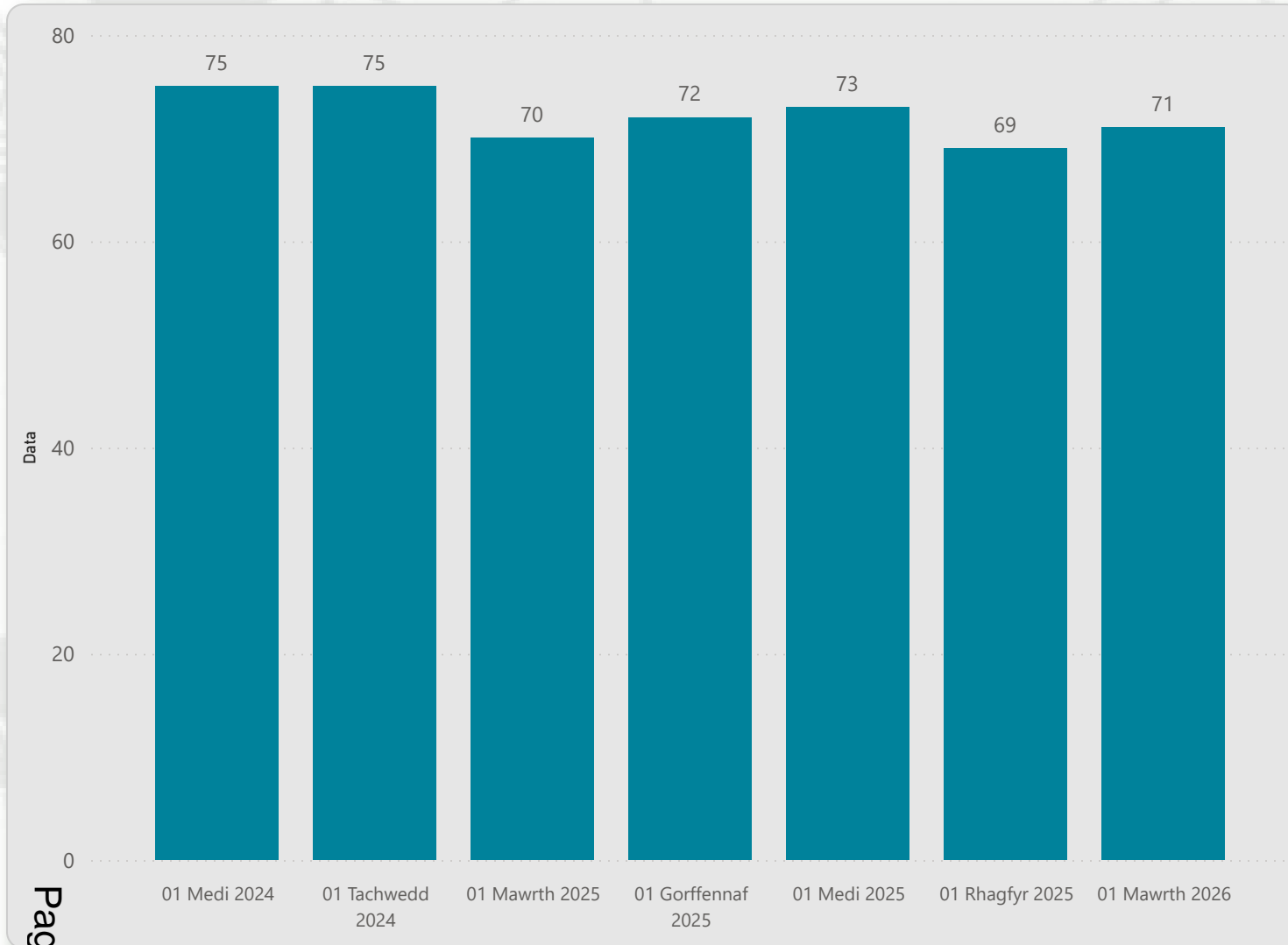
Monthly

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 of young people who have shown an improvement in their wellbeing over the past three months has increased since the last meeting. This positive trend suggests that the provision continues to have a beneficial impact on young people's wellbeing and shows signs of recovery following previous seasonal fluctuations. Wellbeing improvement is measured using the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS), a recognised tool that enables the monitoring of mental wellbeing in the general population, as well as the evaluation of the impact of projects, programmes and policies aimed at improving mental wellbeing. Using this tool ensures a standardised, reliable and evidence-based approach. Although small variations can occur from term to term, the current increase aligns with the annual pattern seen historically, where wellbeing levels tend to improve as we move out of the winter months, when young people often face additional pressures. This reflects the dynamic nature of wellbeing, which can change throughout the year depending on circumstances and individual needs. As a result, the current trend is positive and provides reassurance that the provision continues to respond appropriately to the needs of young people. The percentage will continue to be monitored closely over the coming months to ensure that this improvement is maintained, and that any further changes are identified and considered promptly.

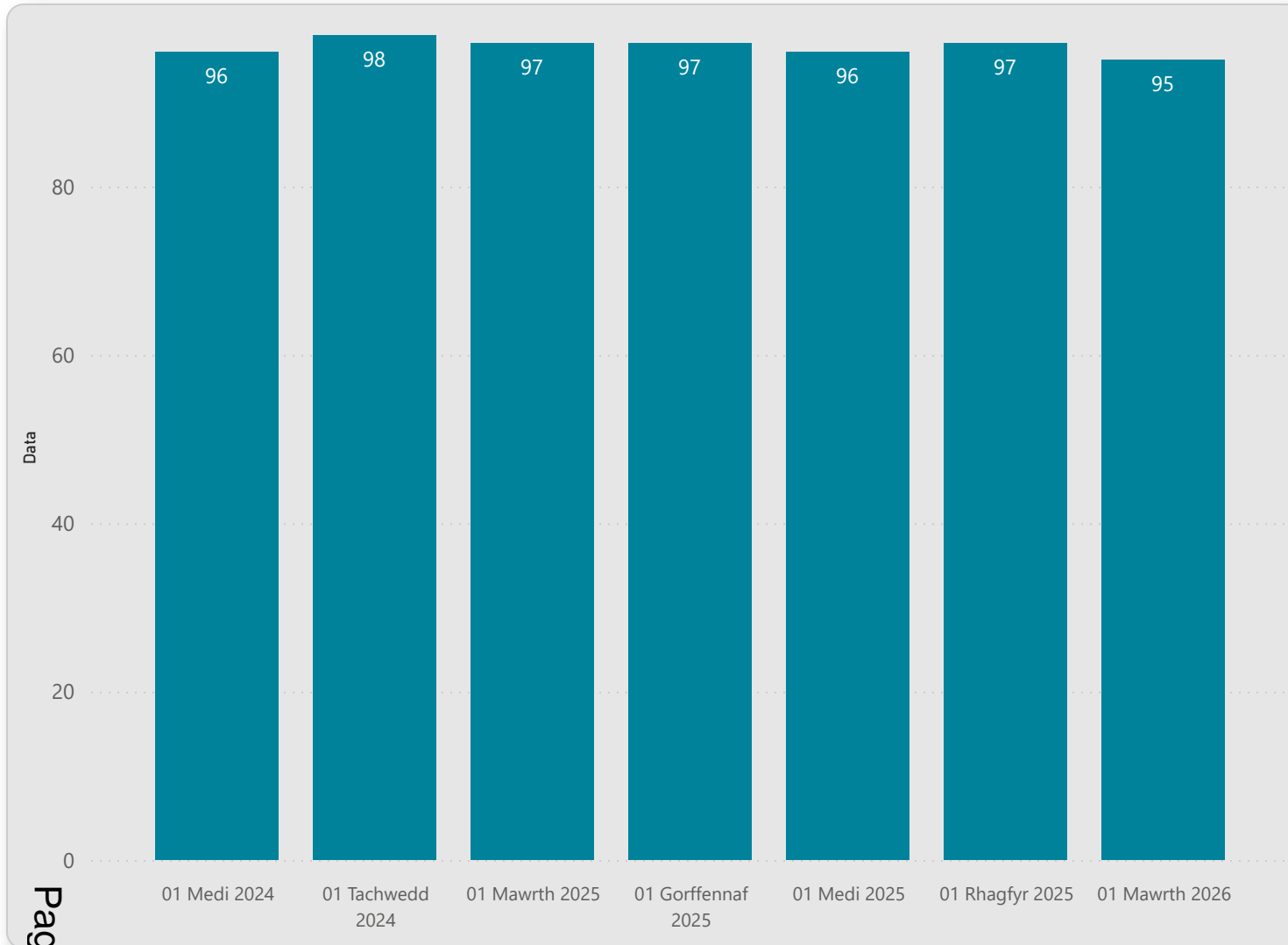
Monthly

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



The statistics show that a very high proportion of young people continue to report that they enjoy the Youth Service's provision. This suggests that the offer remains relevant, appealing to young people, and meeting their needs across different areas. The consistently high satisfaction levels reflect the quality of engagement work and the strong relationships built between youth workers and young people. This measure is collected by youth workers at the end of each session through direct feedback from young people, using simple methods such as scoring systems, short group discussions, or informal feedback activities. This is supported by data from formal questionnaires, youth-voice forums and other engagement methods, which together provide a broader and more comprehensive picture of young people's experiences.

Several factors influence these outcomes, including the quality and relevance of activities, workers' ability to tailor sessions to local needs, the strength of relationships and trust with young people, and the consistency of the provision. Compared with the previous month or quarter, the figures remain stable, with a clear trend of high satisfaction in settings where attendance is regular and where young people have genuine opportunities to shape the provision. In particular, sessions that are co-designed with young people receive the most positive feedback.

To maintain these standards, the Youth Service will continue to place young people's feedback at the centre of session planning, ensure ongoing support and professional-development opportunities for workers, and share effective practice across teams. If any decline in performance is identified, actions will include reviewing session content, expanding methods for gathering qualitative feedback, and working closely with young people to redesign the provision where needed.

Monthly

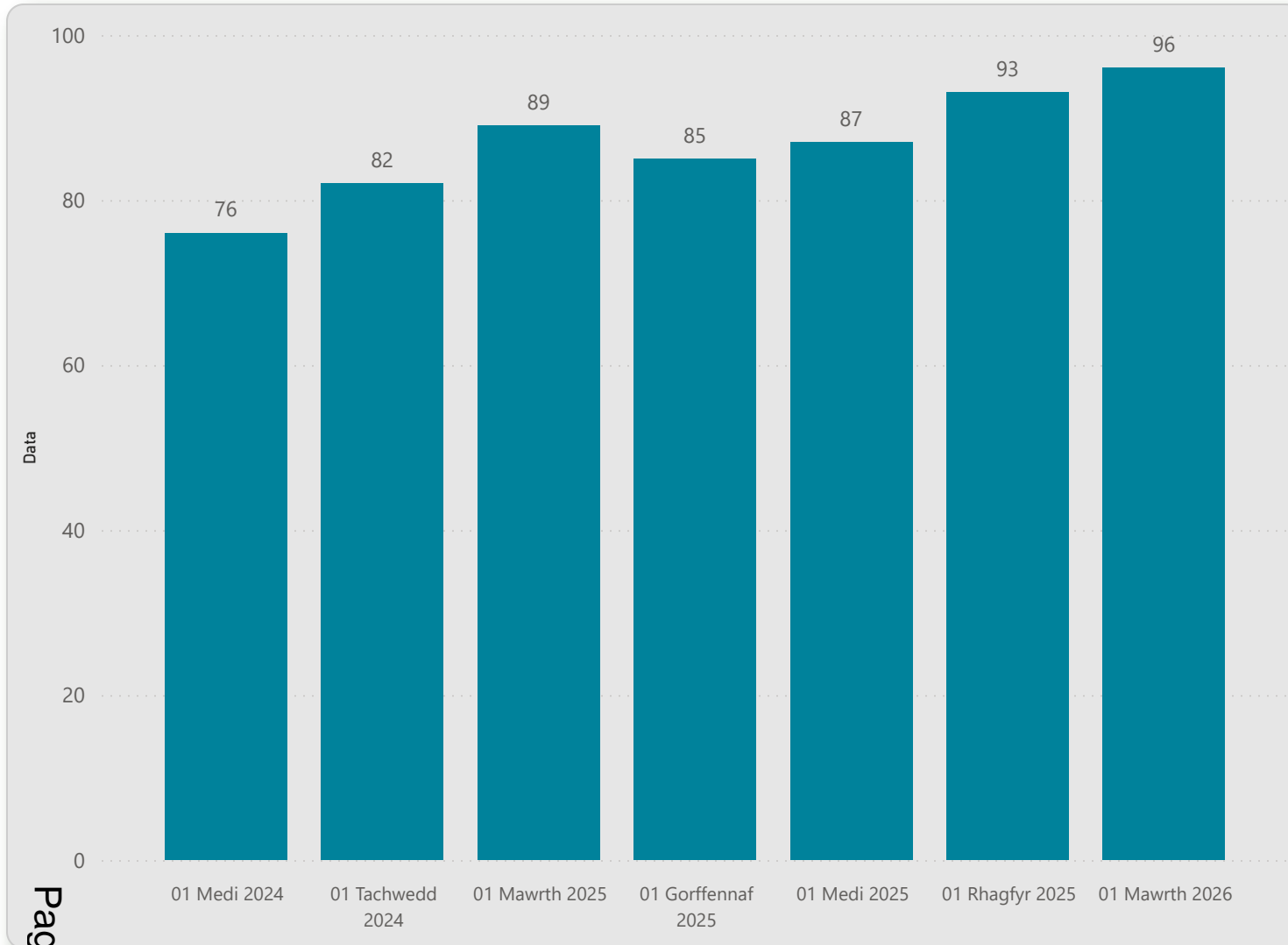
Steffan Williams (ADDYSG)



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



The data for the past three months shows significant growth in the number of referrals to the project, with increasing demand for the provision. As a result of this rise, a number of young people are now on a waiting list due to the project's current capacity limitations. This is clear evidence of the need for the service and the positive impact it is having within the community.

The data has been collected through the service's internal records, based on individuals who have been formally added to youth workers' caseloads following completion of the relevant referral process. This ensures that the figures reflect active engagement and structured support rather than informal contact alone.

However, further challenges are anticipated in the near future, as one of the project's staff roles is coming to an end following the conclusion of SPF-funded support. This is likely to affect the project's capacity to respond to increasing demand and to reduce the waiting list, unless an alternative funding source is secured.

It is also important to note that 85% of the young people supported by the project have a history of very low school attendance, have been deregistered from school, or are EBSA pupils. This highlights the targeted and inclusive nature of the provision, and its key role in supporting young people who are most at risk of disengaging from education and mainstream services.

Given that numbers have risen, the focus is on maintaining the current high levels of performance. This will be achieved by continuing to build strong relationships with referral partners, regularly monitoring individual caseloads to avoid worker overload, and ensuring that referral processes remain clear and effective. If signs of performance decline emerge in the future, steps will be taken to review team capacity and prioritise the most urgent cases in line with the needs of the young people.

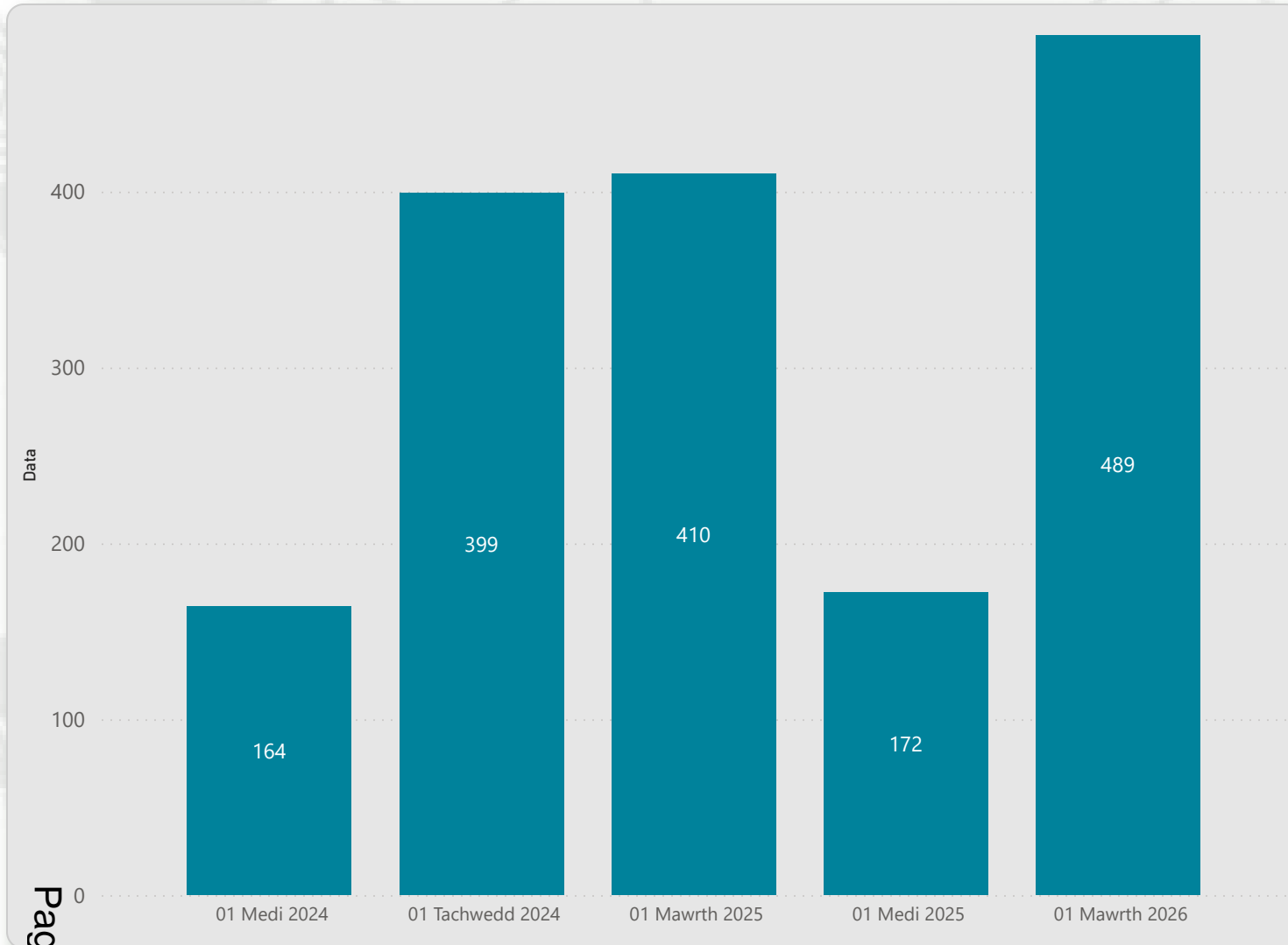
Monthly

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)



Dros y cyfnod adrodd diweddaraf, gwelwyd cynnydd sylweddol yn nifer yr achrediadau a gwblhawyd gan bobl ifanc drwy ddarpariaeth y Gwasanaeth Ieuenctid. Mae'r ffigwr presennol yn uwch na'r hyn a adroddwyd dros y blynnyddoedd diwethaf, gan ddangos tuedd gadarnhaol o ran ymgysylltiad, ymrwymiad a chynnydd personol ymhlith pobl ifanc ar draws y sir.

Mae'r achrediadau a gwblhawyd yn cynnwys cymwysterau Dug Caeredin, unedau Agored Cymru, a modiwlau drwy Virtual College. Mae'r ystod yma o gymwysterau yn adlewyrchu amrywiaeth y cyfleoedd sydd ar gael, gan alluogi pobl ifanc i ddatblygu sgiliau bywyd, sgiliau gwaith, hyder, arweinyddiaeth a gwytnwch mewn cyd-destun anffurfiol ond strwythuredig.

Mae'r cynnydd yn y ffigyrau yn dystiolaeth o waith pwrpasol staff i integreiddio achredu i weithgareddau wythnosol a phrosiectau penodol, gan sicrhau bod pobl ifanc yn gweld gwerth clir i'w cyfranogiad. Yn bwysig, mae hyn yn cyd-fynd yn llwyr ag ethos y Gwasanaeth Ieuenctid o gynnig addysg anffurfiol o safon uchel a chyfleoedd amgen i bobl ifanc lwyddo y tu allan i'r cymwysterau academaidd craidd.

Yn ogystal, mae'r data yn dangos bod achredu yn arf effeithiol i gynyddu cymhelliant ac ymdeimlad o gyflawniad ymhlith pobl ifanc, yn enwedig y rhai nad ydynt bob amser yn ffynnu mewn lleoliadau ffurfiol. Bydd y gwasanaeth yn parhau i adeiladu ar y momentwm hwn drwy ehangu'r cynnig achredu a sicrhau bod cyfleoedd clir ar gael ar draws pob ardal gymunedol.

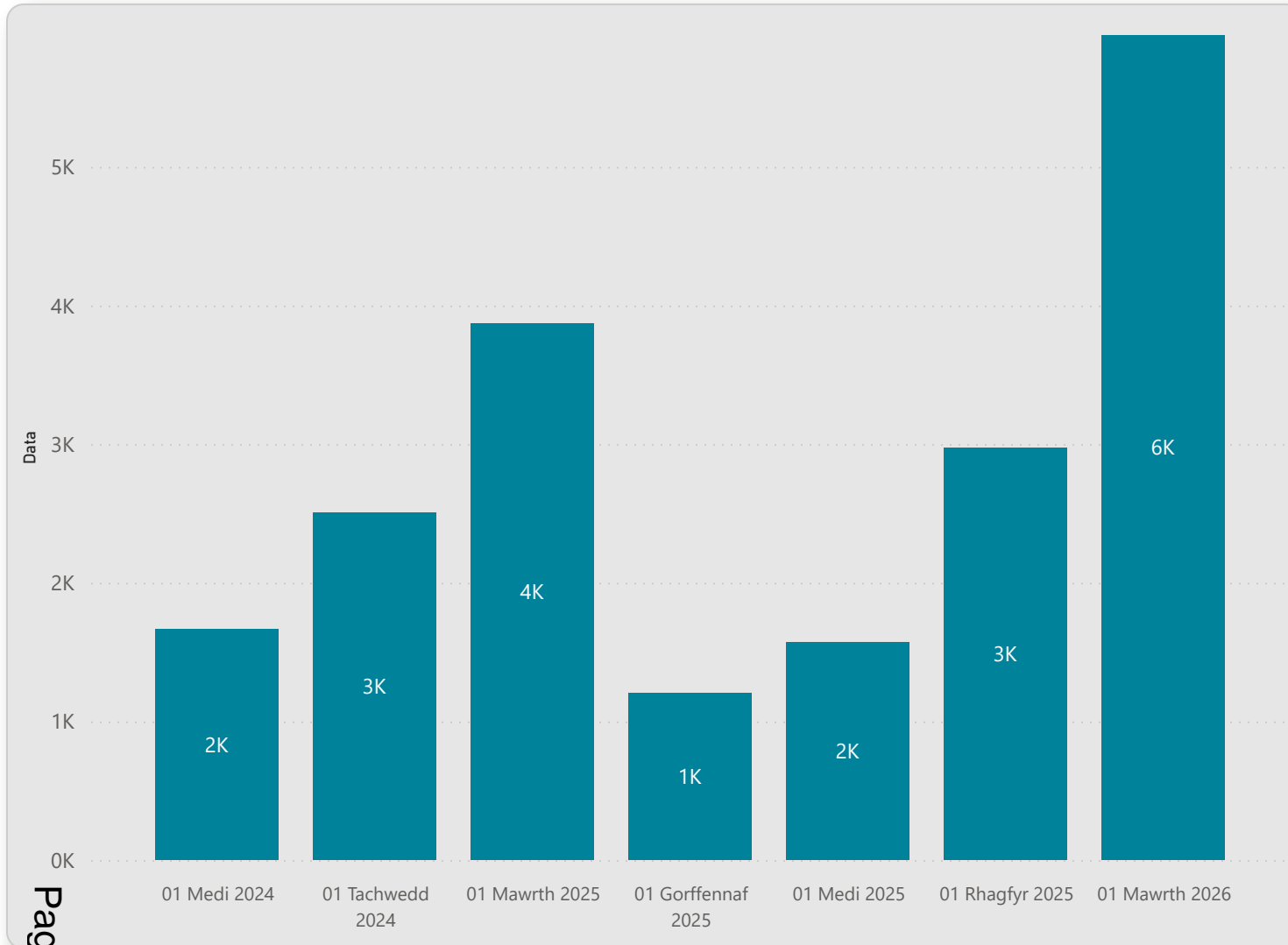
Monthly

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 Youth Community Service



Participation
January – 1897
February – 2067
March – 1987
Individuals
January – 301
February – 264
March – 289

The performance data for the past three months shows that the number of participations and unique individuals attending the Youth Service's community-club provision has remained consistently high throughout the period. Although a further increase was seen in the most recent month, the overall figures have remained strong, reflecting the fact that the community clubs are now fully established and that several new clubs have opened during the period.

At present, the figures broadly align with data from the same period in previous years, demonstrating stability and strength in the provision. However, numbers are expected to drop significantly in the next period, as community clubs close over the summer until September. This anticipated decrease will therefore reflect a seasonal change in provision rather than any reduction in demand or engagement.

The data has been collected through attendance registers completed by youth workers at the end of each community-club session. This method ensures consistency in data collection and enables effective monitoring of performance trends over time, providing clear context for interpreting any seasonal variations.

Overall, the data shows stable and strong performance over the past three months, with a predictable decrease expected in the next period due to seasonal arrangements, and numbers anticipated to rise again once the clubs reopen.

Monthly

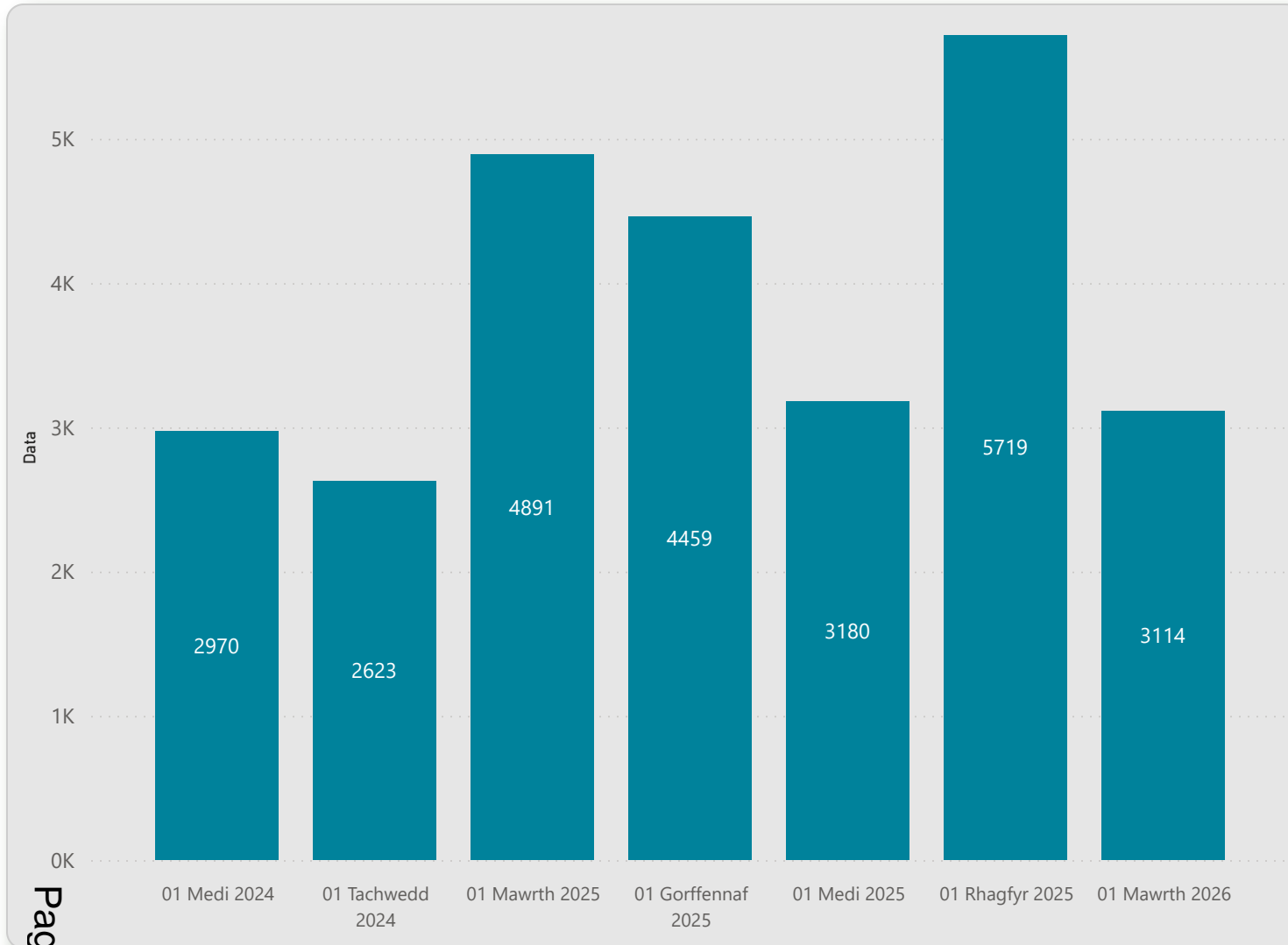
Steffan Williams (ADDYSG)



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



Participation
January – 1002
February – 1126
March – 986
Individuals
January – 283
February – 289
March – 223

The performance data for the past three months shows that participation levels and the number of unique individuals engaging with the Youth Service have remained consistently high, maintaining the positive momentum seen previously. Compared with the same period in previous years, these levels remain higher, reflecting a stable and strong demand for the service's provision, as well as high levels of engagement from young people across a wide range of activities and settings.

The figures are collected consistently through attendance registers completed by youth workers at the end of each session. This method ensures that the data reflects actual attendance and provides a robust basis for monitoring performance and trends over time, strengthening confidence in the reliability of the results.

Several key factors have contributed to maintaining these high standards. All school-based provisions are now fully established, ensuring regular and consistent access for young people. In addition, new community projects have expanded provision to additional areas and groups, increasing opportunities to participate. Further activities, such as targeted wellbeing trips, have also helped sustain strong participation levels.

Overall, the data shows stable and strong performance during the period in question, reflecting the ongoing impact of service development and continued investment in youth work.

Monthly

Steffan Williams (ADDYSG)



Mandatory Training

% of the Education Department staff (including the Catering and Cleaning Service) who have completed the Safeguarding training

34.80%

% of the Education Department staff (including the Catering and Cleaning Service) staff who have completed VAWDASV (Domestic Abuse) training

48.00%

% of the Education Department staff (excluding the Catering and Cleaning Service) who have completed the Safeguarding training

96.80%

% of the Education Department staff (excluding the Catering and Cleaning Service) who have completed the VAWDASV (Domestic Abuse) training

94.00%

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	18 June 2026
TITLE	Performance Report - Cabinet Member for 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 it needs scrutiny?

- 1.1 For Committee Members to scrutinise the performance of Services within the Department.

2. What exactly needs scrutiny?

- 2.1 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 and the Department's day-to-day work.

3. Summary of the Key Matters

- 3.1 We are implementing the Council Plan for 2023-28, and I herein report on progress made during the 2025/26 year, as well as the performance measures of the Department's Services. I challenge all of the matters throughout the year, and I am satisfied with the performance.

4. Background / Context

Performance of Projects in the Council Plan

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

4.2 From the information, you will note that the Department has made good progress against the main milestones of these projects over the past year. The main risk that is common to these four schemes is that the funds that have financed the work since 2023 expired in March 2026 and there is uncertainty around the Government budgets that will replace them. I would like to draw specific attention to the following matters:

Priority Project: Promoting our Culture and a Sustainable Visitor Economy

4.3 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 Residents' Survey, feedback from attendees at the February 2025 summit and discussions within the G&E2035 and Ardal Ni Partnership structures.

4.4 The Visitor Accommodation (Register and Levy) etc., (Wales) Act came into force in September 2025. 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 on the subject was submitted to the Scrutiny Committee in February 2026 and then to the Council in May 2026, when it was decided to go out to consultation on establishing a Visitor Levy for Gwynedd.

4.5 Grants worth almost £300,000 have been offered to 69 organisations across Gwynedd last year to support cultural activities, events and healthy living. Full details of the Diwylliesiant project - [Diwylliesiant Project](#)

4.6 A culture workshop was held at Neuadd Dwyfor in 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.

4.7 I am delighted to see progress in our Llewyrch o'r Llechi project. The project's activities have now attracted over £35m of investment to Gwynedd's slate communities. Full details are available in the [Annual Report](#). You will note that last year, 68 events were held in the communities with 3,100 people attending and learning more about the value of our heritage in the communities. The 'Yr Aelwyd' building in Blaenau Ffestiniog was opened, public art was 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.

Priority Project: Regenerating Communities and Town Centres

4.8 The project has achieved all milestones agreed for the next year. £8.9m has been invested on projects which contribute towards promoting and regenerating Gwynedd town centres across the county. You will note from Appendix 1 the range of projects across Gwynedd that have received an investment. The Council has achieved this by targeting funds from the Government and therefore the work is restricted to grant programme guidelines, which are mainly to improve the appearance of town centre buildings. A question has been raised on alternative investments in town centres that could have an impact on the vibrancy of town centres. After the discussion at the

performance challenge and support meeting, I have asked the Department to consider doing work on what measures would have the biggest impact on the vibrancy of town centres in the future.

- 4.9 This year, as a part of the Gwynedd Ni Regeneration Plan, a Town and Community Councils Fund was established as a pilot scheme and proposals for a contribution from each of these Councils were invited. 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.
- 4.10 There will be an opportunity for the Committee to further scrutinise the Department's activity when supporting town centre regeneration in July.

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

- 4.11 You will note from Appendix 1 that £1.3 million has been targeted from Government funds to establish a fund to support 118 Gwynedd businesses in 2025/26. A programme of drop-in sessions and Business Surveys have been held during the year to better understand the barriers facing enterprises, with a package of information / training sessions provided in response.
- 4.12 Adopting a new economic strategy during the last year has been a key step in order to ensure that Gwynedd's priorities are achieved. The Strategy sets a clear direction for the Council's investment programmes and future partners. One of the priority projects within the 2025/26 work programme is to establish Trawsfynydd Science Park. I am pleased to report that good progress has been made to develop the business case to establish a new Innovation Centre on the Science Park site, to protect, sustain and create new, well-paid jobs, in Gwynedd. Ambition North Wales have committed £10 million towards the scheme, subject to the content of the detailed business case. A more detailed report on the scheme will be submitted to this Committee in due course.
- 4.13 In addition, you will note from Appendix 1 that support has been provided to 255 Gwynedd residents to obtain work, with 130 receiving support to enable them to earn a better salary, developing skills and overcoming barriers.
- 4.14 Finally, you will note that construction work has commenced to erect 10 new work 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.

- 4.15 You will note from Appendix 1 that further Hwb arrangements are now operating in each of the 13 areas across the county. Work has commenced on developing a more sustainable model of providing support within 3 areas, namely Tywyn, Barmouth and Blaenau Ffestiniog, by incorporating the Hwb arrangements within the Gwynedd Libraries service. As part of the new model of community support, all Gwynedd

Library staff have commenced training. The Well-being Facilitators have also established a programme of drop-in sessions in local libraries, as well as partnership events to raise awareness of cost-of-living support and the support services available.

- 41.6 Six rounds of food grants have been held to support community food schemes across the county. To date, grants to the value of £217,743 have been allocated to community groups and food banks to strengthen local support for residents. I can see that the new arrangements are going to lead to more stable, consistent and integrated support for the most vulnerable residents of Gwynedd.

The Department's day-to-day work

- 4.17 The Department's Performance Dashboard can be seen in Appendix 2. It is scrutinised regularly, with meetings arranged over the year to enable me to support and challenge services on performance. I would like to draw the Committee Members' attention to the following matters:

Leisure Services - Byw'n Iach Leisure Resources, Padarn and Glynllifon Country Parks, Maritime, Hafan Pwllheli and Doc Fictoria, Caernarfon.

- 4.18 The grant investment work at Parc Padarn and Glynllifon continues. 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 Parc Glynllifon. The average customer satisfaction of the Country Parks is 88%, but it is also worth noting that wider work is taking place at Parc Padarn, including investment in the National Slate Museum which is currently closed.
- 4.19 It can be seen that the number of accumulative visits to Byw'n Iach leisure centres over the year is 964,980 - which is 5.6% lower than 2024/25. As noted in the appendix, there are various reasons for this, including an increase in the number of customers paying through direct debit and therefore not recorded in the same way; and also change to how a number of historical visits recorded through the club use 'multiplier'. It is considered that the new system, although not comparative with historical data, is more accurate and better grounds for measuring in the future.
- 4.20 In addition, there is less use by schools, despite the effort to encourage more school visits. I remain concerned that the number of Gwynedd pupils having swimming lessons at our centres is falling. Following discussions with Byw'n Iach and the Education Department, we wrote to the Governing bodies of Gwynedd schools asking them to further consider the risks and inequalities across the county. Byw'n Iach 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.
- 4.21 The Customer Satisfaction figures have remained quite similar over the past year, with a small reduction from 84.5% to 84.2%. But you will note from the appendix that a programme of improvements has been achieved and planned in response to the comments and improve user experiences. 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.

- 4.22 The viability of the swimming pool systems at Byw'n Iach Bangor, concerns me. The Department has escalated the risk level in its risk register and works closely with Byw'n Iach and the Council's Property Service to identify short-term mitigation measures and long-term investment plans. We will report on the progress of this work over the year.
- 4.23 You will note from the Appendix that 88% of the customers of Gwynedd Harbours and 70% of respondents to the beaches' customer satisfaction survey said that they were of the opinion that their experience was 'very good' or 'good'. The feedback received from these surveys is extremely useful to enable this service to respond with other Council Departments.
- 4.24 The number of customers with a mooring contract increased by 9% in our harbours in 2025/26, compared to last year, which was an increase of 250 to 273 (excluding Hafan Pwllheli and Doc Fictoria, Caernarfon). 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.
- 4.25 During the year, there were several storms and periods of high winds which had a significant impact on the harbours. Some boats broke free from their moorings, others sank and several navigation aids were damaged. We also saw landslides as well as an oil pollution incident. The Service officers responded at short-notice, often outside normal working hours, to restrict or prevent further damage.
- 4.26 Over the 2025/26 year, the moorings of Hafan Pwllheli have been 96% full and 86% in the outer harbour. This is not a change from 2024-25 for the Hafan. Concerns remain about the silting 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.

Archives, Museums, Arts and Libraries Services

- 4.27 You will note that 91% of the users of the Archives Service was 'very satisfied' with the service. 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 as a result of cuts in 2016. The Service secured a grant of £341,000 from the Welsh Government to invest in the Caernarfon Record Office and Dolgellau Record Office. The work will be completed by end of June 2026, and it will improve the energy conservation of the buildings and the experience and environment for users in the research rooms.
- 4.28 Over the year, positive feedback was obtained, between 97-100%, by partners about the community art service, based on projects such as Porthi Dre, Criw Celf for 7–11-year-old children; Stiwdio Lles to support young people aged 18-30 years (art on

prescription plan with a grant from the Arts Council, in partnership with Cwmni'r Frân Wen and Bangor University); Craft for Adult Well-being; Sgwrs a Chân (Song and a Chat) for those in care flats with Canolfan William Mathias. Night Out and Arts Support Community Arts Grants were provided to ensure that there are opportunities available across Gwynedd, e.g. Croesor, Bangor, Nefyn, Bala and Llanbedr. A key role of the service is to provide advice and support for individuals and organisations to encourage working in partnership. We collaborated with many organisations such as the Youth Service, Cell B, Canolfan Gerdd William Mathias, Theatr Derek Williams, Dawns i Bawb, Theatr y Ddraig, Age Friendly Team, Arts and Health Steering Group, and Ysbyty Gwynedd Gallery.

- 4.29 You will note from Appendix 2 that a Library Services Customer Satisfaction Percentage was 98% in terms of Customer Care with 90% of the users saying that the library had made a positive difference to their lives. But you will also note that only half the users now borrow a book with the role of the centres gradually changing to be warm, welcoming and safe places, which contribute to improving the well-being of residents.

Economy Development, Tourism, Regeneration and Community Support 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. Consultation

- 5.1 The report has been created based on the information and content of the latest meeting challenging and supporting the performance of the Department on 15 May 2026.

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

- 6.1 The Services and the Priority Projects implement a sustainable development duty - to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, aiming to reach the well-being goals. This is achieved by:
- **Including** residents / service users when making decisions and introducing changes;
 - **Collaborating** with partners where relevant;
 - Seeking to **prevent** problems from arising or worsening in the future;
 - Considering the **long-term** and what people's needs will be in years to come;
 - Considering the potential impact on other public bodies in order to ensure integration.

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

7.1 Every Service from the Department and the Council's priority projects are aware of the duty to prepare an Equality, Welsh language, and Socio-economic Duty impact assessment. These assessments are used to improve projects and services.

8. Next Steps

8.1 We will take the Committee's observations into account and where relevant act to improve services.

Background Information - Appendices

Appendix 1: Progress reports on milestones of projects in the Council Plan

Appendix 2: The Department's Performance Measures

A Prosperous Gwynedd: Strengthening the economy and supporting the residents of Gwynedd to earn a decent wage.

Department and Project	Overview	What we want to achieve during the THIRD year 2025-26 (milestones):	Has the milestone been completed	What has been achieved during the year and the impact (or likely impact) on the people of Gwynedd? Information or evidence should also be included to confirm this (measures or data confirming, etc.)
Economy and Community - Promoting our culture and a sustainable visitor economy	<p>We will take a series of steps to promote our culture and create a sustainable visitor economy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Gwynedd and Eryri Sustainable Visitor Economy Plan, which was produced jointly with the Eryri National Park Authority, will be launched in spring 2023. Key partners and stakeholders will work together to deliver what is contained in the Plan, establishing a Gwynedd and Eryri Sustainable Visitor Economy Partnership. We will ensure prosperity from the North West Wales Slate Landscape World Heritage Site designation and secure 	<p>We will have implemented the work programme for the Gwynedd and Eryri Visitor Economy Plan 2035 and targeted resources to promote the new objectives.</p> <p>We will have considered national legislation on the Visitor Levy and consulted through the Gwynedd and Eryri 2035 Partnership.</p> <p>We will have promoted and monitored the use of 4 Arosfan sites across Gwynedd and evaluated the pilot scheme</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>There is a work plan in place and funds such as SPF 2 and Visit Wales's Brilliant Basics Fund have been targeted for resources to implement the objectives.</p> <p>Discussions have taken place with businesses and sector partners in the Gwynedd + Eryri 2035 Partnership. Discussions have taken place with the Welsh Revenue Authority and the Welsh Government and with other local authorities. A draft Gwynedd Levy Report and Proposal were discussed at the Scrutiny Committee on 12 February 2026. A further report to be submitted to the Full Council in May 2026 to approve a formal consultation process.</p> <p>Since June 2024 and up to 30/04/26, 3,518 overnight parking bookings have been made at Arosfan sites (1,977 Criccieth / Pwllheli / Caernarfon and 2,654 Llanberis). Enforcement cases were brought against 96 vehicles that had</p>

	<p>resources to deliver the World Heritage Site Action Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will control Motor Homes visiting Gwynedd by piloting the development of up to six designated sites for motor homes to stay overnight. • Hosting the 2023 National Eisteddfod in Gwynedd will be a platform to celebrate our culture and language, the arts and sports and ensure that the Eisteddfod leaves a positive legacy for the communities of Gwynedd. 	<p>We will have supported Gwynedd's communities and businesses to promote and celebrate culture locally through the 'Diwylliesiant 2' project.</p> <p>We will monitor and implement new plans to provide services at Storiel, the Lloyd George Museum and Neuadd Dwyfor, and work with partners in the cultural sector to identify priorities for the future.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>parked in unofficial places. Discussions have begun in relation to the developing a further Arosfan site in Tywyn. An evaluation report is being prepared to be presented to the Cabinet during 2026</p> <p>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 have been completed alongside the Cultural Services, the Byw'n lach company, as well as Antur Waunfawr and the Llŷn Eco-museum. An Eco-Museum pilot scheme has been developed in Bangor. There is a risk to the continuation of supported activities in future because of changes to UK Government funding schemes.</p> <p>Lloyd George Museum improvements have been completed and the museum reopened. A review of the spaces and an audience development commission is underway. Exterior improvements to Storiel are underway and a third Art exhibition (The Gallery of Contemporary Art) has been held. Audience Development Plan completed. Arrangements are underway for registering a charitable company to support Storiel. The cafe re-opened on 10 February 2026. Neuadd Dwyfor improvements are coming to fruition with regard to visitor numbers. The Leadership Team has discussed the Culture Vision and Principles. An event</p>
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We will have supported the communities of Gwynedd to take advantage of the slate industry's world heritage designation by implementing a project through Heritage Lottery funding for the LleCHI LleNI project, and funding from the Shared Prosperity Fund and the Levelling Up Fund, to include the following work:

- Ogwen – contractors on The Old Post site, complete the upgrade of the connecting route to Penrhyn Quarry, official opening of Neuadd Ogwen
- Dinorwig – contractors on the site of The Slate Museum and Parc Padarn
- Blaenau Ffestiniog – official opening of the connecting route, official opening of Aelwyd yr Urdd, contractors on the Church St site
- Public Art – official opening undertaken in 6 towns
- Town Centre Improvements – schemes completed in 6 towns
- Signs and interpretation – installed in 6 towns
- Conservation – several historic structures have received an investment
- Engagement, educating and events – through the LleChi LleNi project we will have completed the outputs of the Action Plan for Year 2
- Governance: We will have reviewed the Management Plan during 2025 and developed the new Interpretation and Visitor Management Plan.

Yes

titled 'Diwylliant Gwynedd: er lles pawb' (The Culture of Gwynedd: for everyone's benefit) was held in Portmeirion on 04-03-26.

There are major projects underway across the slate landscape. The Annual Report can be viewed [here](#).

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.

We continue to work with the National Slate Museum and the Old Post to ensure that complete funding packages are in place.

Impressive public art has been installed in 4 of 6 locations, with planning permission in place for Llanberis and the arrangements for Bethesda in hand.

Town centre improvements are in progress, with several completed. Penrhyn Quarry Hospital Conservation Work is still ongoing and is the subject of much attention and interest locally.

Extremely popular activities are being carried out through LleCHI LleNI within our communities and schools.

A thematic interpretation workshop was held with nearly 50 attendees in order to develop interpretation across the World Heritage Site.

In the last 12 months LleCHI LleNI has supported:

- 68 events
- 3,100 people attended, including 1,938 children

				Members of the team have attended events in Ireland and Cardiff to share good practice.
Economy and Community – Regenerating communities and town centres	We will establish a Regeneration Framework by developing Local Regeneration Plans for 13 catchment areas across the County and will ensure cross-departmental arrangements within the Council to ensure that work programmes intertwine, and share information with communities by continuing with the engagement work. Town/City Centre action plans will be prepared for individual towns.	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.	Yes	Local Regeneration Plans for each of the 13 areas have been updated during the 2025/6 period, and a series of meetings have been held locally.
		A Cross-departmental Group will meet quarterly to ensure collaboration arrangements between the local regeneration plans and the Council's strategic projects.	Yes	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
		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	Yes	We managed to secure £800k of funding from the Shared Prosperity Fund for a Key Fund that supports local regeneration projects. The Fund was able to support a wide range of projects during 2025/6 with examples including Menter y Tŵr, Pwllheli; Seren Fach Nursery, Brithdir; the Old Library Plan by the Deiniolen Village Committee; the Canolfan Rhyd Ddu scheme, Antur Nantlle; and the schemes of Menter Rabar, Abersoch.
		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	Yes	We successfully secured £1.3m of funding from the Shared Prosperity Fund for the Gwynedd Ni Regeneration Plan package. A large part of the package was implemented during the period, with examples including improvements to Maes Cricieth; upgrading public toilets in Barmouth and Abersoch; improvements to Tŷ Siamas, Dolgellau; preparing plans for Bangor, Pwllheli and Bala; and the piloting of a Fund for Town and Community Councils.

		<p>We will attract additional investment to regenerate Gwynedd's town centres by targeting the Welsh Government's Transforming Towns Programme.</p> <p>We will have brought more empty buildings into use through Cyngor Gwynedd's Empty Properties Programme.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>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. A £1.5m package has been developed for the Pride in Place Impact Fund which is to be completed during 2026/7.</p> <p>An Empty Properties programme is operational, and 13 empty properties have been supported back into use in town centres. £995k has been secured for the Bangor High Street empty properties pilot which will be completed during 2026/7.</p>
<p>Economy and Community – Create the best possible circumstances in Gwynedd for businesses and community enterprises to thrive, and support the people of Gwynedd into work</p>	<p>We will support businesses and community enterprises in Gwynedd to thrive in many ways such as product development and accessing new markets, helping enterprises to save money by reducing waste and using technology more effectively, supporting businesses in Gwynedd to trade together, and prioritise helping enterprises that commit to paying a 'real living wage' to their employees. We will encourage businesses to make the most of the Welsh language, to develop more work units for letting, and strive to ensure that the North Wales Growth Deal</p>	<p>We will have provided a programme of support, to support businesses and social enterprises during 2025/26 using funding from the extra year of the Shared Prosperity Fund.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>A total of £1.3 million has been secured which has been provided to 118 businesses to support local enterprises to reduce costs or increase their income.</p>
		<p>We will have managed the transition year of the ARFOR programme in Gwynedd and the region.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>£500,000 was secured to continue with ARFOR across Gwynedd, Anglesey, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire. The money was used to transfer learning from the programme and implement interventions within the youth and migration themes.</p>
		<p>We will have run a programme to celebrate and promote the success of Gwynedd's businesses and enterprises, including holding a week of activity during the autumn term.</p> <p>We will have secured advice for businesses and enterprises in Gwynedd that respond to their concerns.</p>	<p>YES</p> <p>YES</p>	<p>Business Week 2025 was held in October. News of local successes was shared to over 4 thousand businesses weekly via our business bulletins.</p> <p>A programme of drop-in sessions and a Business Survey were undertaken to</p>

<p>projects benefit the people of Gwynedd. In addition, we will help the people of Gwynedd to fulfil their potential and support those who are excluded from the labour market to return to employment and will work with employers to assist them to ensure sufficient employees.</p>	<p>We will have started construction of 10 new business units in Minffordd during the second quarter of 2025/26.</p>	YES	<p>understand enterprises' concerns, and a programme of information/training sessions was provided in response.</p> <p>Units are in the process of being built and will be ready to be installed in the autumn.</p>
	<p>We will have worked together with partners across North Wales to ensure benefits to Gwynedd from the North Wales Growth Deal.</p>	YES	<p>Industrial units at Parc Bryn Cegin are under construction; the first two phases of the Glynllifon Rural Hub have been approved and are under construction; plans for Phase 3 of the Glynllifon project are being developed; the Portmeirion Welcome Academy centre has been completed; plans for the Zip World development at Penrhyn Quarry and Llechwedd continue to be developed; a plan for developing the Albert Gubay Business School has been approved with work starting on the site of the former Friars School in Bangor during 2026; funding has been set aside to support a Skills and Science Centre in Trawsfynydd, with the detailed business case being submitted before the end of the year and aiming to starting construction in 2027.</p>
	<p>We will have agreed a new Economic Strategy for Gwynedd for the period 2025-2028 and prepared bids for resources to implement its priorities.</p>	YES	<p>A new economic strategy developed and agreed by the Cabinet on 10 March and the full Council on 15 May. Resources to implement elements of the strategy have been targeted.</p>
	<p>We will have provided support for Gwynedd residents to return to work and to increase their ability to earn a good wage.</p>	YES	<p>Support provided, 255 Gwynedd residents have found work after receiving support</p>

and 130 are able to earn a better salary after receiving help to improve their skills.

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

<p>Cross-departmental – Supporting People's Well-being</p>	<p>Some residents find it difficult to cope with life's challenges and the situation of a number of residents has been exacerbated as a result of the cost-of-living crisis. These residents need support to cope, to thrive, to be safe, and to stay healthy. We have a broad network throughout our communities which helps and supports residents to cope and responds to their various needs. This network requires support to sustain that voluntary effort, and we will work to strengthen this essential work over the coming years.</p>	<p>Establish two Supporting People Hubs in two new areas.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Hub arrangements are now in place in all 13 areas across the county. Work has commenced on developing a more sustainable model of providing support within 3 areas, namely Tywyn, Barmouth and Blaenau Ffestiniog, by incorporating the Hub arrangements within the Gwynedd Libraries service.</p>
		<p>Organise training for the Hubs' employees and volunteers on supporting individuals.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>MoneyGuiders training is now included on the Council's learning portal to enable frontline workers to develop skills to support residents with financial and budgeting issues. As part of the new model of community support, all Gwynedd Libraries staff have started the MoneyGuiders training.</p>
		<p>Appoint Well-being Champions posts and host cost-of-living events, and various drop-in sessions.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The Well-being Facilitator has also established a programme of drop-in sessions in local libraries, as well as partnership events to raise awareness of cost-of-living support and the support services that are available.</p>
		<p>Work with a volunteer partner to provide numeracy and budgeting support to residents.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Through the Community Resilience Project's SPF funding, Citizens Advice and Advice Mid Wales provide outreach</p>

		<p>Complete the Digital Inclusion Project to provide practical help to teach people to get online and distribute IT equipment.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>sessions across the Hubs network throughout the county.</p> <p>Changes have been made to the CAB service level agreement to ensure that these outreach arrangements continue beyond the SPF funding period.</p> <p>The SPF Community Resilience Scheme has funded AbilityNet to run informal drop-in sessions in the Hubs network to support residents with IT and digital inclusion.</p> <p>6 rounds of food grants have been held to support community feeding schemes across the county.</p> <p>Grants worth £217,743 have so far been allocated to community groups and food banks to strengthen local support for residents</p>
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Economy and Community Department Performance Report

2025/26

Leisure and Country Parks Service

Country Park users' satisfaction level

88%

Leisure and Country Parks Service

Leisure Centres' customer satisfaction level

84.51%

Leisure and Country Parks Service

Total number of visits to Leisure Centres (Cumulative)

964,980

Maritime Service

Management and Servicing in accordance with the requirements of the Coast Guard Agency and the Marine Safety Code

96%

Maritime Service

Moorings contracts at Porthmadog, Barmouth and Aberdyfi harbours

273

(an increase of 9% since 2024)

Maritime Service

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Beaches – 70%
Harbours – 88%

Hafan and Pwllheli Harbour Service

Percentage of annual moorings at Hafan Pwllheli and Victoria Dock

96% Hafan
100% Doc Fictoria

Hafan and Pwllheli Harbour Service

Customer satisfaction percentage at Hafan Pwllheli

91%
(up from 89%)

Hafan and Pwllheli Harbour Service

Victoria Dock customer satisfaction

98%
(up from 69%)

Archives Service

Archives Service Customer Satisfaction

91%

Museums and Arts Service

Total number of visitors and people who engage digitally with the museums and galleries

1,212,877

Museums and Arts Service

Museums and Galleries Service Customer Satisfaction %

95%

Museums and Arts Service

Percentage of participants benefiting through a Community Arts project

99%

Libraries Service

Number of loans from Libraries 2025/26

452,845

Libraries Service

Libraries Customer Satisfaction 2025/26

98%

Libraries Service

Neuadd Dwyfor customer satisfaction 2025/26

95%

Neuadd Dwyfor Ticket Sales and Income 2025/26

19,602 tickets sold

£201,565 income from the sale of tickets and Food and Drink

Tourism, Marketing and Events Service

74.1% of Gwynedd residents surveyed say that tourism in their area has a positive outcome

Tourism, Marketing and Events Service

311% increase from 2024/5 baseline in businesses and enterprises successfully receiving the Gwynedd and Eryri 35 Business Pledge

Economic Development Service

Businesses committed to pay their employees a real living wage and to use more of the Welsh language

97

Economic Development Service

Businesses that have engaged monthly (2025/26 Average)

4,326

Economic Development Service

Businesses supported to save money and/or increase their income

185

Economic Development Service

People supported into work

255

Economic Development Service

People increasing their ability to earn a good salary

130

Regeneration Programmes Service

Investment in Town Centre
Regeneration Programmes

£3,398,526

Regeneration Programmes Service

Number of Commercial Units
that have returned to use

Support has led to 4
properties in a town centre
coming back into use and
improved the image of 6

Community Support Service

Number of Local Groups
receiving advice or support

335

Community Support Service

Number of projects that have
received support for their
development

337

Economy and Community
Department

Percentage of department
staff who have completed
Mandatory Training

Safeguarding – 90.1%
VAWDASV – 92.8%

Head: Sioned Williams, **Assistant Head:** Llyr Jones

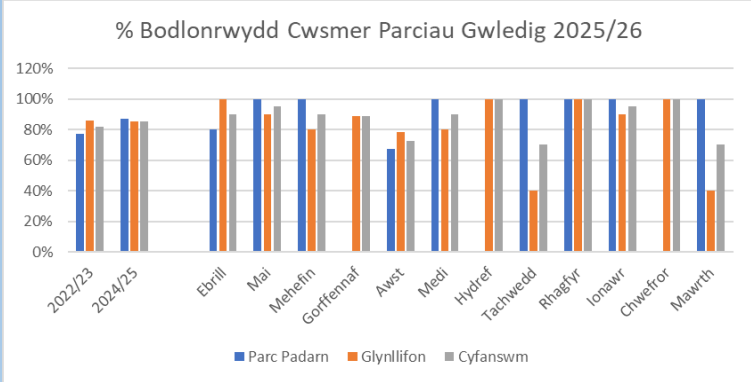
Responsible Manager: Carwyn Williams

Purpose: Ensure a high-quality safe environment in our Country Parks which will allow local people and tourists to appreciate and enjoy them.

Performance Indicator: % Country Parks Customer Satisfaction

Performance overview:

Positive	Improvements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fantastic day!! Beautiful gardens, lots of information around the park about the history of the house and gardens. Staff were all so friendly, food excellent. Park area right by cafe so kids could play whilst we had a paned. Great easter egg hunt that kept the kids engaged throughout the walk. Lovely little artisan shops in a little courtyard. We didn't manage to get around all of it so, will definitely be back soon. Really pleasantly surprised at how lovely it was and can't believe we have never heard of it before. Beautiful and almost hidden gem. So many areas to explore, perfect for dog walking or just exploring on your own. I call it my happy place. 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"> Very interesting park with a huge potential, if somebody is willing to invest here.... 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. Cafe was closed due to staffing issues, which is a great loss to visitors, I'm sure many will come because there is a cafe on site.



- Admission Charge – 2025/26 was the busiest year in terms of the number of visitors to the parc since records began.
- Events – The Parc held the first ever Easter Egg Hunt in 2025. A successful event with more visiting over the Easter weekend 2025 than the total April visits in 2024. During the summer, we set up Fun Fair games with very positive feedback from the Parc visitors and tenants. The August 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 at Parc Padarn, and is therefore an opportunity to promote and market Parc Glynllifon.
- Grants – An Expression of Interest Application was submitted to the Lottery for £2.6m. The application was successful and we were invited to submit a bid for development money during 2026/27.
- Maintenance – The Wardens have been improving the accessibility of the site by laying 100 tonnes of slate waste on the paths. Although we have had many days with strong winds and trees have fallen within the Parc over the winter, the wardens have managed to keep the Parc open by being diligent and ensuring that the paths are safe and by clearing away any mess.



Parc Padarn

Average customer satisfaction **94%** (Parks 88%)

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Head: Sioned Williams, **Assistant Head:** Llyr Jones

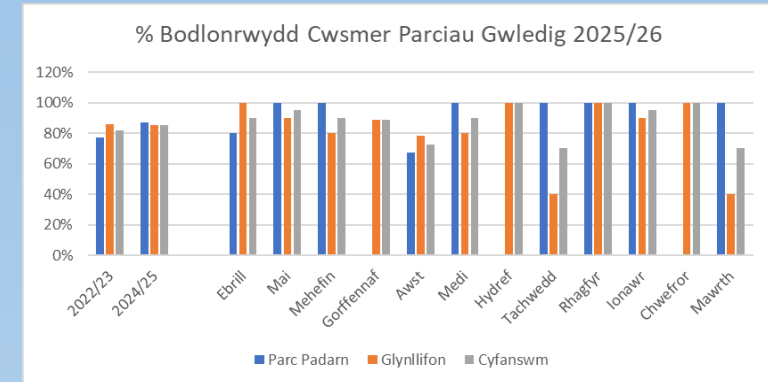
Responsible Manager: Carwyn Williams

Purpose: Ensure a high-quality safe environment in our Country Parks which will allow local people and tourists to appreciate and enjoy them.

Performance Indicator: % Country Parks Customer Satisfaction

Performance overview:

Positive	Improvements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good place for kids • Amazing views and amazing walk with the dog <p>Beautiful place for a walk - wheelchair accessible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good parking and then excellent walks. • I absolutely loved my walk around Lake Padarn — it's one of those places that perfectly captures the beauty of North Wales. The trail is well-marked and easy to follow, offering a mix of woodland paths, open lakeside stretches, and incredible mountain scenery, especially with Snowdon (Yr Wyddfa) in the background 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basically, it is a beautiful park with lots to see and discover, but at the moment a lot of construction and renovation work is going on, so not everything is open. • Really disappointed that the museum was closed • It would be great if Parc Padarn itself was better maintained, there are so many invasive plants and it doesn't seem that any work to reduce them is done? Is there a management plan? Maybe share this with the community, why not have community volunteer days etc?



- Invasive plants – During May 2025 Truxtor boats were on Llyn Padarn to commence the work of removing the invasive weeds. From September onwards there was an arrangement in place with BSAC for divers to come voluntarily to Llyn Padarn to continue with the work of removing the invasive weeds.
- Grants from the LUF, Brilliant Basics, Cadw and the National Grid – restoration work on the Incline completed as well as the new Welcome block. Most of the work in the car park has been completed. A tender package for the Fire Queen and Hafod Owen has been shared and contractors appointed to commence the restoration work during 2026/27. A tender had also been completed for the nature interpretation work in the Welcome Block and improvements to the interpretation work within the Quarry Hospital and the Fire Queen shed.
- National Grid and Slate Museum – The National Grid and the re-cabling work caused the Parc to lose ¼ of the Gilfach Ddu car park and the Railway was also closed occasionally. The Slate Museum had closed for the re-development which meant that some visitors to the Parc were disappointed with what was offered. Nevertheless, the Parc created a new Facebook page and made an effort to share information with visitors over the last year.



Byw'n Iach

Average customer satisfaction **84.51%**

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Head: Sioned Williams; **Assistant Head:** Llyr Jones

Responsible Manager: Trystan Pritchard – Managing Director, Byw'n Iach,

Purpose: Support the Byw'n Iach Company to provide sports and leisure activities to improve the well-being of Gwynedd residents

Performance Indicator: % Byw'n Iach Customer Satisfaction

Performance overview:

The end of 2025/26 customer satisfaction figures show a small reduction from 84.51% to 84.26% with a general score of 4.21 out of 5.

Communication, Staff and Fitness Classes have all improved. 524 customers responded, with 119 different comments.

'Staff' continues to perform best (93.2%) with the Fitness Room (78.37%) and Facilities (77.17%) scoring lowest again.

'Facilities' also shows the biggest reduction – 2.5% while 'Fitness Classes' shows the biggest increase – 4.5%.



Positive

Bro Dysynni - "The staff are really knowledgeable & helpful. I have struggled over the last few years getting my confidence & fitness back up. They have all been really supportive. Thank you."

Glaslyn - "The leisure centre has made a real difference to my life! The Aquafit sessions and the circuits keep me moving and the staff are brilliant! The other customers are friendly and it's lovely to have the library and the bank and the excellent cafe in the building!!!"

Plas Ffrancon - "Staff at Plas Ffrancon are FANTASTIC. They make the place what it is, creating a feeling of community and family! "

Arfon - "The use of Welsh first by all members of staff add to the homely feeling that exists at the centre in Caernarfon."

"Great facilities, great staff and very value for money! Very good all! "

Pavilion "The quality of fitness classes have improved over the last 9 months, Jody, Paula and Meg's classes are fantastic."

Penllyn - Thank you very much for the excellent service.

Improvements

Arfon: "Byw'n Iach Arfon desperately needs modernisation inside and out the pool changing rooms especially "

Bro Dysynni: "A range of fitness classes and more of them "

Dwyfor: "Changing rooms. The showers are old and weak. Not enough resources for a family (children change in the adults' rooms). The floors can be wet and slippery and the drains are dirty. "

Glaslyn: "More extensive equipment in the fitness and weights room - e.g. kettlebells"

Pafiliwn: " just need the equipment updating/replacing"

Penllyn: "I would get much better value for money if the gym opened earlier on more than one day a week it is not enough at present "

Plas Ffrancon: "More of the same fitness machines "

Plas Silyn: "Some classes are popular and fill up quickly, perhaps offer more classes".

2026

Byw'n Iach

Total number of visits 964,980 (>5.6% compared to 2024/25)

[Back to the dashboard](#)

Head: Sioned Williams; **Assistant Head:** Llyr Jones

Responsible Manager: Trystan Pritchard – Managing Director, Byw'n Iach,

Purpose: Supporting the Byw'n Iach Company to provide sports and leisure activities to improve the well-being of the community.

Performance Indicator: Total Number of Byw'n Iach Visits

Performance overview:

Numbers on the Direct Debit Scheme (DU), April to August 2025, numbers consistent with the same period last year.

Then over 7 months, the numbers grew to 4,229 (March 24, 3,650) – an increase of 579.

- Number of Swimming Lessons – have stabilised following the COVID waiting lists. 1:1 programmes and specialist programmes are being delivered.

- Occasional income – impact of increase in DD customers but need more information following the report on month 13. A strong drive within the company to regain or ensure the continuation of the NERS customers.

- Cumulative visits down. Many reasons, a little less use by schools, more DD customers, but the main reason is the change in the club use 'multiplier' in the recording system. This has likely been too high historically, and by now the 'block hire' has gone, and different 'products' are used with a lower multiplier, but more correct, e.g. five-a-side football before was previously 50 as an user, but is now 15. Therefore, the current picture is more correct.

Centres generally report that there is a reduction in school and club use, and school swimming is decreasing mainly in terms of the duration of the course (often 10 weeks).

- Canolfan Dwyfor Projects/Grants – Special fitness space created and open from 30 April – potential for 150 new members and a prominent joint-working project with local GPs.

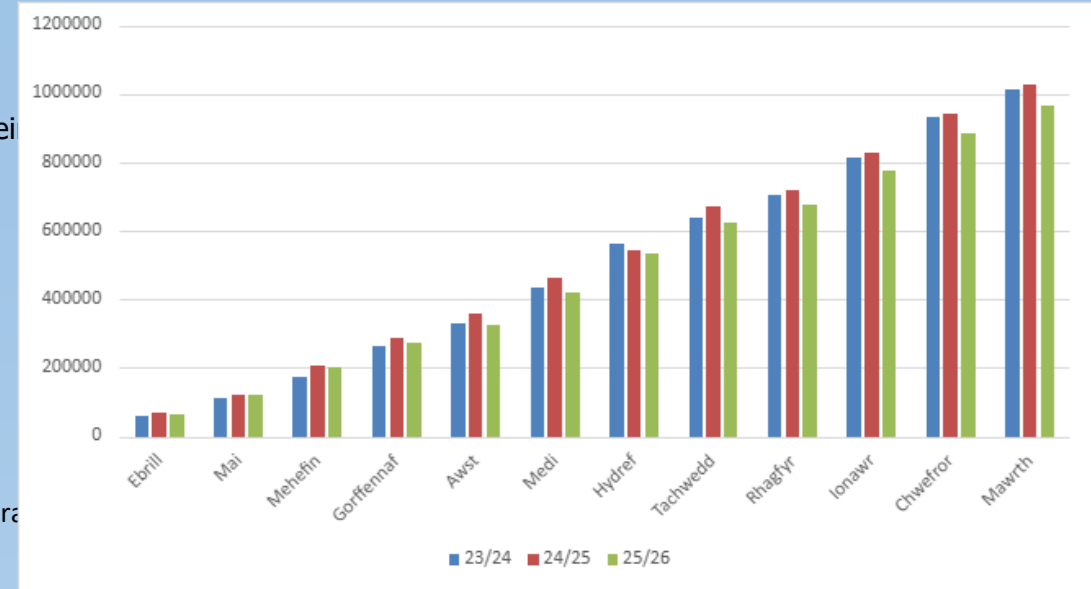
- 64 new members in Bangor having installed the Biocircuit equipment.

- Bro Dysynni all weather pitch about to open following a grant of £300,000 from Sports Wales.

- Arfon fitness area project about to commence to transform the existing gym and enable more health-referred training and classes – obvious emphasis on public health in the company's strategy.

- A pilot scheme with Ysbyty Eryri Stroke Team has significantly improved the key health indicators of 12 patients, therefore the scheme to be expanded across the county.

- Further developments with health concentrating on patients with diabetes, heart disease and those overweight but on lists awaiting surgery – waiting for the result of an application for £80k of NHS funding.



Economy and Community Department: Maritime Service

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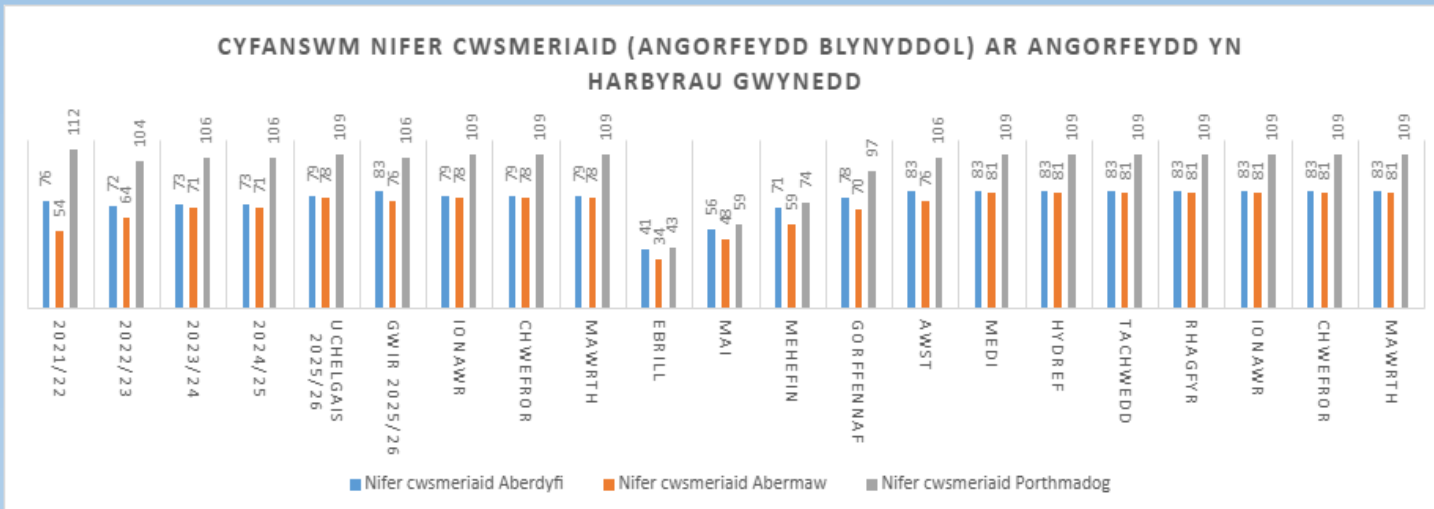
Head: Sioned Williams; **Assistant Head:** Llyr Jones

Responsible Manager: Bryn Pritchard-Jones

Purpose: Safely manage Gwynedd's beaches and harbours and retain the number of loyal customers in our harbours and attract new customers annually

Performance Indicator: Cyngor Gwynedd's total harbour moorings customers

Performance Overview:



During the year, there were several storms and periods of strong winds which had a significant impact on the harbours. Some boats broke free from their moorings, others sank and several navigation aids were damaged. The Service's officers responded at short-notice, often outside normal working hours, to limit or prevent further damage and to ensure that no pollution discharged into harbour waters.

The total number of customers with a mooring agreement in our harbours for 2025 has increased by 9% compared to 2024, reflecting the increasing demand for harbour facilities and services. Continuous investment has improved users' experience and has made the harbours more attractive, enabling every harbour to attract new customers and increase the number of visitor boats that stay on temporary moorings. This boosts the local economy and is a vital source of income for the Service.

Dynamic navigation channels and silt continue to create significant challenges and has an impact on the service's ability to provide safe mooring areas and access into the harbour for customers. The service closely monitors the navigation channels and the silting levels and works to maintain and manage safe moorings and is inspecting ways of alleviating the impact of silting on the entrance.



Due to the volatile weather over the winter months, together with the lack of availability of a contractor to re-locate the equipment, the percentage of navigation aids on station have reduced to 81.5%. The service has invested in new equipment, and there are plans afoot to install these during April and May when the weather is more stable.

An independent individual was appointed to undertake an inspection to ensure that the Council complies with the requirements of the Port Marine Safety Code. The inspection was completed in February with a very positive result. A 'Statement of Compliance' has already been published on the Council's website, together with the Code's documentation – [Port Marine Safety Code and Maritime Facilities](#)

Economy and Community Department: Maritime Service

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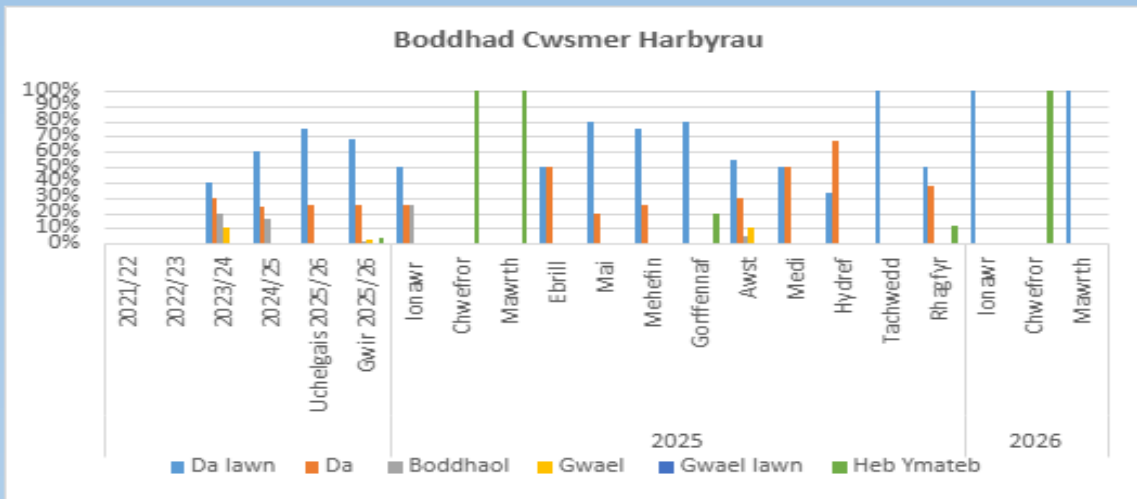
Head: Sioned Williams; **Assistant Head:** Llyr Jones

Responsible Manager: Bryn Pritchard-Jones

Purpose: Safely manage Gwynedd's beaches and harbours and retain the number of loyal customers in our harbours and attract new customers annually

Performance Indicator: Gwynedd Harbours Customer Satisfaction

Performance Overview:



A high percentage of respondents (88%) noted that their experience of the harbours during the year was 'Very Good' or 'Good'. We received constant comments about the professionalism of our officers, with many drawing attention to the fact that they went 'above and beyond' to assist customers. This was particularly true when there were difficulties during harsh weather, or when advice was needed regarding navigation or mooring within the harbour. Many also noted how clean and tidy the harbours are. 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 after year. Concerns were also raised by many about the silting within Barmouth harbour, with some customers having difficulties due to shallow depths.

Offices: The proposed plans and designs for the development of a new harbour office in Aberdyfi have been completed and have been submitted to the Eryri National Park Planning Department for observations. In addition, the work of improving the Porthmadog harbour office building has now been completed, this will ensure that there is suitable space and facilities for staff.

The scheme to improve the external compound in Porthmadog harbour was also completed during the last year. The improvements included laying a concrete surface, safety gates, together with a new periphery fence. We have received several positive comments about the appearance of the site, especially from residents who live near the harbour.



Aberdyfi Jetty: In March, the project to renew the wooden jetty at Aberdyfi was completed. The scheme, partly funded by SPF funding, has transformed the structure, and has restored and strengthened its construction, improved safety, accessibility and has also improved its general appearance.

Support: During the period of challenging weather at the start of January, the Maritime Service provided valuable support to Adults Service by transporting carers from across the county, enabling them to continue providing care to vulnerable residents.

Staff: One member of staff within the department completed a Harbour Master's Diploma, which was fully funded by the Council. The qualification strengthens the skills and technical knowledge within the team. Also, another member of staff completed a six weeks voyage across the Atlantic Ocean – the experience and skills gained during the voyage will contribute significantly to his personal development, and support and strengthen his day-to-day work.

Economy and Community Department: Maritime Service

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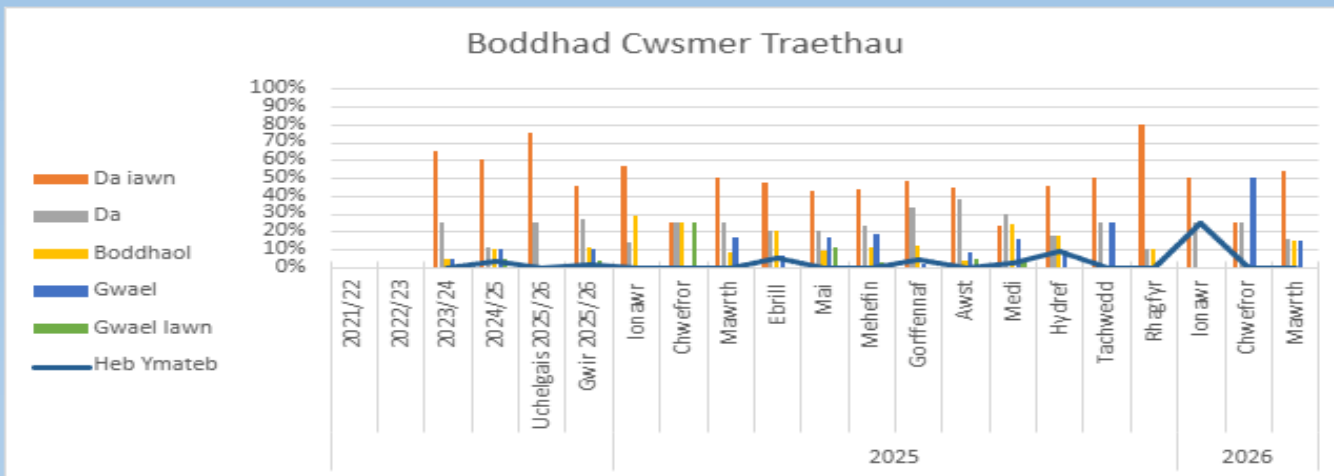
Head: Sioned Williams; **Assistant Head:** Llyr Jones

Responsible Manager: Bryn Pritchard-Jones

Purpose: Safely manage Gwynedd's beaches and harbours and retain the number of loyal customers in our harbours and attract new customers annually

Performance Indicator: Gwynedd Beaches Customer Satisfaction

Performance Overview:



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.



Landslides: Following periods of heavy rain there were two significant landslides on the cliffs on Nefyn beach. Proactive safety measures were implemented including closing part of the beach and installing clear safety signage. The situation continues to be closely monitored due to the risk of further deterioration if there is another period of heavy rainfall.



During the year, 70% of respondents said their experience of visiting the beaches was either 'Very Good' or 'Good'. There was praise for the quality and general cleanliness of the beaches. However, attention was drawn to some concerns, especially during the peak summer season, including litter on beaches, a lack of bins and the presence of dog faeces. Mixed feedback was received on the performance of seasonal officers on the main beaches, drawing attention to the lack of enforcement of bye-laws and rules in some cases. There was also frustration about overnight parking on beaches and the level of fees. There were unruly dogs and dogs present in prohibited zones which was a concern to many.

These matters are considered within a wider environmental and coastal framework with the aim of improving users' experience. We have had productive discussions recently with the Council's Enforcement Team to ensure enforcement and a more prominent presence on beaches.

Improvements: The service has been very fortunate to secure funding to undertake improvements in some of our most popular destinations. Work has commenced at the main entrance to Morfa Bychan beach to improve access arrangements and to ensure that the entrance continues to be safe and suitable for users. Improvements are about to be completed on Golf Road, Abersoch to strengthen the infrastructure and improve the safety of users in an extremely busy and popular location. In addition, work has commenced to improve access to Marian-y-De beach, Pwllheli. It is expected that all the projects will be completed by the end of May, improving the visitor experience and safety across these key sites.

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

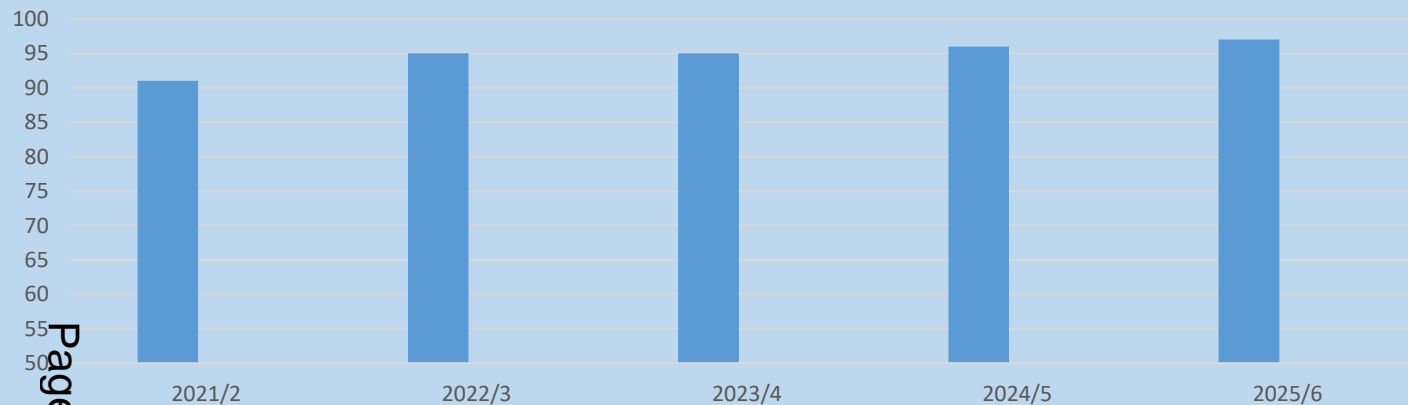
Performance Overview: 96%

Over the 2025/26 year, the moorings of Hafan Pwllheli have been 96% full and 86% in the outer harbour. 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), there is no change in the number of mooring/anchoring contracts. What has changed is that 5 outer harbour moorings from 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.

Over the year we have continued to work with YGC to prepare applications for Marine Licences to complete capital dredging and maintenance dredging. We are continuing with this work. Applications are due to be submitted by summer 2026.

As part of the work, we have also commissioned a report considering possible sites within the harbour boundary for reclaiming land – and in doing so disposing of harbour silt. An extraordinary meeting of the Harbour Committee took place in March to offer an update on the proposed dredging schemes, working closely with stakeholders and local organisations.

Percentage of annual moorings at Hafan and Pwllheli Harbour



Economy and Community Department: Pwllheli Hafan and Harbour Service

Head of Department: 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.

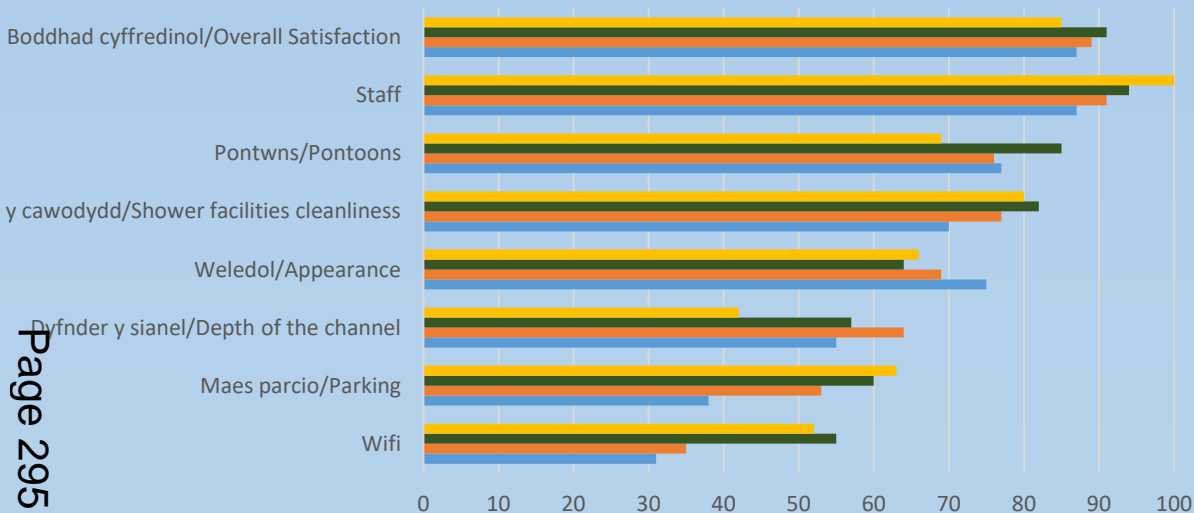
Performance Indicator: % Customer Satisfaction

Performance Overview:

The annual customer satisfaction survey was undertaken in November. For the 2025 period, an increase was seen in satisfaction in terms of aspects such as staff attitude and parking facilities. However, a reduction was seen in aspects such as general appearance which reflects the fact that infrastructure and facilities are ageing (including pontoons and showers). We also find that water depth is getting worse with increased silting, although the channel depth is maintained.

After listening to our customers' feedback we have now started to work on preparing a customers lounge provision that will be available prior to the season peak in 2026.

Customer satisfaction %



Our application for a grant through the Welsh Government's Marine and Fisheries Division has been successful. We have received a grant offer of £67,688 for the reinstallation of the commercial fishing pontoon and tender racks. The work has commenced since the end of February 2026.

As part of this project, new pontoons were installed in February and they are very popular with the fishing community.

Economy and Community Department: Victoria Dock (Pwllheli Hafan and Harbour)

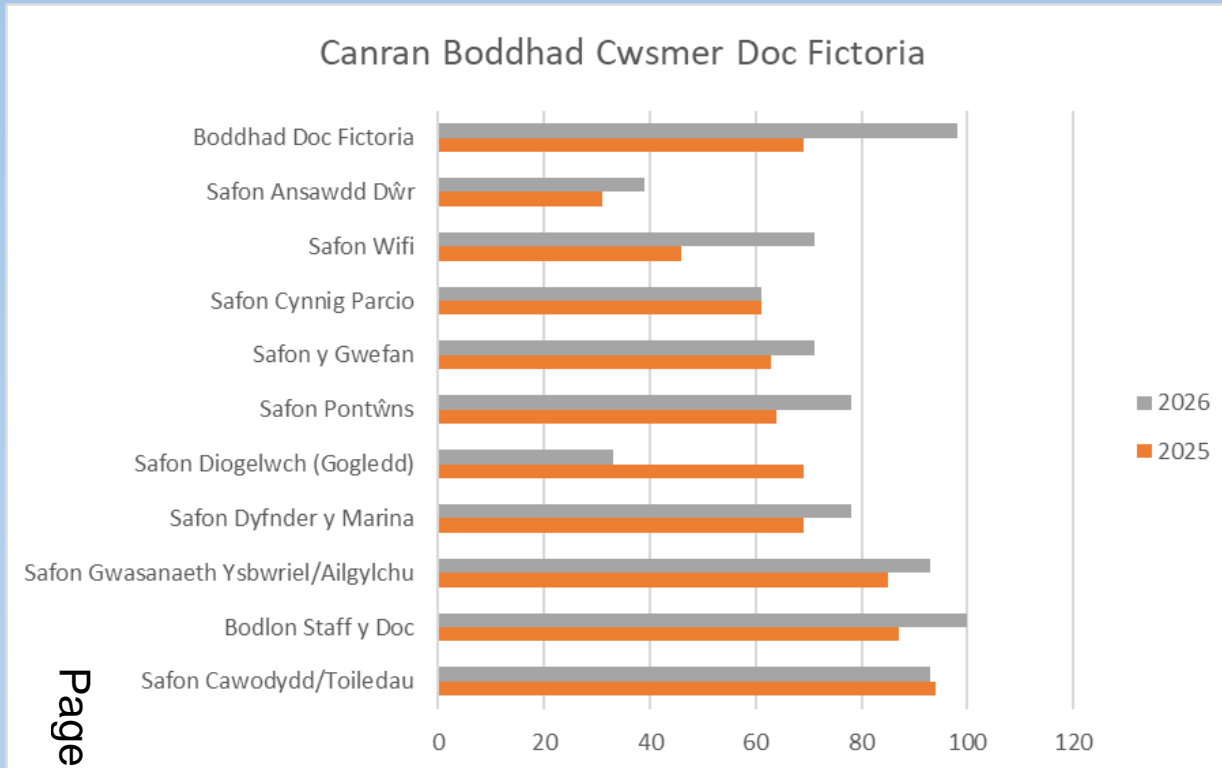
Head: Sioned Williams; **Assistant Head:** Llyr Jones

Responsible Manager: Sarah Hattle

Purpose: Ensure a 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 the day-to-day operations, whilst Cyngor Gwynedd retains responsibility for the infrastructure.

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.

During 2025/6 there was a rise in customer satisfaction to 98%. This increase can be seen across all aspects, except security. It appears that positive feedback regarding the Doc Master has been a contributing factor in this increase.

Economy and Community Department: Archives Service

Head: Sioned Williams; **Assistant Head:** Roland Evans

Responsible Manager: Lynn Francis

Purpose: Protect the County's 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:

Between April 2025 and March 2026, 1,321 users completed the customer satisfaction questionnaire. On average, 91% of users were very satisfied with the service, 3% were satisfied, 1% of users indicated that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 5% were not satisfied.

Most comments received during the year were positive, such as:

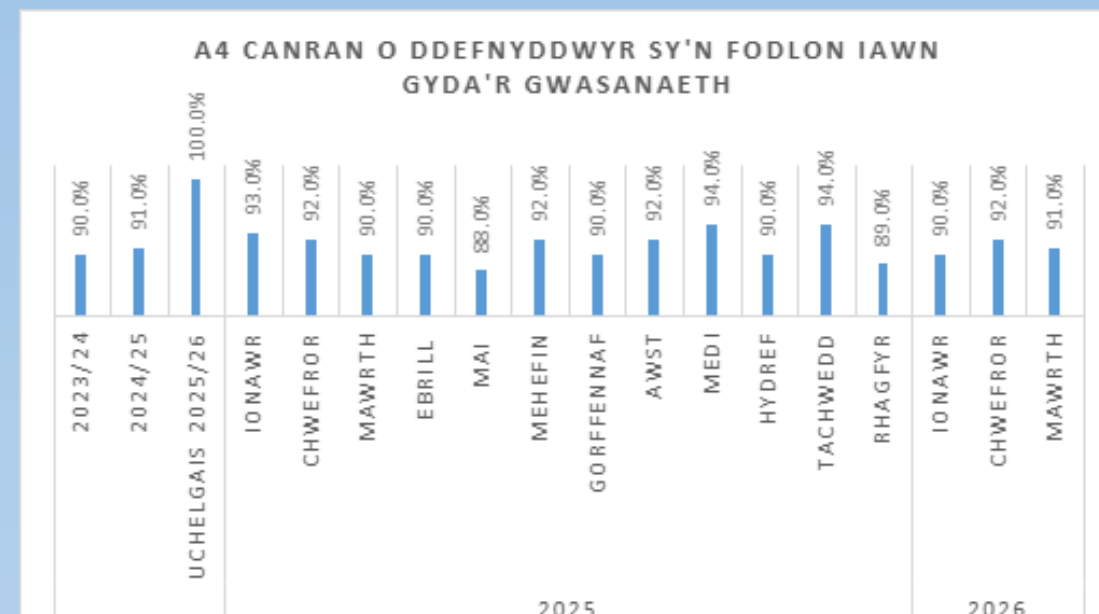
Everyone very keen to help The staff behind the desk were of invaluable help to me, "Very helpful – was a bit anxious about coming in, but staff friendly and approachable".

Of those who were not satisfied, most of the comments indicated their dissatisfaction with the opening hours, the website and the lack of material available on-line.

"More opening hours are needed", "When using the online system, it's not very clear which archive / record office the information is held", "I find it difficult to visit the Record Office it would be good if some documents were available on-line".

Opening hours were reduced to the minimum allowed by the National Archives due to cuts back in 2016. During the last two years the service was fortunate to receive SPF grant monies to employ an officer to focus on the digitisation of collections. The work will set a foundation for creating a new website where people can access material that has been digitised and also provide more information about the collections in our care.

Also, during the year the Service received a grant from the Welsh Government to improve the public areas and the sustainability of the buildings. These improvements will improve accessibility and the experience of our users.



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Economy and Community Department: Museums and Arts Service

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Head: Sioned Williams; **Assistant Head:** Roland Evans

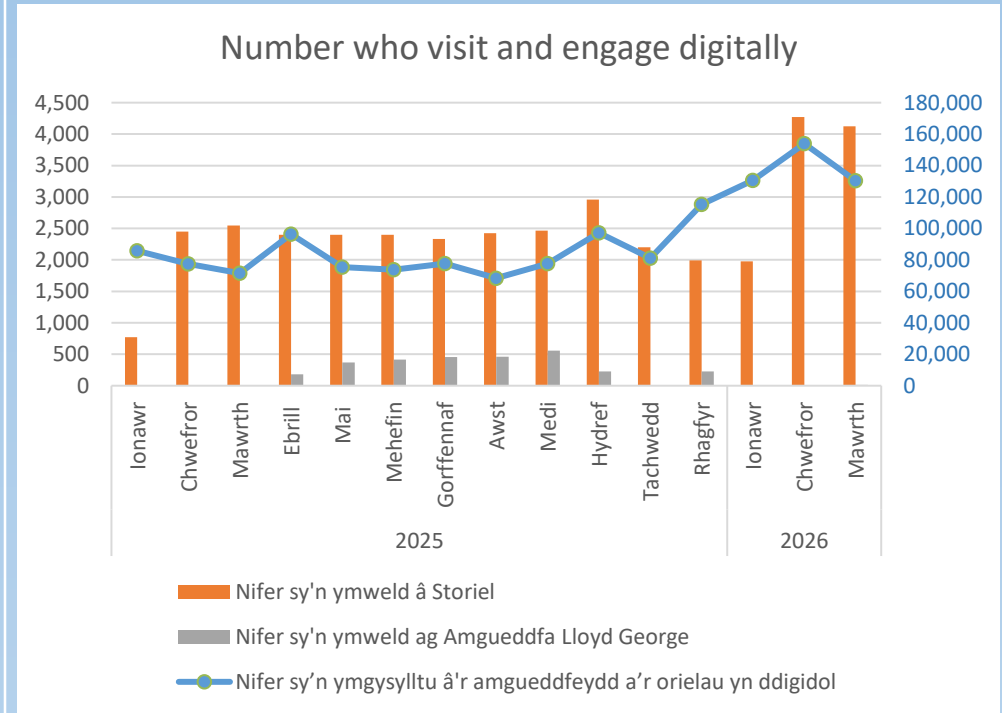
Responsible Manager: Nêst Thomas

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: Re-opened Easter 2025 with a new exhibition in place. The 2025/6 priority was to look at developing the audience and marketing with grant support from the UK Government. An action plan is in place and during 2026 the leaflets, signage and other investments will bear fruit to promote opportunities on the site for our communities, schools and visitors.
- Storiel: As a result of a CELF (National Contemporary Art Gallery for Wales Network) grant, an Audience Development and Marketing Plan has been completed with an action plan in place. A UK Government grant pays for an officer to support marketing and engagement activities to increase visitor numbers and engagement. This had led to an increase of 14.8% in the number of visits to Storiel. Also, Cyfuno activities, with a Welsh Government grant having provided opportunities for our communities by supporting and creating partnerships with others throughout the county.
- Engagement activities through grants have attracted over 2,000 people to Storiel and provided opportunities to nearly 1,000 throughout the county. Dependency on grants is challenging for planning for the future. The role of the Service is very important to facilitate and direct people to each other leading to new partnerships, e.g. Tywyn Cinema and Menter Iaf Gwynedd.
- Cumulative total visits only between April 2025 – March 2026 was 34,859
- Cumulative total of visits and digital engagement April 2025 – March 2026 was 1,212,877 including social media such as Tripadvisor, Instagram and Google.
- To respond to the deficiency in the service, Caffi Siabod has now opened in February 2026.



Economy and Community Department: Museums and Arts Service

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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

Since re-opening with a new exhibition, most people praise the experience and the staff. The Sequoia Report (Audience Development and Marketing Plan) states that the majority have an interest in Lloyd George and Welsh history. 22% lived locally (LL53). It needs to be promoted better.

"Need more for children" (this has now been added) / "My GCSE history grade is gonna thank me for coming here" / "far more interesting than anticipated" / "(Speeches) ...please bring them back." (this is afoot) / "I liked that we are encouraged to form our own opinion" / "I've learnt a great deal that I was not familiar with before. The exhibition is well worth a visit and visiting the home and street where he was brought up was a bonus. Thank you for re-opening to the public".

Storiel Feedback

The Audience Development and Marketing Plan confirms that there is a need to raise the Storiel profile; that 48% regularly visit and 24% annually. Many see it as an important contribution to Bangor and to Gwynedd's heritage and culture.

"Very interesting. The children and myself really enjoyed this" / "We are so fortunate to have such a facility" / "What a coup for STORIEL Iwanowski & Piech" / "Really good exhibitions of modern Welsh artists in the galleries when we visited." / "We travelled some distance to see this we learnt so much more about the background of promoting Welsh language culture to the youth (Celebrating 50 years of Gwaed ar y Sêr jointly with Pontio) / Some see that there is a need to invest in the history galleries, and many praise the activities for children and families but more of these are needed.

% customer satisfaction Museums and Galleries Service



Economy and Community Department: Museums and Arts Service

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Head: Sioned Williams; **Assistant Head:** Roland Evans

Responsible Manager: Nêst Thomas

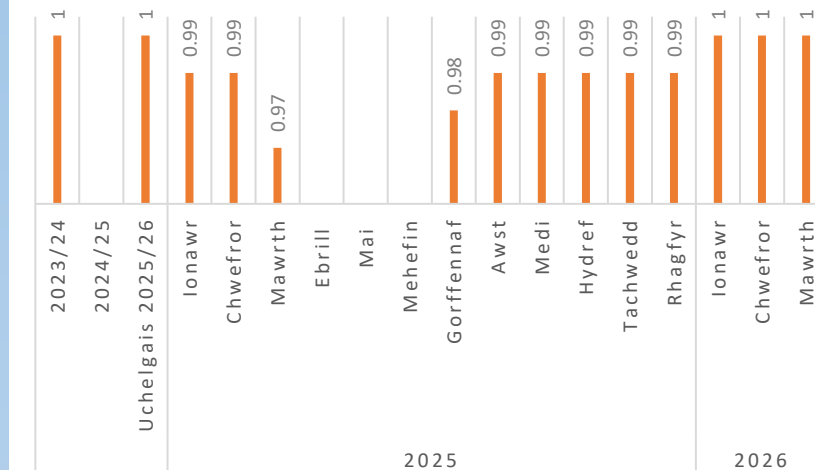
Purpose: Promote the arts for all as a medium to improve the well-being of Gwynedd residents

Performance Indicator: % of Participants benefiting through a Community Arts project

Performance overview:

- A variety of projects were provided throughout Gwynedd for various ages either directly or via grants focusing on the well-being, learning and enjoyment elements, and supported many in the sector by providing work.
- Positive feedback was obtained, between 97-100%, based on projects such as Porthi Dre, Criw Celf for 7–11-year-old children. Stiwdio Lles to support young people aged 18-30 years (an art on prescription scheme with a grant from the Arts Council, in partnership with Cwmni'r Frân Wen and Bangor University); Craft for Adult Well-being; Sgwrs a Chân (*Song and a Chat*) for those in care flats in conjunction with Canolfan William Mathias.
- Community Arts; Night Out and Supporting the Arts grants were provided to ensure that there are opportunities available across Gwynedd, e.g. Croesor, Bangor, Nefyn, Bala and Llanbedr.
- An important role of the service is to provide advice and support for individuals and organisations to encourage working in partnership. We collaborated with many organisations such as the Youth Service, Cell B, Canolfan Gerdd William Mathias, Theatr Derek Williams, Dawns i Bawb, Theatr y Ddraig, the Age Friendly Team, Arts and Health Steering Group, Ysbyty Gwynedd Gallery, etc.
- Please note that it is a challenge to get responses and observations for an appraisal by many.
- With the UK Government grant, workshops and a Culture Conference were held, bringing the sector together to identify future priorities. By now there is a commission in the pipeline to undertake a socio-economic assessment of the value of culture for Gwynedd. .
- Stiwdio Lles Feedback – *The confidence I got through Stiwdio Lles allowed me to be more confident when managing other aspects of my life that I had difficulty with them previously.*

% of participants who see a clear benefit as a result of their arts experience



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 matter to me.

Performance Indicator: Number of Gwynedd Libraries Loans

Performance Overview:

The established pattern in loans and active membership continued during 2025-26, with a small reduction in physical borrowing compared to the previous year. At the same time, digital loans continued to increase every month.

A campaign to promote the BorrowBox service was held for Gwynedd primary schools, including presentations in area meetings of the Literacy and Numeracy Network (Primary).

As part of the 'Sêr y Silffoedd' programme, visits by authors and a broad programme of creative activities for children were organised, funded via the SPF Fund – Diwylliesiant project. 999 children in Gwynedd took part in the Summer Reading Challenge - 'Gardd o Straeon' 2025.

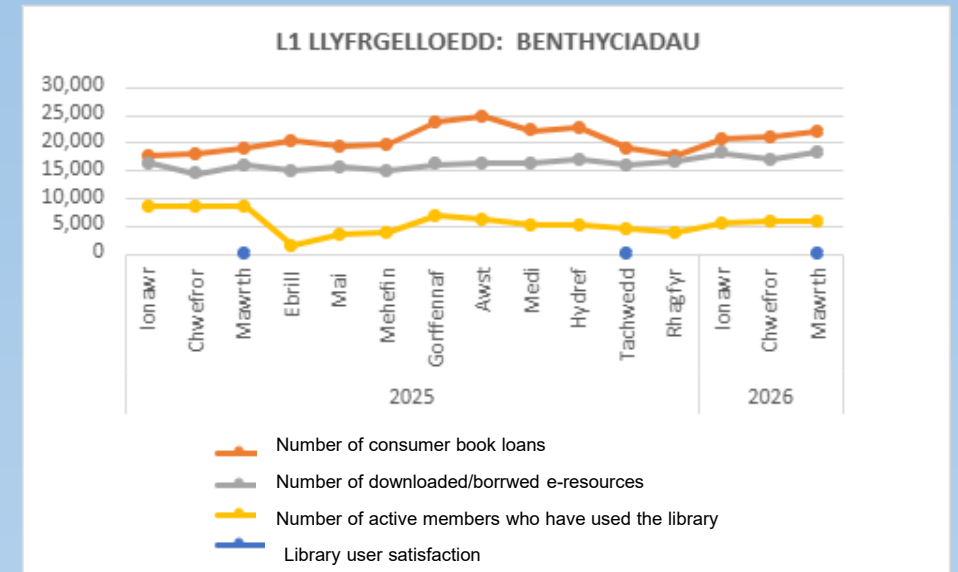
As a new development during 2025-26 a number of events for adults took place in libraries, including sessions such as Jukebox Memories, musical evenings, meet the author events and craft sessions. SPF funding – Diwylliesiant was key to enable these activities.

The Warm Welcome campaign is now active in all of Gwynedd's Libraries with the opportunity to join in activities such as playing chess, making jigsaw puzzles and a dementia choir.

We also continued to distribute SIM cards and data vouchers to individuals facing a digital emergency through the National Databank scheme.

Our 1:1 Digital Support sessions have remained stable, despite losing the AbilityNet sessions that came to an end on March 2026. In addition, many front-line staff commenced on-line Money Guiders training.

During the year, the service also collaborated on the Taith Tywyn pilot, namely a community transport service in the Tywyn area.



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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 matter to me.

Performance Indicator: % Customer Satisfaction

Performance Overview: To coincide with the 7th Library Standards Framework, we conducted a comprehensive survey during November 2025 which included a general survey in all Libraries as well as a specific survey for children and young people. We received 610 responses

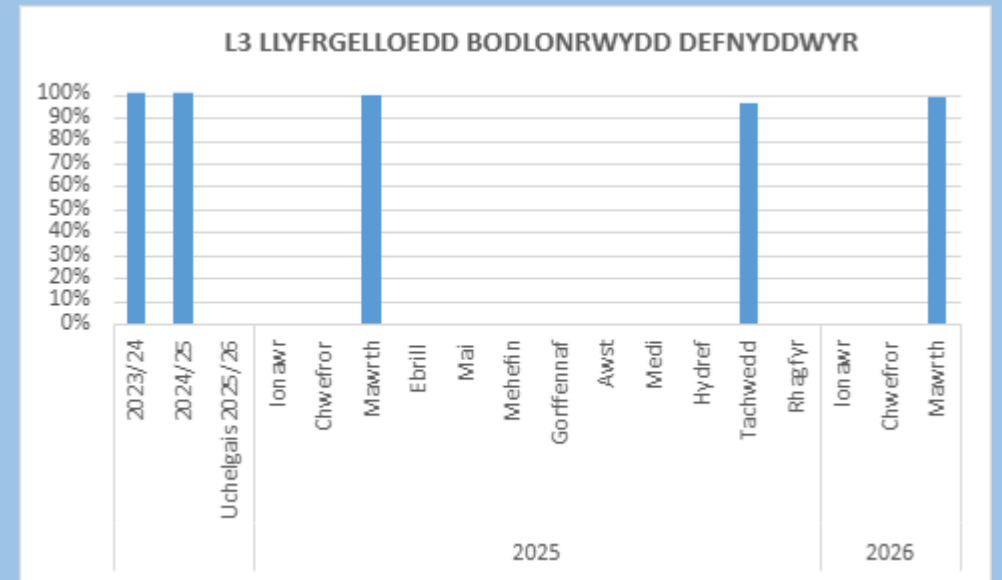
They included the following:

- 96% were completely satisfied with the service they receive from the library
- 90% believed that using the local library had helped them to learn something or develop new skills.
- 69% believed that using the library had helped them with their health and well-being
- 98% believed that the library was a safe and welcoming space to visit
- 90% believed that using this library had made a difference to their lives
- 79% believed that the Information Technology facilities were good or very good.
- 88% believed that the choice of books was good or very good
- 98% believed that the standard of customer care was good or very good
- 51% had visited the Library to borrow a book or read
- 22% had visited to use the computer, print or use Wi-Fi
- 34% had visited to attend an event or for a social reason
- 12% had visited to get support or to look for information

Most of the comments received were positive but where constructive comments were received, we try to give them consideration as part of the service's improvement process.

- "I can read books and play and eat biscuits"
- "How homely it is here and everyone so willing to help" "A useful and important part of the community"
- "my favourite place to go to feel calm" "The jigsaws! It makes a world of difference and calms the mind."
- "This library seems to be very child orientated. No groups for adults which is a shame i.e. Talking groups, Reading groups"
- "My life would be so much poorer without the library home delivery service. Thank you!"

"I use the library regularly for a variety of reasons - homeschooling, poetry group, writing group, children's activities, health and well-being sources. The library has been an essential place for my and my children's socialising, education and wellbeing"



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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 the year, 1,191 users completed the customer satisfaction questionnaire. On average, 95% of users were very satisfied with the Service.

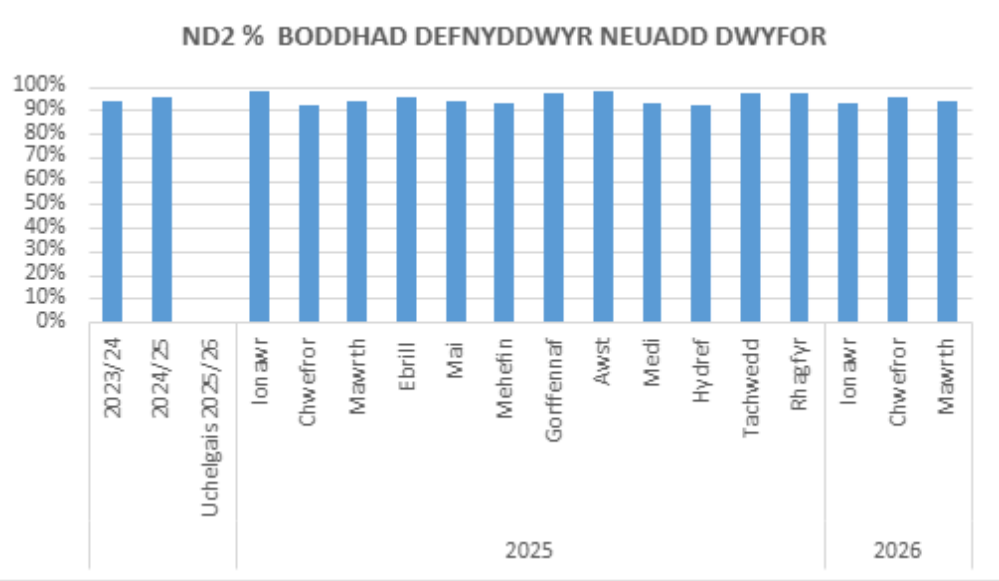
Since January, we have presented a new customer satisfaction questionnaire and this will give us an insight into points such as how our customers reach Neuadd Dwyfor, and whether they visit any other business in Pwllheli before or after the performance.

Most of the comments received during the period were positive, such as:
"Nice to see something different here"
"It was a fantastic evening!" Perhaps next time you can stage two nights?! It was nice to see Neuadd Dwyfor so full! Thank you for organising x."

The negative comments are often 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.

Neuadd Dwyfor was nominated for the independent cinema of the year award and although we did not come out top, positive comments were received about what we offer.
"A wonderful local community atmosphere. Something for everyone. Friendly helpful staff always welcoming"

We are currently planning to re-establish the user group which will provide valuable feedback and suggestions for future programme planning.



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Economy and Community Department: Neuadd Dwyfor, Pwllheli

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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:

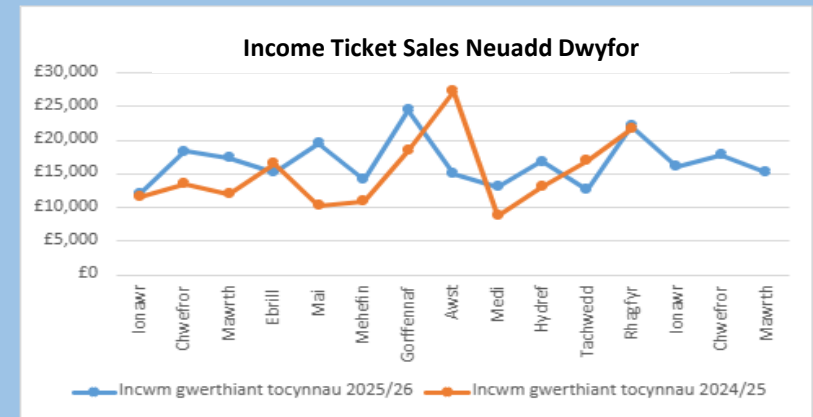
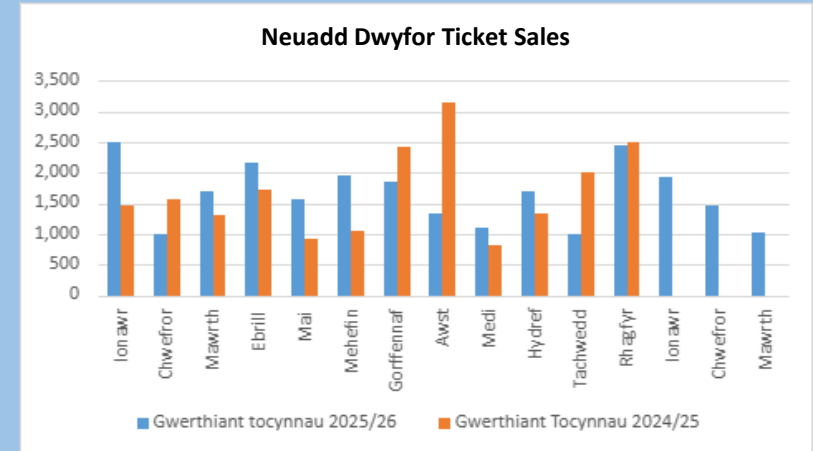
One of our strategic priorities was to enhance the variety of the programme by offering more live music events, in addition to the usual film and theatre show offerings. The popularity of these events shows that this priority is working and that we are responding positively to our users' visiting pattern and the expectations of our audiences.

A number of successful evenings were held during the year, including performance by Al Lewis, Cabarela, Welsh of the West End, and also comedy nights where the hall was full. As a result of the success of the Welsh of the West End performance in May 2025, the group has been confirmed for two additional performances in 2026.

Following feedback from users, craft events for adults were introduced as a new addition to the programme, together with establishing a Reading Club – From Book to Film, thus extending the cultural and social offer.

During the year, the costs associated with staging productions increased significantly. Consequently, although income is increasing, we must recognise that we need to be vigilant of increasing costs. We have started offering insurance when selling tickets which means an additional Income stream.

All these developments are a means of renewing the Neuadd Dwyfor offer and support the aim of appealing to new audiences while also retaining the support of existing audiences.



Total Cumulative Ticket Sales & Income	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March
Cumulative Ticket Sales 2025/26	2,178	3,753	5,726	7,586	8,918	10,019	11,723	12,731	15,172	17115	18578	19602
Cumulative Income of ticket sales and food & drink 2025/26	£15,176	£34,636	£48,809	£73,200	£88,207	£101,176	£118,002	£130,634	£152,650	£168,634	£186,369	£201,565
Cumulative Ticket Sales 2024/25	1,737	2,656	3,721	6,136	9,296	10,131	11,476	13,481	15,989	17002	18449	19924
Cumulative Income of ticket sales and food & drink 2024/25	£16,449	£26,682	£37,630	£56,059	£83,288	£92,001	£105,113	£121,986	£143,679	£155,568	£173,891	£191,266

Economy and Community Department: Tourism, Marketing and Events Service

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Head: Sioned Williams; **Assistant Head:** Roland Evans

Responsible Manager: Sian Jones

Purpose: To support a sustainable 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 saying that tourism in their area has a positive outcome

Performance Overview:

Percentage of Gwynedd residents surveyed saying that tourism in their area has a positive outcome

The data is collected in an annual survey which is completed by the 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.

In 2025, 996 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 asked to state if they generally believe that tourism has a positive, negative, or neutral impact on their community. 74.1% stated positive, 14.3% stated neutral and 10.8% stated negative.

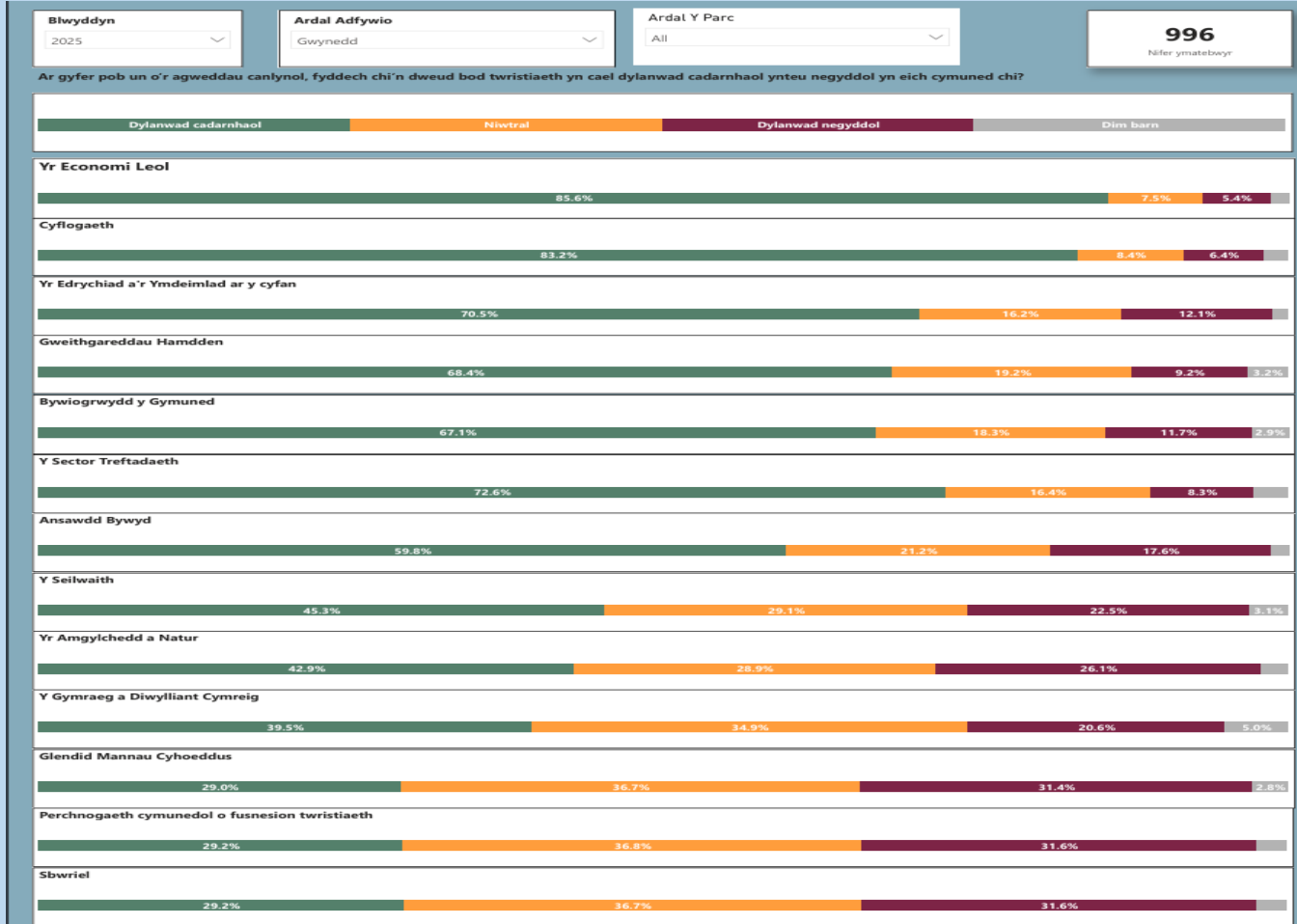
In 2024 – 74.3% stated positive, 12.1% neutral and 12.7% negative

In 2023 – 75.8% stated positive, 10.8% neutral and 13.4 % negative

To those who noted that tourism had negative consequences in their area there will be an opportunity for them to note what issues come up and to what extent they were a problem (more feedback to be seen in the table).

Specific questions are 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, the AONB Area, the Eryri National Park Authority Area within Gwynedd and the 6 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. 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.



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 visitor economy for the benefit and well-being of the people of Gwynedd; its environment, language and culture

Performance Indicator: Percentage increase in the businesses and enterprises managing to receive the Gwynedd and Eryri 35 Business Pledge

Performance Overview:

70 signed up to the Gwynedd and Eryri 35 Sustainable Business Pledge between April and March 2025/26, a percentage increase of 311% from the baseline number established in 2024-25.

The business is required 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 visitor 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**. 511 have registered on the County Ambassador scheme. (259 have passed three Bronze level modules, 172 have passed 6 modules to Silver level and 152 have passed 9 or more modules to reach Gold level)
- Code of good practice for visitors to the area - **Gwynedd and Eryri 35 Visitor Pledge** [Gwynedd and Eryri Visitor Pledge](#)
- **Gwynedd and Eryri 2035 Sustainable Business Pledge / Accreditation** [Gwynedd and Eryri Business Pledge](#)
- **Gwynedd and Eryri 35 Information Bulletin**

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Economy and Community Department: Economic Development Service

Head of Department: 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 PAYING THEIR EMPLOYEES A REAL LIVING WAGE AND TO USING MORE OF THE WELSH LANGUAGE

(Indicator of the impact of the Council providing support – every business that receives funding must commit to pay a real living wage and use more Welsh)

Performance overview:

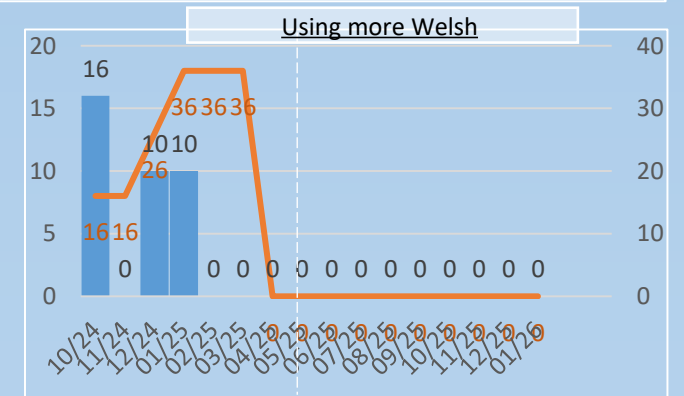
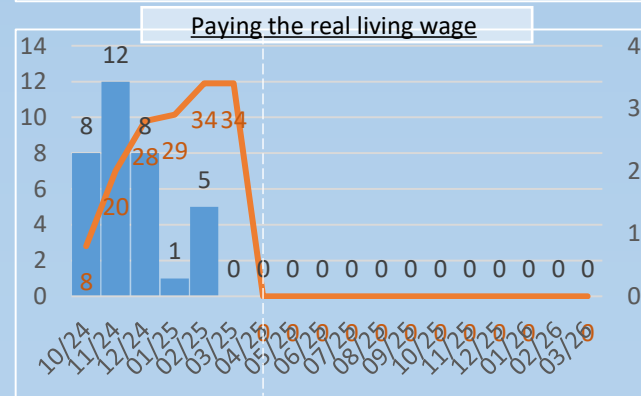
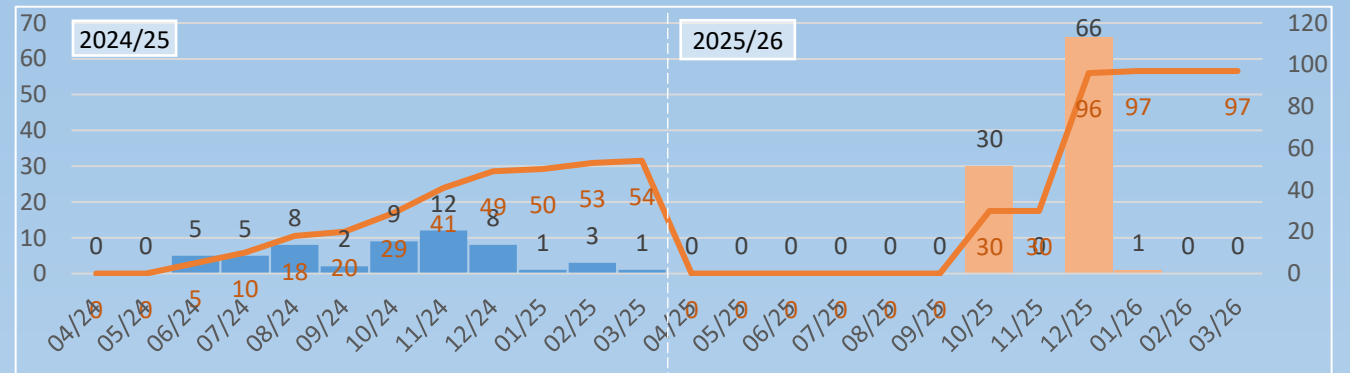
The Service makes a continual effort to promote the benefits that enterprises gain from using the Welsh language and paying a real living wage.

The Service also requires any business that receives an offer of financial assistance from the Council to commit to increasing their use of the Welsh language and to work 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 118 local enterprises this year.

The number appears in the indicator when the business claims their grant. Thus far, 97 claims have been received.

The number of businesses which pay the real living wage and who use more Welsh are monitored following completion of the work funded by the Council.



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 Note: 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.

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Economy and Community Department: Economic Development Service

Head of Department: 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 AND BUSINESSES THAT HAVE RECEIVED SUPPORT

(Management Data that counts the Service's work encouraging businesses to engage with business support and the number receiving support from the Council).

Performance Overview:

An average of 4,326 enterprises have engaged monthly with the Service during 2025/26.

Businesses have come into contact as they have received information via our regular information bulletins or by attending an activity organised by the Council. During the year, a successful Business Week was held together with a series of drop-in sessions for businesses, and a series of events in response to important matters to local businesses.

The Council has developed a Strategy to develop the Gwynedd economy that will lead their work over the next decade to support Gwynedd enterprises and ensure an economy that delivers for our people and local communities.

During 2025/26 the Service provided support to 185 businesses, including providing £1.3 million in financial assistance to businesses to reduce their costs or increase their income.

Examples of schemes supported this year included:

- A local food company starting to sell frozen meals
- A local garage started to repair electric/hybrid cars
- Help to buy laser cutting equipment to change the production method of a long-established company in the county.

Financial assistance was provided to 56 businesses in Arfon, 24 in Dwyfor and 36 in Meirionnydd.

This is the feedback from one business that has received support:

'Many thanks for all your help, and for the support of Cyngor Gwynedd to develop my business and increase resilience. It is deeply appreciated. The project is progressing well. Only yesterday I had a cold enquiry via my online course trailer on YouTube from Brazil! The international market is opening up, little by little.' Ruani Higson from Dyffryn Nantlle (www.raunihigson.co.uk/) who has received £5k for a new enterprise to offer on-line jewellery training.



This is a photo of Mirain Glyn from Llangybi who has received a contribution of £4.5k towards a new kiln that will extend her business's product range. www.prydferthflwch.com.

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Economy and Community Department: Economic Development Service

Head of Department: 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 require intensive support to help them be ready for work. The cost of the work is paid for by the Welsh Government.

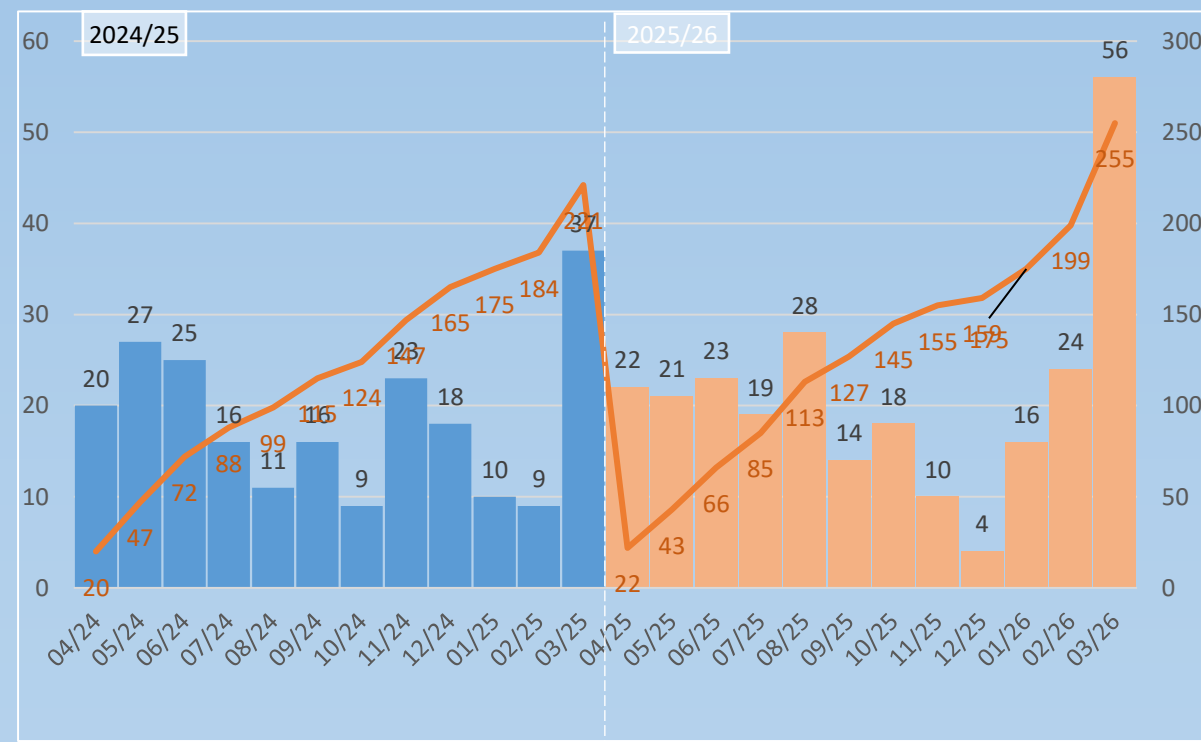
In 2025/26, 255 local people secured a job as a result of the help they have received from Gwaith Gwynedd. The number was 34 more than in 2024/25.

This is the story of one of the beneficiaries of Gwaith Gwynedd in 2025/26:

Seimon was homeless, sleeping rough, without any income when he self-referred to Gwaith Gwynedd at the advice of Job Centre Plus.

Seimon was supported to get urgent access to the local homelessness team, once he had gained access to temporary accommodation, Gwaith Gwynedd helped him to apply for jobs locally and to prepare him for an interview.

As a result, within a month Seimon moved from sleeping rough to temporary accommodation and to securing a job. To ensure that his success was sustainable, Gwaith Gwynedd also provided him with a bus pass so that he could travel to work until he received his first pay packet.



Key: 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.

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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 to gain the required skills for a better job or to resolve an issue that prevents them from increasing their hours).

Performance Overview:

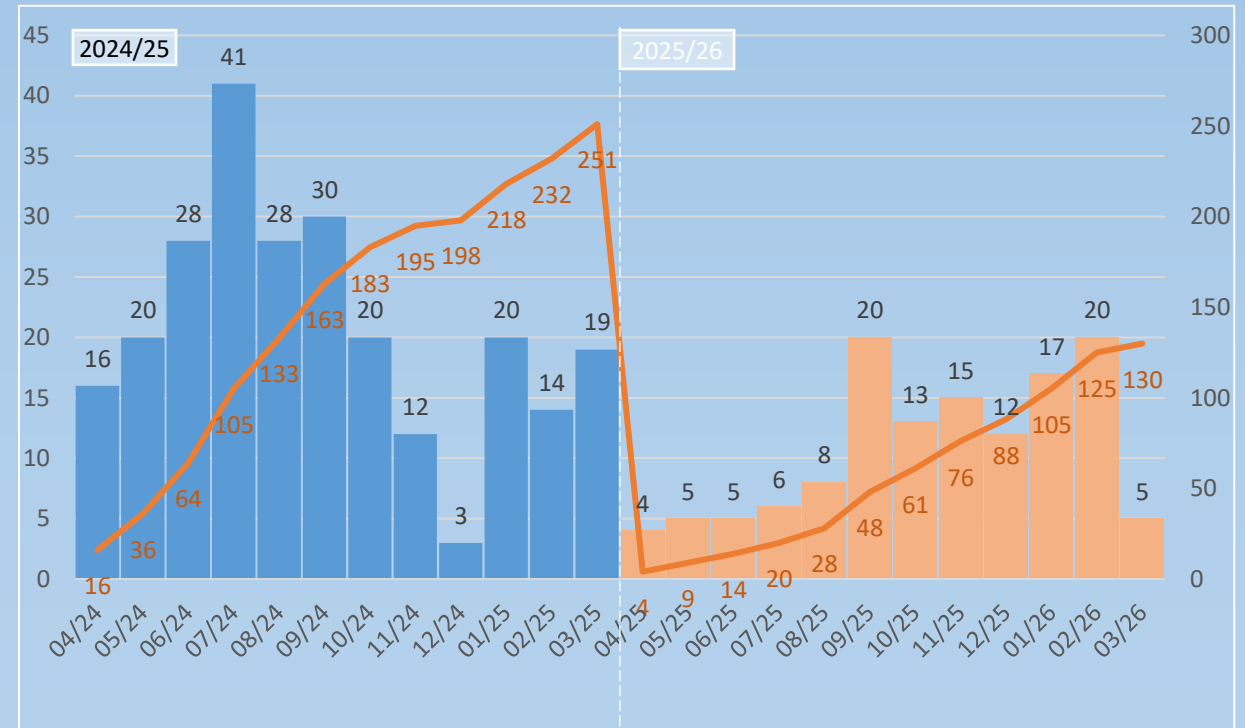
Residents who work fewer hours than they could are a feature of the labour market in the county. There are also many residents who do not earn a salary that is enough to meet their needs.

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 acquiring 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 were 130 people in Gwynedd with an improved ability to earn a good salary as a result of the Service's support in 2025/26. 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, but the momentum of the work has now returned.

The change from revenue funding in the Local Growth Fund endangers the future of this work.



Key: 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.

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Economy and Community Department: Regeneration Programmes Service

Head: Sioned Williams; **Assistant Head:** Llyr Jones

Responsible Manager: Eyllt Rhys Jones

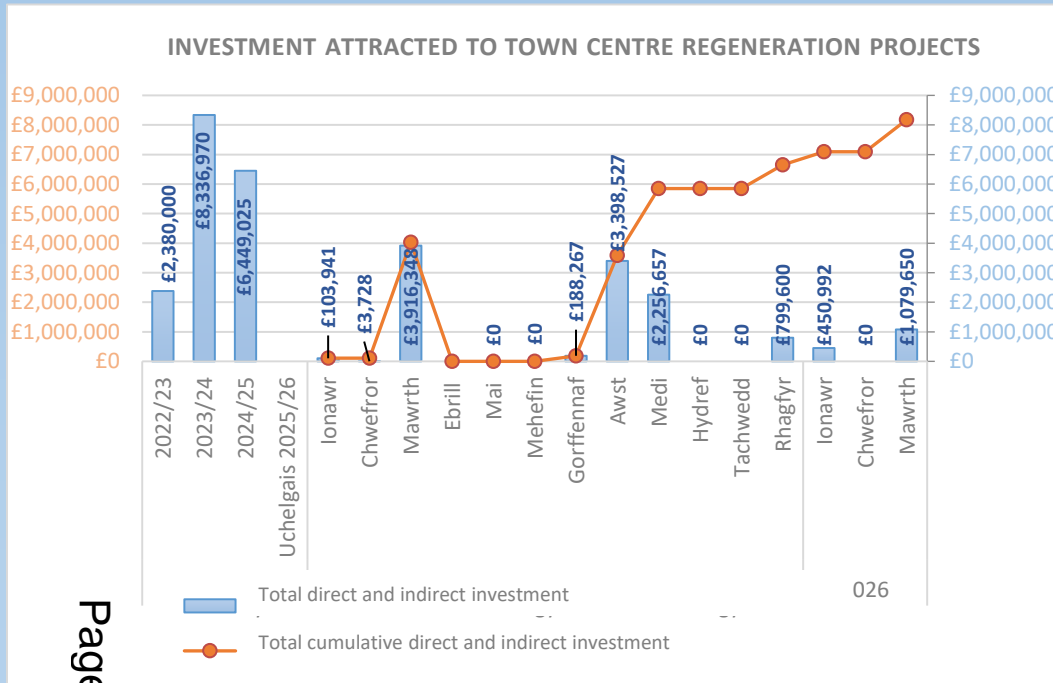
Purpose: Develop and manage regeneration programmes to bring life back into town centres, to make Gwynedd a better place to live.

Performance Measure: Investment in Town Centre Regeneration Programmes

Performance Overview:

The Regeneration Programmes Service is responsible for targeting financial support from funding sources to invest in the regeneration schemes in commercial centres. The Service is responsible for bringing key officers/partners together to develop and form any plan. This measurement is based on the offer letters received from a funding stream which makes it possible to move from a developmental phase to an implementation phase and the Service's ability to formally follow the Project Management steps. The sums secured annually vary and depend on funders and the regeneration programmes of external bodies.

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The Regeneration Programmes Service has managed to:

- Ensure a budget of up to £1M to work with property owners in Bangor to improve the appearance and bring empty properties back into use in the City;
- Work jointly with partnerships to develop schemes in town centres in response to the Placemaking Plans for Bangor, Caernarfon, Pwllheli, Porthmadog, Dolgellau and Bala. The outcome to this included ensuring full use of Placemaking and Transforming Towns funding by supporting the work of upgrading Y Ganolfan and Cob Crwn in Porthmadog, Llety Arall, Caernarfon along with preparatory work for the external space at Cei Llechi Caernarfon and the Roman Camp, Bangor.
- Complete the implementation and closure of Gwynedd Ni Shared Prosperity Fund schemes (including 64 schemes by Local Councils) which included schemes such as work to upgrade playing fields, toilets and bus stations across the County, together with a wide cross-section of schemes via Diwylliesiant2 (Diwylliesiant Project – Shared Prosperity Fund) for the benefit of Gwynedd communities, maximising the anticipated outputs and outcomes.
- Ensure governance arrangements for a comprehensive package of projects to be implemented via the Pride in Place Impact Fund (UK Government), to include a second round of the Fund to the Local Councils.
- Continue to implement the Llewyrch o'r Llechi scheme, monitoring the progress of external partner schemes whilst implementing a series of town centre interventions. Several projects were seen such as Yr Aelwyd building in Blaenau Ffestiniog, signage work in Bethesda and the Welcome block in Parc Padarn being completed.
- Support in implementing a package of schemes in the coastal area, via the Brilliant Basics Fund, Visit Wales, such as improvements to Morfa Bychan entrance, Upgrading the Aberdyfi Jetty and improvements to the road to the beach at Abersoch.
- Co-ordinate the work of arranging and undertaking the ballot for the Bangor Business Improvement Area and Hwb Caernarfon.

Economy and Community Department: Regeneration Programmes Service

Head: Sioned Williams; **Assistant Head:** Llyr Jones

Responsible Manager: Esyllt Rhys Jones

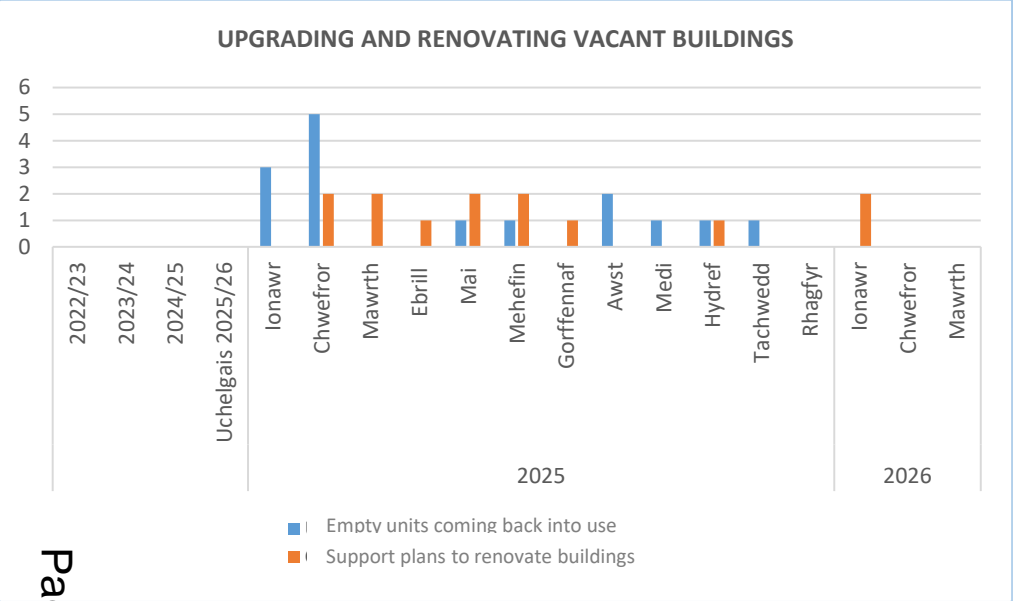
Purpose: To develop and manage regeneration programmes to bring life back into town centres, to make Gwynedd a better place to live.

Performance 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.

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The Regeneration Programmes Service has managed to:

- Work on coordinating the cross-departmental Empty Properties Group, identifying interventions and support, and advancing to respond to the Action Plan has progressed significantly;
- As part of the Pilot Scheme for Empty Properties in Bangor, secured a budget for working with property owners in Bangor to improve the appearance and bring empty properties back into use in the City. Working with 6 owners to develop and implement plans;
- Support to bring 15 properties in town centres back into use, including properties that received financial support through Transforming Towns, the Shared Prosperity Fund, Arfor and Town Centre Loans. Examples included Y Maes, Cricieth, Aelwyd yr Urdd Blaenau Ffestiniog and Lle Da, Caernarfon.
- Enforcement arrangements are in place with various properties to move the agenda forward. Supporting building refurbishment schemes;
- 13 buildings in Gwynedd's town centres have received financial support to renovate them and improve their image as a result of Cyngor Gwynedd's support through the Transforming Towns and the Shared Prosperity Fund. Examples included Y Tŵr, Pwllheli, 4 properties in Caernarfon purchased (with support) by Galeri Caernarfon, and Eifion Stores, Blaenau Ffestiniog.
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Economy and Community Department: Community Support Service

Head: Sioned Williams; **Assistant Head:** Llyr Jones

Responsible Manager: Lindsey Ellis

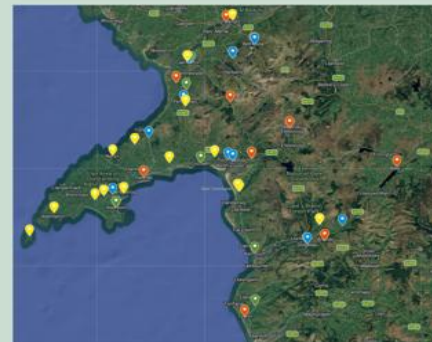
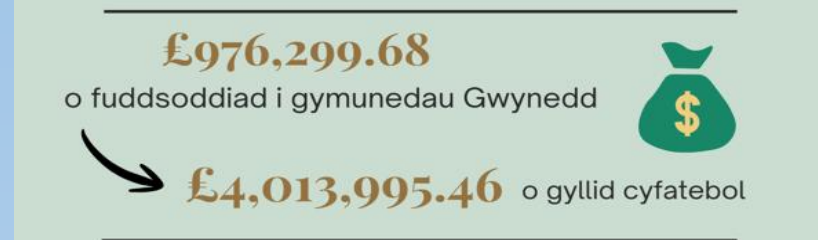
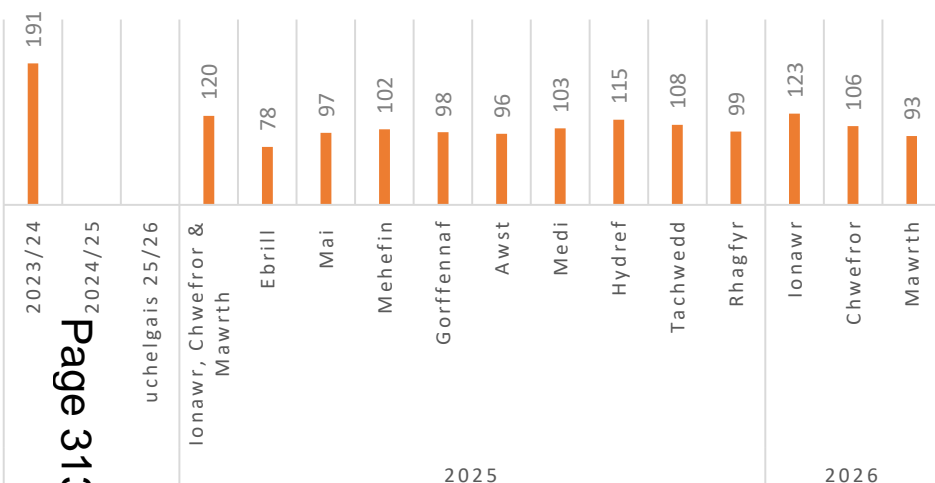
Purpose: To support local groups to play a key role in the regeneration process to improve communities.

Performance Indicator: Number of groups that have received advice or support – 335

Performance Overview:

205/2026 has been a busy year of investment and supporting community hubs to realise projects via the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF), developing 'Ardal Ni' schemes across the county, and allocating over £1.6m of grants. The integration of Supporting People work has been a key step towards strengthening more resilient and sustainable communities.

No. of groups who received advice or support



46
o brosiectau wedi derbyn grantiau





CEFNOGI CYMUNEDAU

£976,299.68

o fuddsoddiad i gymunedau Gwynedd

CRONFA CEFNOGI CYMUNEDAU

£84,348.77 o fuddsoddiad i 12 prosiect Refeniw	£50,034.40 o fuddsoddiad i 7 prosiect Cyfalaf	7 gwelliant i adelladau cymunedol	11 prosiect i wella cynladwyedd	2 swydd wedi ei greu
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CRONFA'R DEGWM

£48,999.99 o fuddsoddiad i 16 prosiect	£4,200.00 cyfraniad i 14 Eisteddfodau lleol	5 prosiect a arddangosodd hanes a threfladaeth	9 prosiect i wella lleoliadau cymunedol pwysig
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CRONFA CEFNOGI ADYFYWIO CYMUNEDAU (CFFG)

Wedi ei ariennu gan Lywodraeth y DU / Funded by UK Government

£792,916.52 o fuddsoddiad i prosiect	£3,973,927.92 o gyllid cyfatebol i prosiectau	16 prosiect i wella cynladwyedd	15 grwpiau cymunedol a gafodd eu cefnogi
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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 projects that have received support for development – 337

Annual Overview

Support from the service has enabled investment, safeguarding assets and developing community projects, with a focus on long-term sustainability.

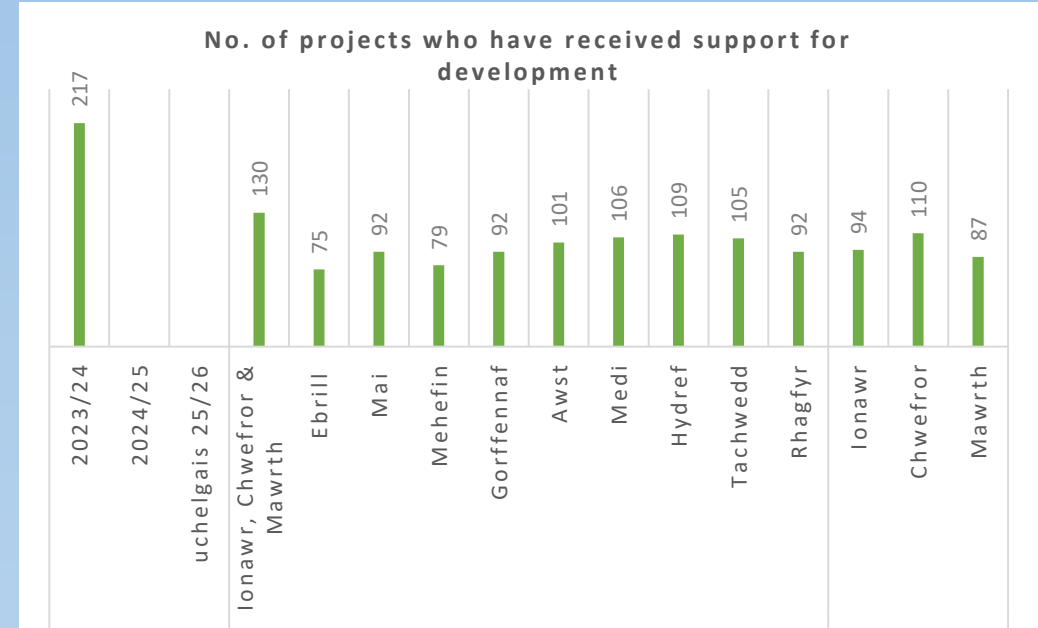
The team have assisted 337 community projects across a wide range of activities – from capital projects to enterprises that strengthen community resilience via local activities, governance and developing sustainable models and job creation.

This has included enabling 22 capital projects, supporting 11 to develop plans, and working on 7 plans to ensure community use of Council assets.

Examples of projects completed this year:

- ✓ Menter Rabar (Abersoch) and Menter y Tŵr (Pwllheli)
- ✓ 2 sustainable community transport schemes in Meirionnydd.
- ✓ Improvements to 7 village halls
- ✓ Upgrading Rhyd Ddu Outdoor Centre and Lle'r Llan (Llan Ffestiniog)
- ✓ Extension to Seren Fach Nursery, Brithdir
- ✓ Garndolbenmaen play park
- ✓ Purchase of the former Deiniolen library with £300k of funding

The work of the 'Ardal Ni' Regeneration Framework has developed strongly with 13 live local action plans, development frameworks in 9 areas, and a continuous conversation with communities to inform priorities.



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Economy and Community Department: Supporting People

Head: Sioned Williams; **Assistant Head:** Llyr Jones

Responsible Manager: Lindsey Ellis

Purpose: Helping the people of Gwynedd to cope with cost-of-living challenges. Help people to get support, information and access to a service and advice that ensures fairness for all.

Charis Emergency Vouchers
101 vouchers created, the majority of these were food vouchers.
Financial total of vouchers: £5,011.80

Well-being Champions have helped 498 people to maximise income and have organised 4 cost-of-living events throughout the county

Pension Credit Campaign
Households targeted: 162
Households claimed: 21
Total annual: £ 62,118.54
Total lifetime: £ 604,859.51

Community Hubs Network
A scheme to transfer the Community Hubs Network to a more integrated and sustainable model, using libraries as the main access point and draft an area-by-area model based on local needs and assets.

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Summary 25/26

- Community Resilience Programme worth £820k supporting vulnerable people across Gwynedd
- A focus on prevention: cost of living, loneliness, digital skills
- Work through a wide network of partners and community hubs
- Direct impact on well-being, independence and preventative services and activities.

Strengths

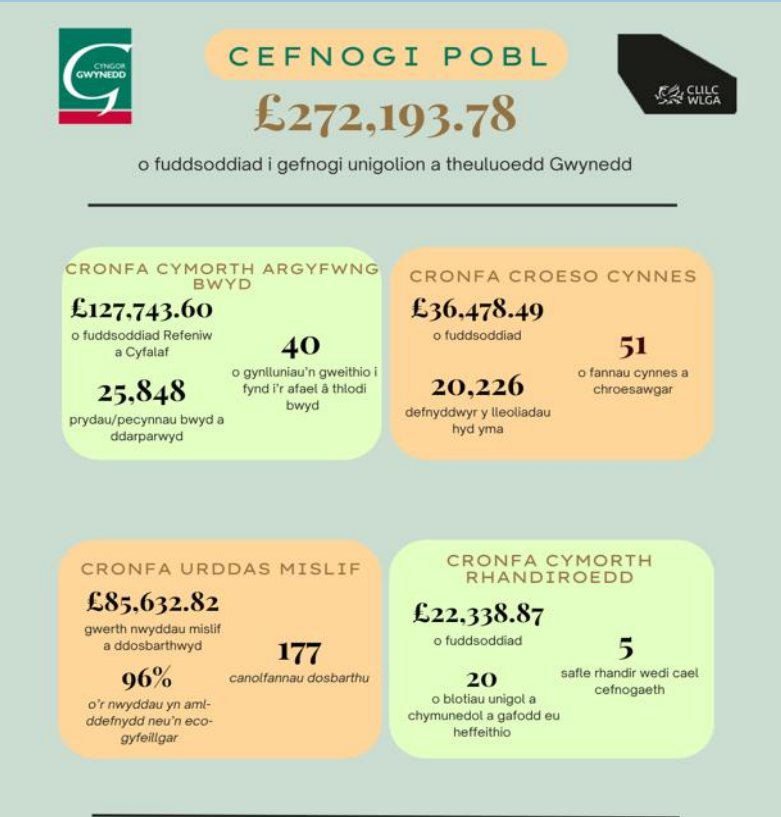
- Stronger joint working between partners (CAB, Ability Net, Age Cymru, Mantell Gwynedd, Adra, community transport schemes)
- Reaching remote communities
- Personal help (1:1) making a real difference

Challenges

- The demand and complexity of needs are increasing
- Pressure on resources and the sustainability of some schemes
- Variety in quality and provision across areas

Key Message

The programme has a clear positive impact but the provider models need to be strengthened and the long-term sustainability ensured, which has led to a Community Hubs Network transformation scheme



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.

% Economy and Community Department Staff who have completed Safeguarding training

90.1%

% Economy and Community Department Staff who have completed VAWDASV training

92.8%

MEETING	Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee
DATE	June 18, 2026
TITLE	Performance Report of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services Department
REASON FOR SCRUTINY	To report to the Scrutiny Committee on the performance of the Corporate Services Department
AUTHOR	Ian Jones – Head of Corporate Services Department
AELOD CABINET	Councillor Llio Elenid Owen

1. Why is scrutiny necessary?

In order for Committee Members to be satisfied that I, the Cabinet Member for the Department of Corporate Services, have a grasp on 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 field that I am responsible for as Cabinet Member for the Corporate Services Department. This includes outlining the latest regarding the pledges in the Council Plan and the Department's day-to-day work for the period up to the end of March 2026.

We are implementing the Council Plan for 2023-28, and I herein report on progress made to the end of March 2026. All matters have been the subject of discussion and have been scrutinised by myself at a performance challenge meeting, and I am satisfied with the Department's performance.

2.2 Rationale and justification

Performance of Projects in the Council Plan

The Corporate Services Department is leading on six projects within the various priority areas of the Council's Plan 2023 – 2028, namely:

1. Keeping the Benefit Local
2. Promoting the Use of the Welsh Language by Gwynedd Residents
3. Workforce Planning
4. Ensuring Fairness for Everyone
5. Women in Leadership
6. Strategic Review of Health and Safety Management

I am very satisfied with the work undertaken during 2025-26, and Appendix 1 outlines the progress made against the milestones set for the six priorities.

2.3 The Department's day-to-day work

Appendix 2 includes performance measures for the Department's Services. It includes for the latest period, context and comments explaining the performance of all areas during 2025-26.

The Corporate Services Department has several different services and various areas of responsibility. I wish to note my appreciation of the work of all the officers in the Department and recognise the key contribution they make to supporting the work of the Council.

3.Consultation

The report has been produced based on the information and content of a the latest challenging and supporting meeting on the performance of the Corporate Services Department, attended by the Chief Executive, Head of Department, Assistant Head, Service Managers and myself.

4. Appendices

Appendix 1: Council Plan Priority Areas Progress Reports

Appendix 2: Corporate Services Department 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 and Project	Overview	What we want to achieve during the THIRD year 2025-26 (milestones):	Has the milestone been completed	What has been achieved during the year and the impact (or likely impact) on the people of Gwynedd? Information or evidence should also be included to confirm this (measures or data confirming, etc.)
Corporate Services - Keeping the Benefit Local	<p>The Council is responsible for purchasing a significant amount of goods and services from external companies and we are keen to see local businesses competing and winning these contracts to ensure that as much of the Council's expenditure as possible remains local.</p> <p>This project will ensure that we make every effort to support local businesses to apply for opportunities, within the relevant rules, whilst ensuring at the same time that the Council receives</p>	<p>1. Develop a new procurement strategy to embed the principles and aim of the plan to keep the benefit local.</p>	<p align="center">Yes</p>	<p>A new procurement strategy has been developed and approved by the Cabinet during the year.</p> <p>We took the opportunity to engage with different stakeholders in its development, and the new strategy was scrutinised by the Corporate Committee in the autumn, and was also approved here.</p> <p>The new strategy identifies seven priority areas which include:</p> <p>local benefits, zero carbon, value for money, social value, technology, governance arrangements and the Welsh language.</p> <p>During 2026/27 we will be working on drafting and implementing an action plan.</p>
		<p>2. Report on the Council's procurement performance – local expenditure.</p>	<p align="center">Yes</p>	<p>We have calculated and reported on the Council's procurement expenditure with local businesses over the year.</p> <p>As in the previous year, we see that the main areas where expenditure leaves the County continue to be Specialist Construction schemes, IT Systems and Adult and Children's Residential Care.</p>

	<p>the best possible value for the money that is spent.</p>			<p>Purchases in areas such as Domiciliary Care, Housing and Support, School Transport, Equipment Hire and Recycling is being provided by local companies.</p>
		<p>3. Raise awareness of the project and the objectives of buying locally, gaining social value and reducing carbon (climate) with council officers and County businesses.</p>	<p>Partially</p>	<p>Training sessions were developed and conducted with officers who procure on a regular basis to raise awareness and understanding of the objectives of buying locally, gaining social value and reducing carbon.</p> <p>Officers held 'meet the buyer' events to highlight these procurement arrangements and assessment criteria.</p> <p>We also took part in awareness-raising events for businesses in conjunction with Business Wales and Adra.</p> <p>We have also shared messages through the staff bulletin and supported businesses in relation to transferring to the new national procurement regulations.</p>

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

Department & Project	Overview	What we want to achieve during the THIRD year 2025-26 (milestones):	Has the milestone been completed	What has been achieved during the year and the impact (or likely impact) on the people of Gwynedd? Information or evidence should also be included to confirm this (measures or data confirming, etc)
<p>Corporate Services</p> <p>– Promoting the use of the Welsh language by Gwynedd Residents</p>	<p>We will conduct specific projects that will promote the use of Welsh and increase the opportunities to use the Welsh language in the community. This will include increasing the use of Welsh in engaging with public and community services.</p>	<p>1.Implement the Gwynedd Language Strategy Work Programme 2023-2033.</p> <p>The language strategy is divided into 5 priorities namely:</p> <p>Early years The language of learning Work and Service The community Research and technology</p> <p>Work that promotes the use of the Welsh language by the residents of Gwynedd is reported here by the Welsh Language and Scrutiny team and is primarily relevant to the priority area of Work and Service, Community and Research and Technology and the work done as a result of the grant awarded to Menter Iaith Gwynedd to realise some elements of Gwynedd's language strategy and contribute towards staff costs and projects 2025-2026.</p>	<p align="center">Yes</p>	<p>Work and Service Priority Area</p> <p>We worked with the Welsh Language Sub-group of the Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board to produce digital resources for public organisations that dispel myths about the Welsh language and help to recruit Welsh speakers.</p> <p>Management teams were given training and a video was produced for the welcome workshop to continue trying to improve internal compliance with the Council's language policy and Welsh Language Standards. We continued to collaborate with others and participated in the Welsh Language Commissioner's Increasing Internal Use Group to help promote the Welsh language in workplaces across Wales. A workshop was attended on the formation of the Welsh Government's new language skills framework to provide views on what would be beneficial to assist employers and the public in understanding and using the Welsh language.</p> <p>We worked with officers from Menter Iaith Gwynedd and the Business Support Team, to work towards increasing businesses' use of the Welsh language and to address this during the Gwynedd Business Week, Shwmae's/Su'mae day and Mentrau Iaith Cymru's Happy to Chat Day. Around 200 businesses were targeted to display a poster stating that they are happy</p>

to speak Welsh with customers and support learners to chat in Dolgellau, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Penrhyndeudraeth, Tywyn and Bro Peris. There are plans to target more businesses in the county.

The adoption of Twf – The Welsh at Work Charter in conjunction with the Welsh Trades Union Congress and local representatives from Unison, GMB and Unite unions was given the seal of approval by the Cabinet. The charter supports workers, their trade unions and employers to work together to create bilingual workplaces as well as placing emphasis on increasing the use of Welsh at work and on ensuring that employees have access to representation by trade unions in their chosen language. An officer was also a member of a panel discussing the importance of Welsh in the workplace at the National Eisteddfod and what others can do to increase the use of Welsh in the workplace.

Work began on the establishment of the Welsh Language Project Board to have a better strategic overview of the work being done to promote the Welsh language across all departments and to agree on future priorities.

Early Years Priority Area

Menter Iaith Gwynedd worked with Sesiwn Fawr Dolgellau to organise a Nursery Rhymes Event for parents and children to encourage people to sing traditional nursery rhymes to children. A playlist was also produced which was professionally recorded so that people could listen and sing together at home.

Learning Priority Area

Over the course of the year various activities were carried out by Menter Iaith Gwynedd, in collaboration with the schools and the education department, to promote the Welsh language. This included a schoolyard games play session in Welsh at Ysgol y Garnedd in Bangor and activities for children, with the opportunity to discuss with the parents, at Ysgol y Faenol in Bangor during their summer fair. We worked with officers of the Gwynedd Language Charter to organise a tour by Gareth the Orangutan and Hywel Pitts to 5 secondary schools, with elements of the show discussing which jobs need the Welsh language after leaving school. As well as this, a school music tour was organised, with Ed Holden doing rapping workshops and Mei Emrys conducting commentary workshops with visits to the secondary schools of Brynrefail, Tywyn, Ardudwy, Friars, Moelwyn and Dyffryn Nantlle. An officer also attended a meeting of the schools' Language Council and held a language awareness session and discussed how the initiative can support them to promote the Welsh language at the school.

The 'Arwyr Iaith' project was carried out again this year, in conjunction with the Education Department, at Ysgol Ffridd y Llyn and Ysgol Abererch. The project was led by arts facilitators, and followed the special pack created which focuses on praising individuals who have just returned from the immersion centres to their mother school, and the importance of the children already in school speaking Welsh with new arrivals. Although this is a project in schools, the concluding events are performances for parents, and an opportunity for them to come in and have a performance from the children that is full of positive messages about the Welsh language, its history and the importance of using it. The families of the pupils of the Immersion Units were also spoken to at the end of the children's time at the centres.

The community

In accordance with the terms of the grant, several community activities to promote the use of the Welsh language were provided by Menter Iaith Gwynedd. Several activities and community chat sessions were held for Welsh learners, one in every well-being area in Gwynedd, which gave learners the opportunity to practise their Welsh and gain confidence in an informal atmosphere. Community organisations were supported to increase use of the Welsh language locally, including the Rhiwlas hall committee, a group in Dinas Mawddwy and the Urdd groups for young people in Llanystumdwy and in Penrhosgarnedd. Community events also took place in Bethesda, Bala, Botwnnog and Tywyn about how to increase the use of the Welsh language there.

Music was used to attract adults to the Welsh language, by holding monthly Welsh music evenings at the Nelson pub in Bangor, and a 'Bang Bang Bangor Ucha' night was organised in upper Bangor, which was a series of gigs in several venues. As part of the St David's Day celebrations there was a successful gig by Gwilym Bowen Rhys in Tywyn.

The focus was on attracting families who do not normally use the Welsh language socially to social events e.g. lantern making workshops in Bala, and the band 'Calan's' gig in Llithfaen and a community disco in Llanbedrog as part of the St David's Day celebrations in the area. St David's Day parades were also organised in Tywyn, Llanbedrog and Bangor using match funding from Cyngor Gwynedd (Storiel) and the Lottery to fund the various events.

St David's Day parades were organised by Menter Iaith in Tywyn, Llanbedrog and Bangor using match funding from Cyngor Gwynedd (Storiel) and the Lottery to fund

				<p>the various events as well as running a Young Promoters project which gave groups of young people the opportunity to organise their own gigs in Blaenau Ffestiniog, Tywyn and Dolgellau.</p> <p>A Support for Sports Clubs Project was developed to increase/continue the use of the Welsh language following consultation with sports clubs. Clubs – Felinheli FC, Cae Glyn FC, Bethesda Rugby Club, Caernarfon RFC, Dolgellau FC and Llanystumdwy FC came to a special event to see the contents of the pack and input ideas in Porthmadog in mid-August.</p> <p>See more details about the Gwynedd language forum, the placenames work programme and Project 15 below under 2, 3 and 4.</p> <p>The Council is now a member of the WISERD Network which brings together academics and language planners to discuss research about Welsh and other minority languages and to identify gaps.</p> <p>It is also pleasing to report that departments are now liaising with language advisers in the procurement of large information technology systems to ensure that they comply with the Welsh Language Standards.</p> <p>See more details about this workstream under 4 and 5.</p>
		2.Implement the Place Names Work Programme 2025/26	Yes	<p>During the year attention was paid to increasing the visibility of Welsh names as well as promoting them. We provided advice on house and street names, installed new street signs, held workshops in primary and secondary schools and also advised other bodies and organisations.</p> <p>We worked with Engineers from the Arfon and Dwyfor area to install around 40 new street signs and discussed a list of other street signs to be installed during the next</p>

financial year. It was also arranged for Welsh language signs to be placed at the beaches of Porth Neigwl (*Hell's Mouth*) and Porthor (*Whistling Sands*).

Others such as Conwy Council and Monmouth Council were also advised on our internal processes relating to property naming, a digital names map and a names app for staff, and advice was given to Caernarfon Civic Society about promoting a list of old Caernarfon Street Name plaques.

There was good feedback from pupils at Ysgol Maenofferen and Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen to the placenames workshop. More 'Yr Enw a'r Hanes' articles were published on the Intranet to promote Welsh names for staff and a document on Bangor place names was provided to Menter Iaith Gwynedd. We also contributed to the Welsh Government's National Place Names Forum including sharing good practice materials created by the project.

Following public enquiries, pressure was put on Natural Resources Wales to change the name of a forest at Braichmelyn in Bethesda and to gather evidence on the use of the name 'Pistyll Dafn' to convince the Ordnance Survey to use the name on official maps. Concern was also expressed to the Welsh Language Commissioner about the lack of use of native Welsh names by the Ordnance Survey.

This was the final year of the project and during the lifetime of the project it was possible to address the main objectives of promoting Welsh names on Council properties, individual houses, businesses, streets, villages and destinations, geographical features.

It became clear that the main problem is that the Council has no power to change names other than street names. It was decided that it was not feasible to change all street signs to a Welsh language sign and that it would be preferable to change signs to Welsh only

				<p>when signs need to be replaced, following the completion of a pilot to change street signs in Trefor. The pilot scheme was completed this year and the main lesson learnt was that it is necessary to check in detail if the street/estate has been adopted by the Council in the past as it can greatly affect the location and exact wording of new signs as well as the timetable for the installation of signs.</p> <p>It also became clear that Ordnance Survey wanted to know who has the right or authority over a name and evidence in favour of supporting the name change if name changes were to be made on official Ordnance Survey maps. Without us being an 'authority' (i.e. entitled) on the name it can be difficult to persuade the Ordnance Survey to change names on their maps. From the point of view of protecting geographical names on official maps, it has therefore become clear that the Council can only do anything firm and concrete through political intervention and strong, specific legislation.</p>
		3.Further develop Project 15 to increase the use of Welsh by children and young people	Yes	<p>Mentera was commissioned to manage and create content for Project 15's social media and provide a report on potential future options for the project. It is pleasing to note that there has been growth in the number of followers on all social platforms with special attention given to the main platforms used by young people, namely TikTok and Instagram.</p> <p>Posts were published relating to Caernarfon Food Festival, AI characters, LGBTQ Pride Week, the Gwynedd landscape, the Urdd Eisteddfod, Facts about Gwynedd in 15 seconds, the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show and collaborations with groups such as Bangor Welsh Students' Union and Llŷn Surf Club as well as various influencers. One video clip of Oshi G, a 16-year-old agricultural influencer from Gwynedd, about</p>

				<p>popular clothing in the show attracted over 161,000 viewers.</p> <p>A year-end report was received which stated that Instagram's reach over the year had increased to 42,000 and that 382,000 had viewed the content of a Tik Tok account. The report also noted that the project was not sustainable without adequate investment of around £35,000 a year which would allow content creation and a healthy budget to collaborate with individuals and influencers.</p>
		4.Maintaining and Developing Fforwm Iaith Gwynedd	Yes	<p>This year the Gwynedd Language Forum focused on creating a language strategy for the forum. Although the strategy is not yet finalised, sub-groups have been created to look more closely at challenges facing certain areas. The forum now has 3 sub-groups namely business, communities and young people.</p> <p>The Young People sub-group has been established for some time and has consulted young people aged 16-18 about their attitudes to the Welsh language. There were 200 responses to the questionnaire which was shared among 16–18-year-olds living or working in Gwynedd, and 4 focus groups were held to get more detail on their attitudes. The data highlighted that there is a difference in the use of and confidence to use the Welsh language on social media where the Welsh language is at its weakest, and a dip in those who are confident in writing in Welsh, compared to speaking it.</p> <p>Discussions will continue as a sub-group about the interventions to take on the challenges, with two phases emerging; namely to ensure that there are Welsh medium courses available for young people to follow which will lead to Welsh careers, and raise young</p>

				people's awareness that there is a demand for Welsh by employers.
		5. Investigate the choice of language use by the public when using our services and understand more about people's attitudes towards the Welsh language.	Yes	<p>The analysis of the research was completed, and it was found that the public's use of the Welsh language was highest among children and young people aged between 5 and 15 years. Nevertheless, a pattern was observed that the use of the Welsh language decreased as the residents got older. It was also found that more people use Welsh with frontline staff in places that provide a more informal service such as a library or leisure centre than in places that provide more formal services, e.g. Canolfan Galw Gwynedd. It was concluded that it would be beneficial to carry out the survey again in 3 years' time and extend it to other locations.</p> <p>Council officers led the consultation on the attitudes of young people aged 16-18 towards the Welsh language on behalf of the Gwynedd Language Forum's young people sub-group, including analysing the results towards the Welsh language. It was seen that the young people did not see value in the Welsh language as a skill in the world of work.</p> <p>An online survey carried out by Bangor University in consultation with Cyngor Gwynedd which looked specifically at people's attitudes towards the Welsh language was also discussed. Most respondents, around 900, had a positive attitude towards the Welsh language which is encouraging news.</p>

Cyngor Gwynedd Plan 2023-28 – Year 3 Actions

An Efficient Gwynedd: Putting the people of Gwynedd first and treating them fairly and ensuring that the Council performs effectively

Department and Project	Overview	What we want to achieve during the THIRD year 2025-26 (milestones):	Has the milestone been completed	What has been achieved during the year and the impact (or likely impact) on the people of Gwynedd? Information or evidence should also be included to confirm this (measures or data confirming, etc.)
Corporate Services – Workforce Planning Also Cross-departmental	The main aim of the project is to ensure that the Council has an adequate supply of qualified staff to enable it to provide services to the county's residents, and that we can ensure that the supply is in place for the long term. We will address the specific problems of staff recruitment in key areas such as social care and education.	1. Work with departments and services to produce workforce plans, by advising managers on adhering to the following steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify key positions, assessed based on the risk to service continuity. b. Analyse the workforce profile of the teams, to identify potential risks to staffing levels / skills needs. c. Produce action plans. ch. Establish arrangements to review plans. 	No – work continues	A draft plan has been produced, and consultation will take place in the near future.
		2. Review the process and methods of attracting staff to work for the Council, in order to continue to improve the experience for job applicants and ensure that the Council attracts the most qualified workforce possible. Steps to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Reviewing how we advertise jobs and attract candidates, and introduce new approaches. 		No – work continues

		<p>b. Reviewing the process of submitting applications, and amending as necessary.</p> <p>c. Coming to a conclusion on how additions or changes can be introduced to the terms and conditions of employment package, and revise as required.</p>		
<p>Corporate Services</p> <p>–</p> <p>Ensuring Fairness for All</p>	<p>We will continue with the work that is already underway to ensure that the Council, in all its actions, gives due regard to equality. We will identify the work that is required to ensure that the Council treats everyone fairly, regardless of their equality characteristics, background and needs.</p>	<p>1. Review and change our approaches to recruiting people into the workforce, to ensure we give potential candidates the best possible experience but also position ourselves as a leading employer for everyone from all parts of society.</p>	No	<p>This milestone is tied to workforce planning and has slipped into the year 2026-27 due to capacity challenges. Work has taken place to produce a draft strategic plan that will set direction moving forward, and this will be led by a cross-departmental group of officers.</p>
		<p>2. Create a dashboard of data about Gwynedd to be used to produce evidence-based impact assessments and improve our services.</p>	Yes	<p>A core dashboard has been created but is not yet live and the work of adding to it will be long-term. The information will be used in carrying out impact assessments etc., to ensure that we are acting on the basis of sound evidence. This will enable us to ensure that our policies and procedures are fair to all.</p>
		<p>3. Continue to raise awareness with managers of the importance of using equality impact assessments effectively.</p>	Partially	<p>The electronic system (PowerApp) is now ready to be promoted and we have started visiting Management Teams. Raising managers' awareness of the need to undertake an assessment will ensure that we comply with the Equality Act 2010 in order to improve our policies and procedures and ensure that equality issues are duly addressed when making any changes.</p>
		<p>4. Carry out an Equal Pay Assessment on the Council's pay systems and respond to any messages arising from the results.</p>	No	<p>This has not happened in the last year (2025-26) and will slip into next year. We will be commissioning an independent consultant over the next few months to undertake the work, with a view to producing the report by March 2026 - the</p>

				exact timetable for completing the assessment is yet to be confirmed, depending on the consultant.
<p>Corporate Services</p> <p>–</p> <p>Women in Leadership</p>	<p>The number of women in managerial roles within the Council does not correlate with the split of the entire workforce. We will therefore carry on with a developing potential programme for women, conduct an audit of our recruitment and appointment methods for managerial positions, and create a forum for female leaders and prospective leaders as part of the programme to encourage more women to apply for senior positions within the Council.</p>	<p>1. Continue to run and develop the activities that form the basis for the project's work, such as the Developing Potential Programme, 'Sgyrsiau dros Baned' (A cuppa and a chat);</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>'Sgyrsiau dros Baned' – Two series of the popular "A Cuppa and a Chat" sessions have been held with in-house speakers. Conversations with Keira Sweeney, Planning Manager, and Councillor Nia Jeffreys, Leader of the Council, took place over the summer period. Conversations with Llinos Rowlands, Assistant Head of Adults, Health and Well-being Department, and Delyth Jones-Thomas, Investment Manager for the Finance Department, took place over the winter.</p> <p>There are arrangements in place to arrange further talks for the period ahead. The ongoing intention is to target a greater range of job levels among speakers, to include Managers and Team Leaders, with the aim of targeting young women to take the first step.</p> <p>Developmental Programme – The sixth series of the Developmental Programme came to an end in mid-December. There were 13 deserving women, from various Council departments, involved in the series.</p> <p>One woman who was part of the last series has already applied and</p>

				<p>accepted a higher position, with a few others having applied for a higher position / preparing to apply for a higher position.</p> <p>Since establishing the Developmental Programme, 71 women have participated to date.</p>
		2.Stage interventions to raise awareness among men;	No	<p>A specific event directly for men has not been held. However, every opportunity is used to promote the work of the project in various networks and meetings.</p>
		3.Continue to build on the statistical basis already established for the purpose of measuring the success of the project;	Yes	<p>This is ongoing work that takes place throughout the year. The hope is that live reports can be produced once the Human Resources system has been installed.</p> <p>Data on the progress and impact of the project is being updated continually. The figure for women in managerial positions is currently 46%. There are differences between Departments and differences between job tiers as well.</p> <p>A questionnaire was drawn up to be sent out to the women of the Council in early January. The purpose of the questionnaire is to find out women's views on different aspects to be able to identify how to move forward with the project.</p> <p>Ongoing work will take place over the year to update the data.</p>

4.Continue with the work of finding out what Services across the Council are doing to encourage women to apply for senior positions in order to identify and share good practice, and tailor according to Departments' requirements where necessary

Yes

Work continues. A task has now been incorporated into the developmental programme which requires women who follow the programme to identify one piece of work to do in that area in their Department.

5.Organise an event to celebrate the success of the project's work to date

Yes

This year a short video was created for International Women's Day which took place on 8.3.26. The successes of women who attended the women in leadership developmental programme and who have been promoted to senior positions as well as other key appointments, were celebrated during the year. The video was shared internally with staff via the intranet and *Gair Wythnosol*. In addition, the video was shown to members at the beginning of the Full Council meeting in March and the video was shared via the bulletin to members.

6.Use networks such as the 'Managers' Network', 'Live Session with the Chief Executive' to raise further awareness of the project's work.

Yes

During the Chief Executive's 'Live Session' in July he drew attention to the video produced for International Women's Day 2025, and the link to the video was shared in the chat panel.

In the October staff bulletin, it was pointed out that the sixth series of the Women in Leadership Developmental Programme had begun. In addition, discussions are being held with the Leader of the Council.

Continue to take advantage of opportunities to raise awareness of the project's work.

<p>Corporate Services – Strategic Review of Health and Safety Management</p>	<p>This project looks at the strategic management of health and safety within the Council and how that ties into overall performance and governance systems. It involves conducting a full review of the management system as a whole.</p>	<p>1. Continue to roll out the new IT system for Health and Safety across the Council. The work has been structured into three phases, with the first phase – the development of the electronic accident form – nearing completion.</p>	<p>Part 1 has been completed. Parts 2 and 3 are delayed because of the corporate digital system</p>	<p>Over the past year, significant progress has been made in introducing a new IT system for health and safety across the Council, with a clear focus on delivering the first phase of the programme, which is the implementation of an electronic form for reporting accidents, incidents and near misses. This has involved extensive development, testing, co-ordination and planning work, delivered through close collaboration between the Health and Safety Service, IT and managers across services.</p> <p>Although IT resources were re-prioritised during the year to support wider corporate work, which limited the ability to progress with phases two and three for now, we managed to keep the momentum of the programme and successfully completed the first phase of the system. A planned pilot was carried out, alongside a structured training programme for managers, adopting a 'train the trainer' approach. Over 450 managers have now received training, with feedback being very positive, highlighting efficiency, consistency and improved reporting quality.</p> <p>During the last quarter, additional emphasis was placed on internal communication activities to support the full implementation of the new system. Key messages were shared widely through corporate channels, and posters were sent to work sites to raise awareness</p>
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				<p>among employees of the changes to the reporting system. This approach reinforced corporate expectations and supported the process of sharing of information locally, contributing to clear progress in terms of understanding and engagement across a number of services.</p> <p>As a result of the ongoing work, the significant effort of the team, and the clear focus on embedding the new arrangements, a strategic decision was made to change the operational procedure. From 1 April 2026, the Service now accepts all reports of accidents, incidents and near misses through the electronic system only. This marks an important milestone in modernising the Council's health and safety arrangements and shows how a combination of systems, training and effective communication can drive practical change across the organisation.</p> <p>Although a new corporate IT system is about to begin, which could have an impact on further developments in the future, it is not yet clear what the nature or scale of that impact will be. The situation will continue to be monitored in cooperation with IT, with the focus remaining on maintaining the current arrangements and sustaining the progress achieved.</p>
		<p>2.Continue to introduce the detailed (draft) action plan to the Council's Management Team, which outlines the</p>	<p>Yes – introduced to the departments</p>	<p>Over the past year, significant progress has been made in developing and advancing the detailed action plan to</p>

steps towards achieving an integrated model for Health and Safety management.

and continues to be implemented.

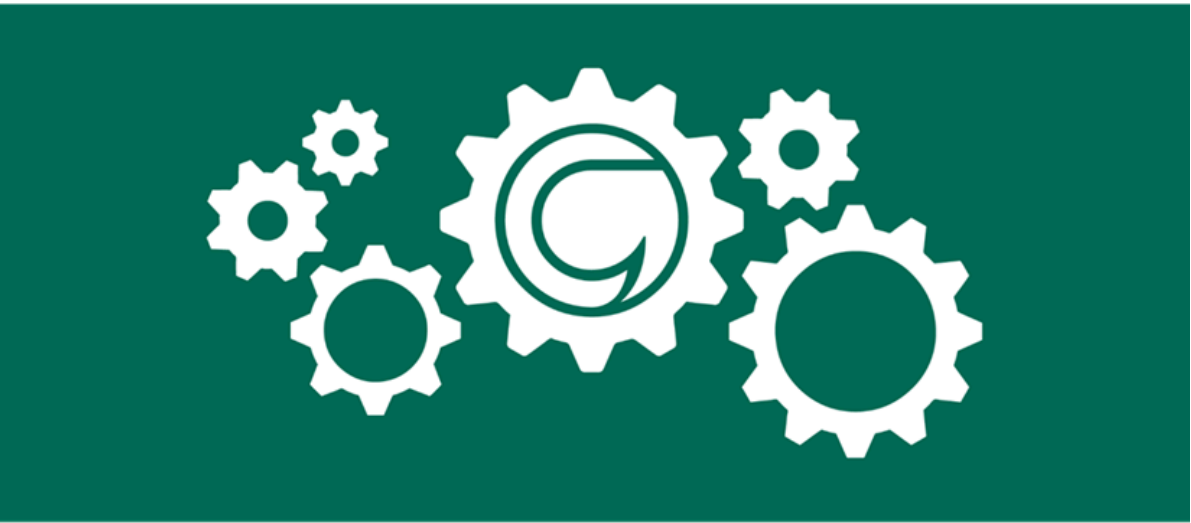
support the implementation of an integrated model for Health and Safety management across the Council. Although the plan has not yet been formally presented to the Council's Management Team, strategic momentum was maintained by using the findings of the Safety Models questionnaire as a basis for corporate and departmental discussions, enabling a common understanding and a decisive movement towards practical action.

During the latter part of the year, most departments have discussed Safety Models through their departmental forums and have begun implementing related work programmes. To support implementation and monitor progress, a centralised system has been established to record, prioritise and track actions, providing a structured and proportionate approach to managing activities and maintaining a strategic overview. This work, alongside the ongoing development of the Health and Safety IT system, and the need to complete phases two and three in order to strengthen the infrastructure and management arrangements, places Cyngor Gwynedd in a strong position to create a robust, sustainable and integrated system. This supports not only statutory compliance, but also the development of a positive culture that reduces risks, improves the health, safety and well-being of the workforce, and contributes to better long-

		term management of associated financial pressures.
3.Develop a five-year audit programme, based on the data collected through the Safety Model Questionnaires.	No	<p>Over the past year, significant work has been undertaken to lay solid foundations for the development of a risk-based five-year audit programme, using data from the Safety Model Questionnaires. Although a formal audit programme has not yet been completed, a conscious and strategic decision was made to ensure that the process is established properly. Moving forward too soon without the proper data and a clear procedure for prioritisation would have been ineffective and reduced the value of the audits. Given that audits are a significant resource for the Health and Safety Service and for the departments being audited, a clear emphasis has been placed on ensuring that the audit model is robust, consistent and adds real value.</p> <p>Although there have been some barriers which have extended the original timetable, decisive steps have been taken to move the work forward in a sustainable way. Significant work has gone into developing and strengthening a corporate risk register that maps the legislative requirements across the Council. This register is maintained and reviewed continually to reflect changes to the law and HSE requirements, providing a robust and flexible foundation for prioritising future audits based on actual risk. As the implementation of the Safety Models continues, we anticipate that this</p>

information can be combined with the results of the questionnaires to form a five-year corporate audit programme that is integrated and reflects real risks across the organisation.

In addition, work has begun to strengthen the operational arrangements of the audits themselves. This includes investing in digital equipment to support consultants on site and developing more effective methods of recording and managing information during audits. The time given to establish the infrastructure and these processes and systems is considered critical to the programme's long-term success. In this context, it is recognised that delivering a full audit programme within one year has been deliberately ambitious, and that allowing fair time to establish a robust system lays a much stronger foundation for an effective, valuable and sustainable audit programme in the future.



Corporate Services Performance Report

Newid i
Gymraeg

Quantitative Measures Summary

Departmental

Procurement

**Communication and
Engagement**

**Customer Contact and
Registration**

**Learning and Organisational
Development**

Support Services

Democracy and Language

Health, Safety and Welfare

Research and Information

Human Resources Advisory



Choose Year
2025-2026

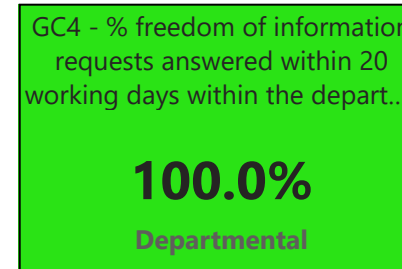
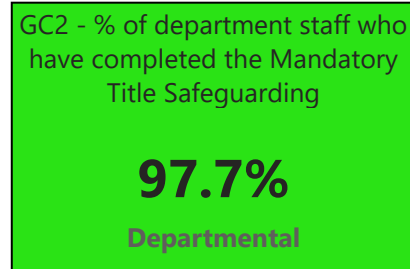
Choose Quarter
Qtr 4

Choose Month
March

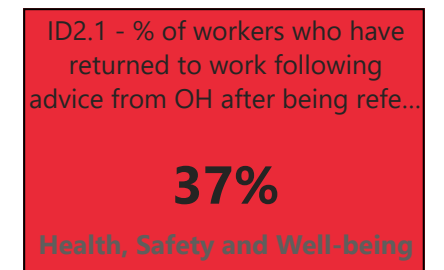
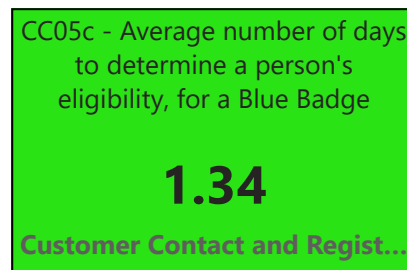
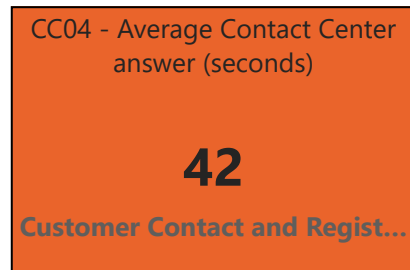
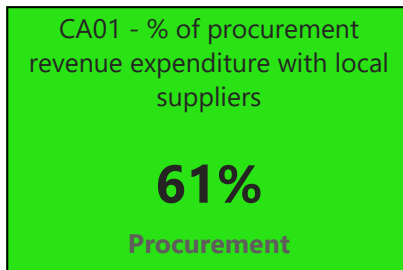
Measures

Newid i
Gymraeg

Departmental Measures



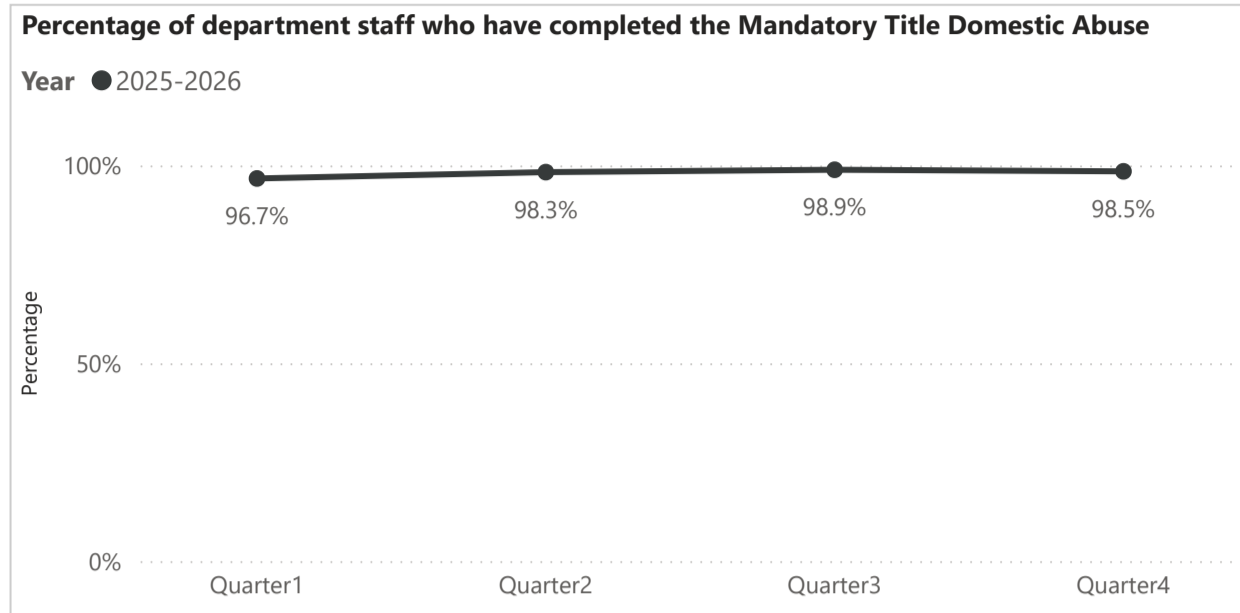
Service Measures



Purpose

Newid i Gymraeg

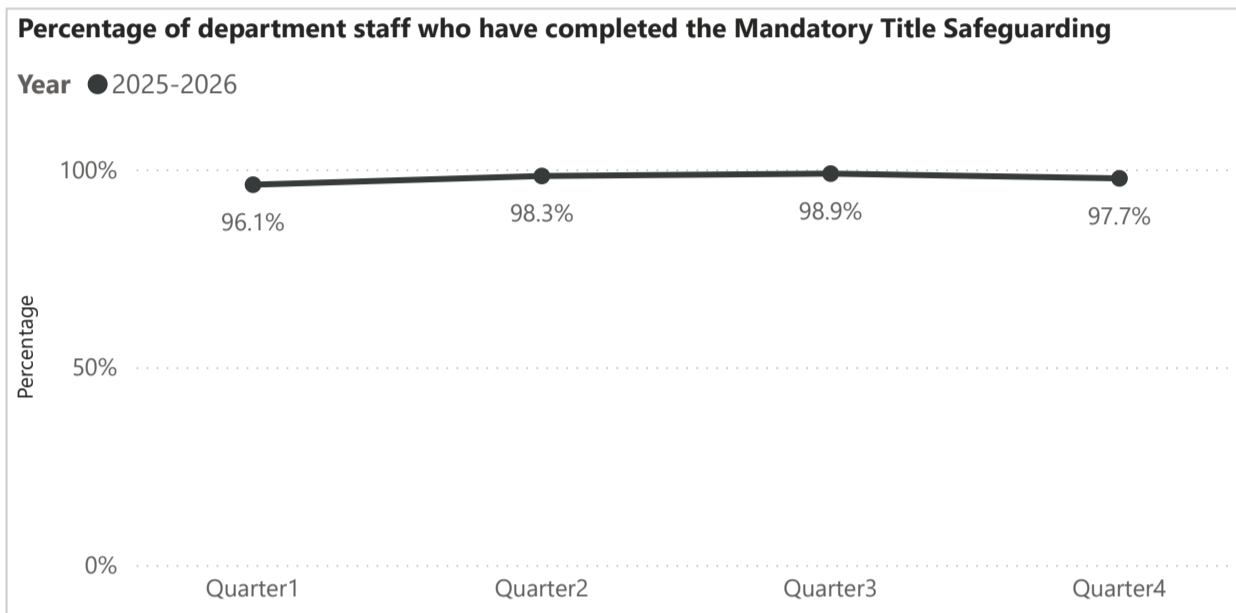
GC1 - Mandatory Title - Domestic Violence (Quarterly)



Comment

98.5% of the Department's staff have completed mandatory Domestic Abuse training. This figure is slightly lower than in Quarter 3, as a result of staff turnover. Ongoing work is taking place to encourage staff who have not yet completed the training to do so as soon as possible.

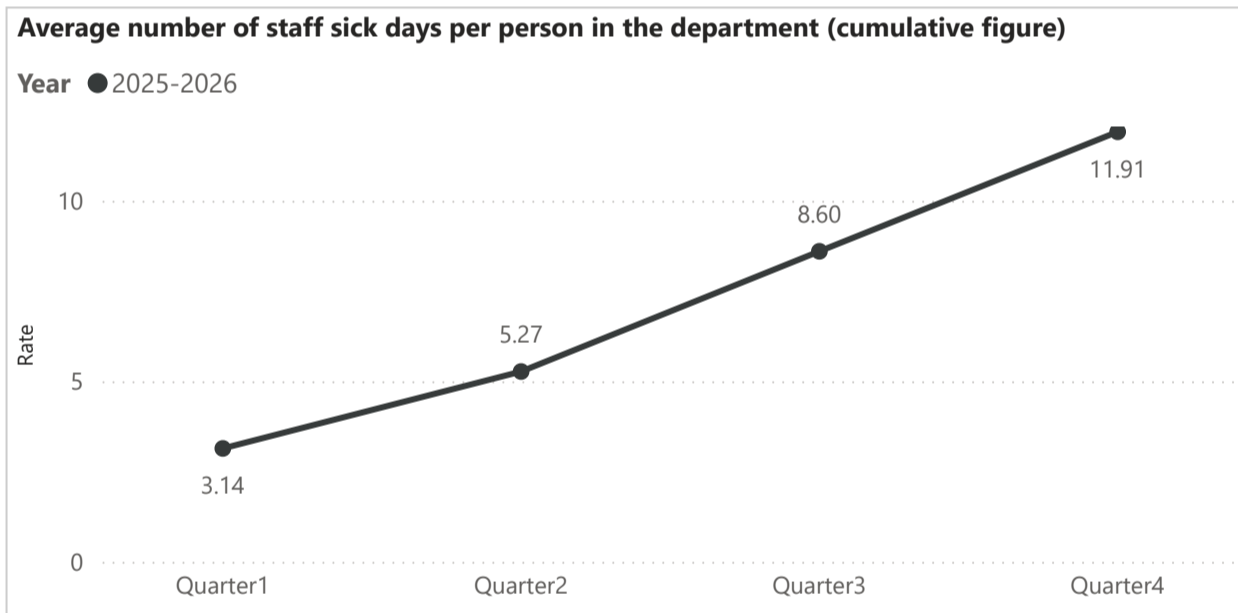
GC2 - Mandatory Title - Safeguarding (Quarterly)



Comment

97.7% of the Department's staff have completed mandatory Safeguarding training. This figure is slightly lower than in Quarter 3, as a result of staff turnover. Ongoing work is taking place to encourage staff who have not yet completed the training to do so as soon as possible.

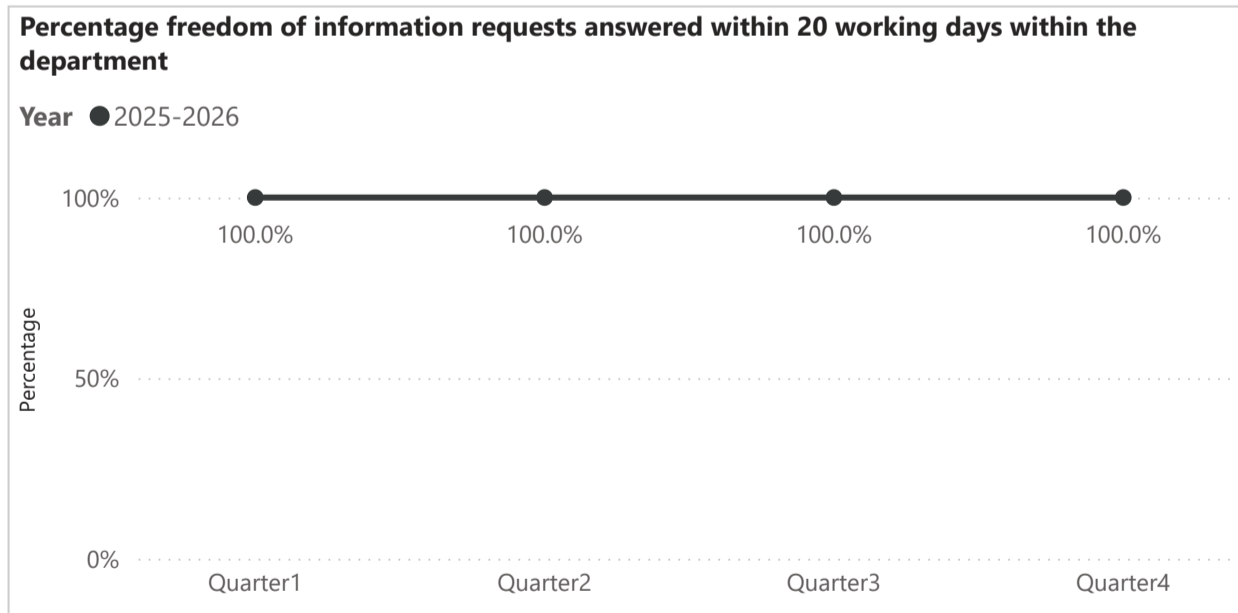
GC3 - Number of Sick Days (Quarterly)



Comment

Over the four quarters of this year, there has been a gradual increase in the department's sickness figures. The data shows a consistent pattern of quarter-on-quarter increases. As a department, we are aware of the factors contributing to this trend and continue to monitor the situation in order to understand the underlying causes and identify appropriate actions to manage it.

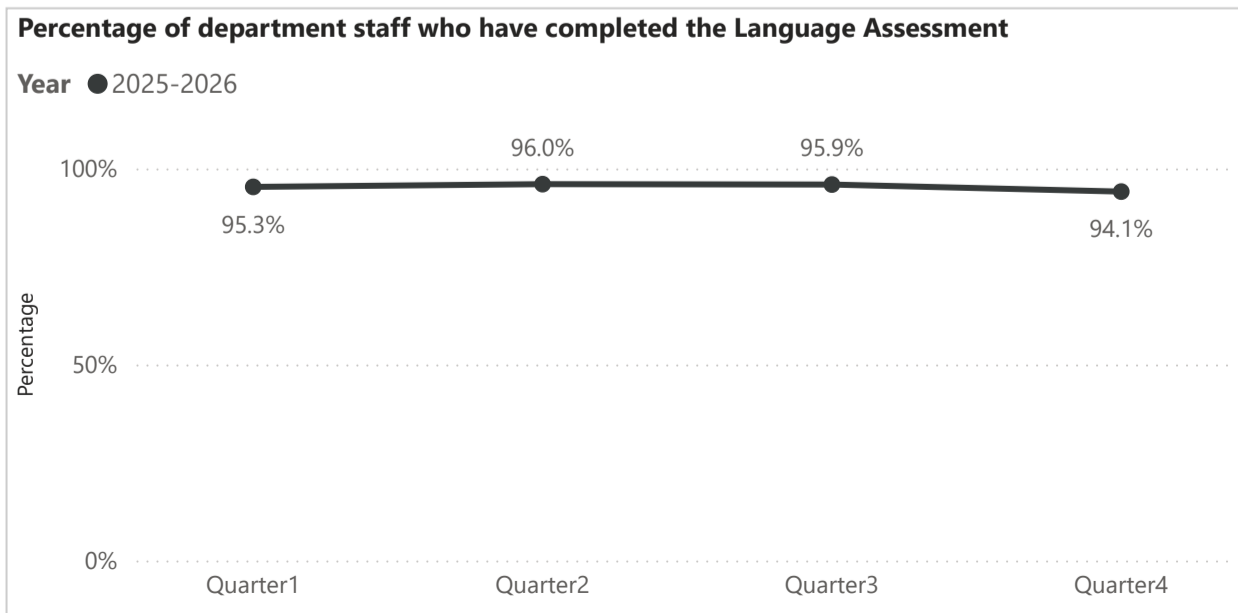
GC4 - Freedom of Information Requests (Quarterly)



Comment

The Department received 81 freedom of information requests during 2005/26. All requests were answered within the 20 working days.

GC5 - Language Assessments (Quarterly)



Comment

There has been a very slight decrease in the number who have completed the language assessment this quarter compared with Quarter 3. This is because new members of staff have joined the Department during the quarter and have not yet completed the assessment.

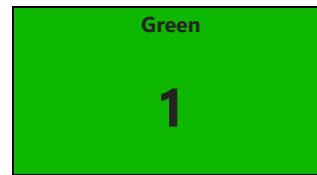
Ongoing work is taking place to encourage those members of staff who have not completed the assessment to do so as soon as possible.

Purpose

To enable the Council to aim for value for money, keep the benefit local and improve the quality of Council procurement

Newid i Gymraeg

Current Risks

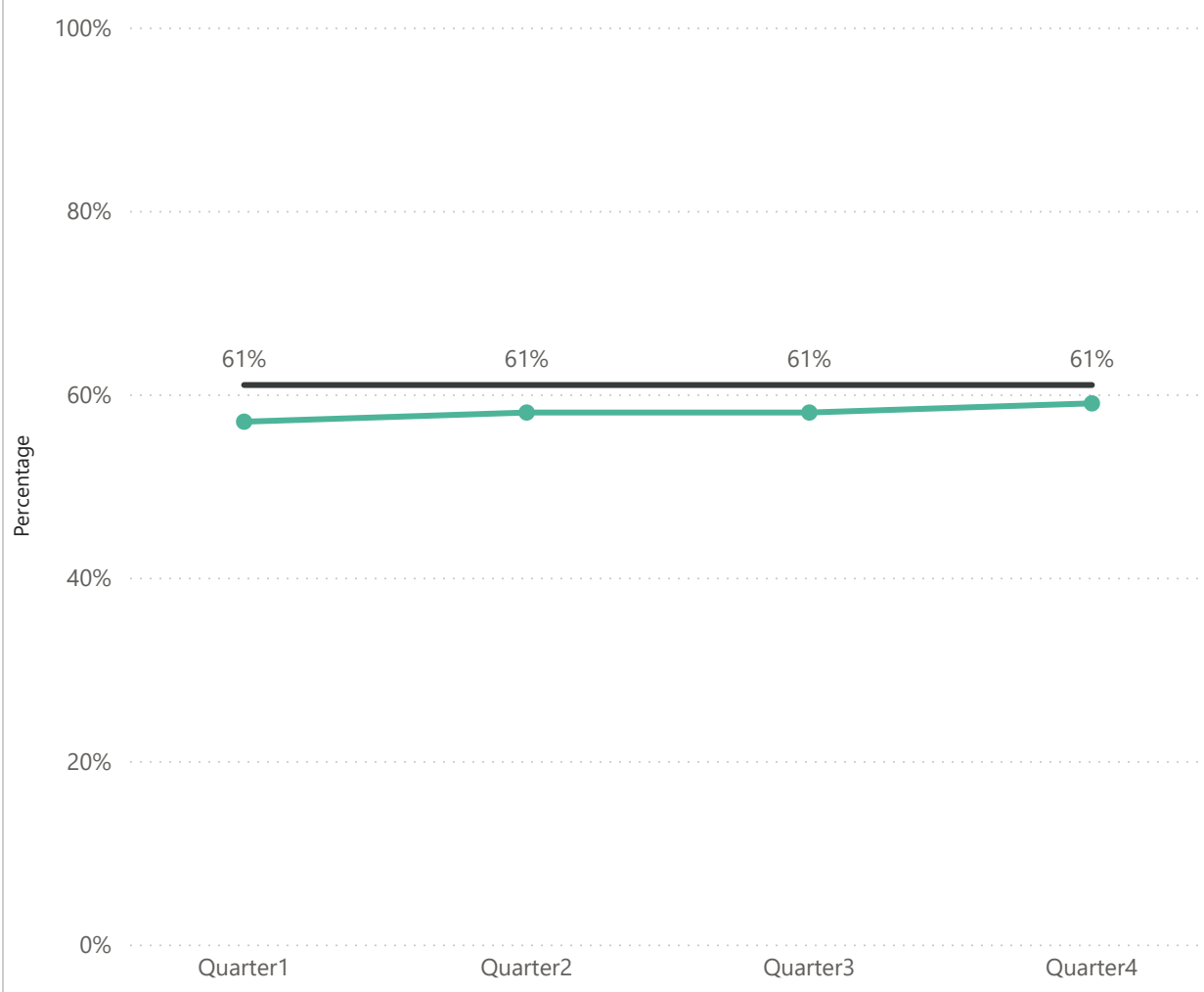


[Click here to see the risks](#)

CA01 - Local Suppliers (Quarterly)

Percentage of procurement revenue expenditure with local suppliers

Year ● 2024-2025 ● 2025-2026



Comment

The local percentage has increased 2% to 61% compared to last year's Quarter 4.

The main reasons for the increase include:

- Further expenditure from Shared Prosperity Fund with Local Colleges of £1.2m
- Further expenditure on flood control of £1.7m
- Rising costs of Care provision with existing local providers.

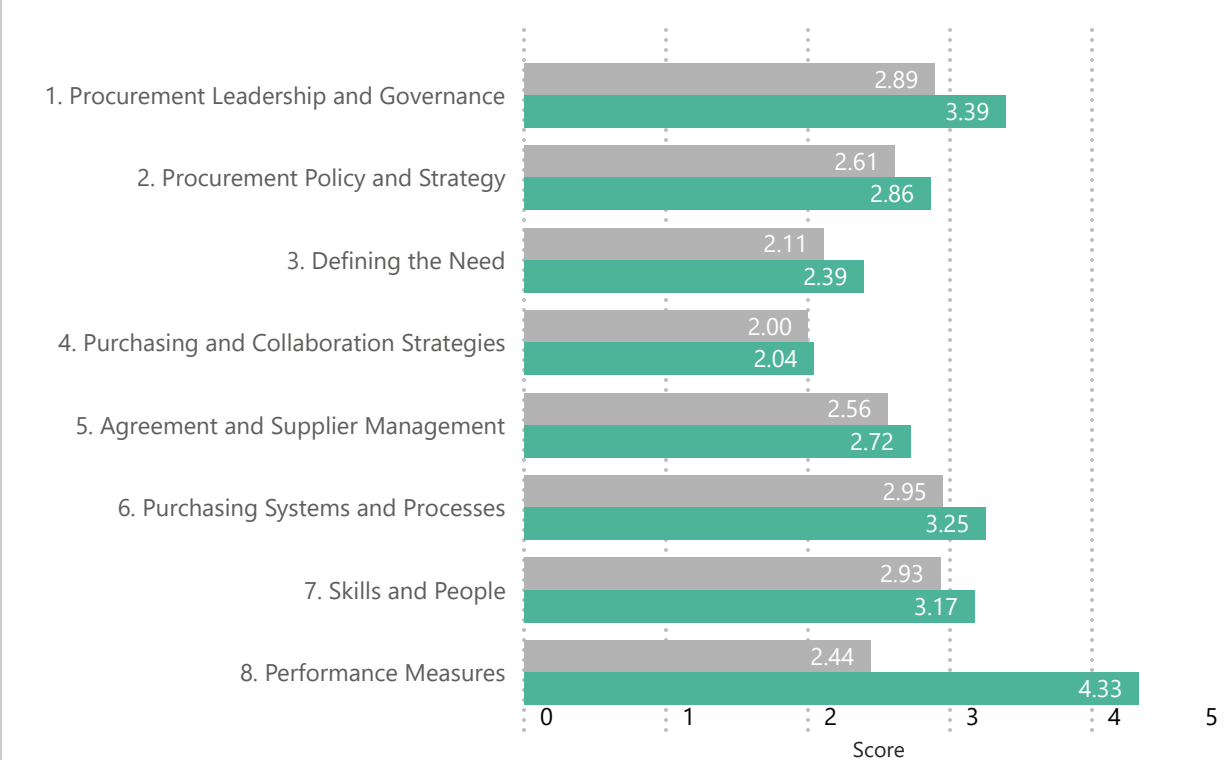
Total revenue expenditure for 2025/26 is £191m with £116.5m being spent in Gwynedd.

The main areas where expenditure leaves the County over the year continue to be Specialist Construction, IT Systems and Adult and Children's Residential Care. With purchases in areas such as Domiciliary Care, Housing and Support, School Transport, Equipment Hire and Recycling being provided by local companies.

CA02 - Procurement Self-Assessment (Yearly)

Procurement Development (Score 0-5)

Year ● 2023-2024 ● 2024-2025



Comment

We have begun drafting an Implementation Plan for the new Procurement Strategy. The plan focuses on the seven improvement priorities we have identified namely, local benefit, carbon zero, value for money, social value, technology, governance arrangements and the Welsh language.

The final draft of the new Procurement Policy has been circulated among the Category Teams and Corporate Services Managers for comment. We are seeking to develop Procurement Measures and an Annual Report in line with the needs of the Social Partnership and Public Procurement Act, we will need to consult on the final performance measures we will publish. These will most likely include Local Spend, Value for Money, Social Value, Reducing Carbon, Promoting the use of the Welsh language and the use of technology.

We have conducted the exercise to complete the procurement self-assessment during the month and asked the Category and Procurement Team Officers to complete the questionnaire.

The training sessions are ongoing, with a Procurement and Contracts Training session taking place during March.

Purpose

- Maintain staffing structure information for Departments
- Legally recruit and appoint individuals
- Enable Council staff to access information in the Self-Service Staff system
- Maintain and develop a Benefits program for Council staff
- Provide Printing and Post Services along with administration of Freedom of Information requests for Council Departments, as well as processing orders and invoices
- Ownership and responsibility for implementing the Council's Complaints and Service Improvement arrangements

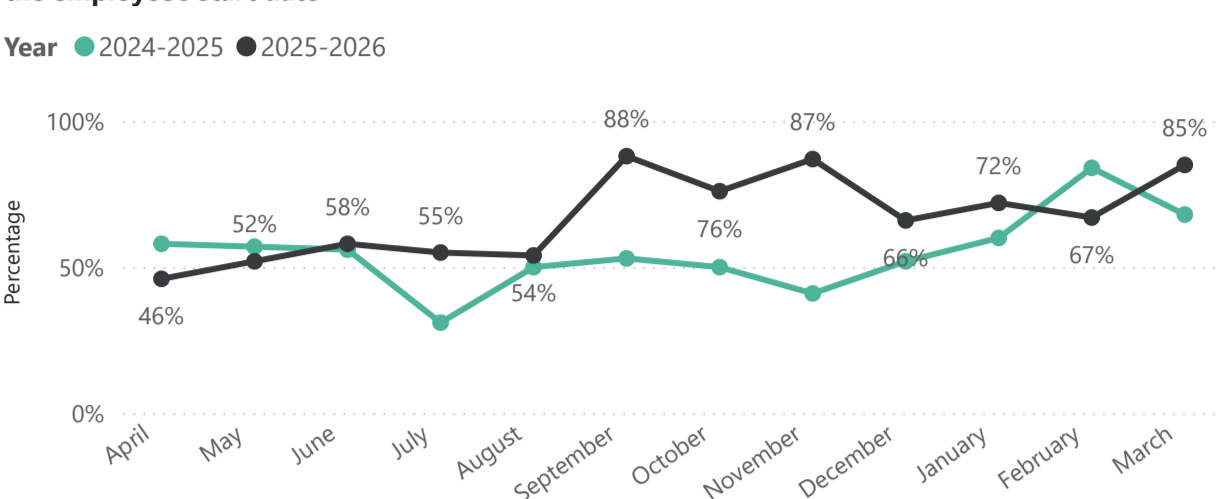
Current Risks



[Click here to see the risks](#)

CE01 - Employment Contracts

Submission of an employment contract (which is legally to have been submitted) before or by the employee's start date

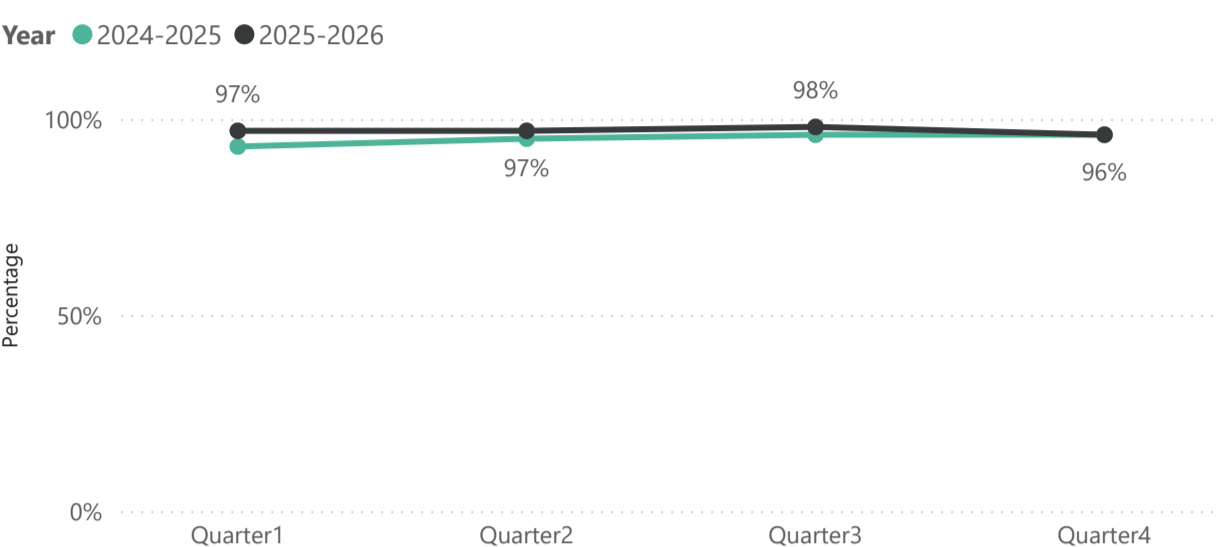


Comment

The Departments continue to send information late (15%). A procedure has been established to contact managers and team leaders after interviews have been arranged through Staff Self-Service. The purpose of this is to clarify the recruitment and appointment procedure that must be followed, as well as to emphasise the need to submit the details of the successful candidate promptly. This is to ensure that an employment contract is sent to candidates in a timely manner, and that the necessary safeguarding checks are carried out without delay.

CE02 - Candidate Satisfaction (Quarterly)

"Are you fully satisfied with the service you received from the Support Service" - Candidates



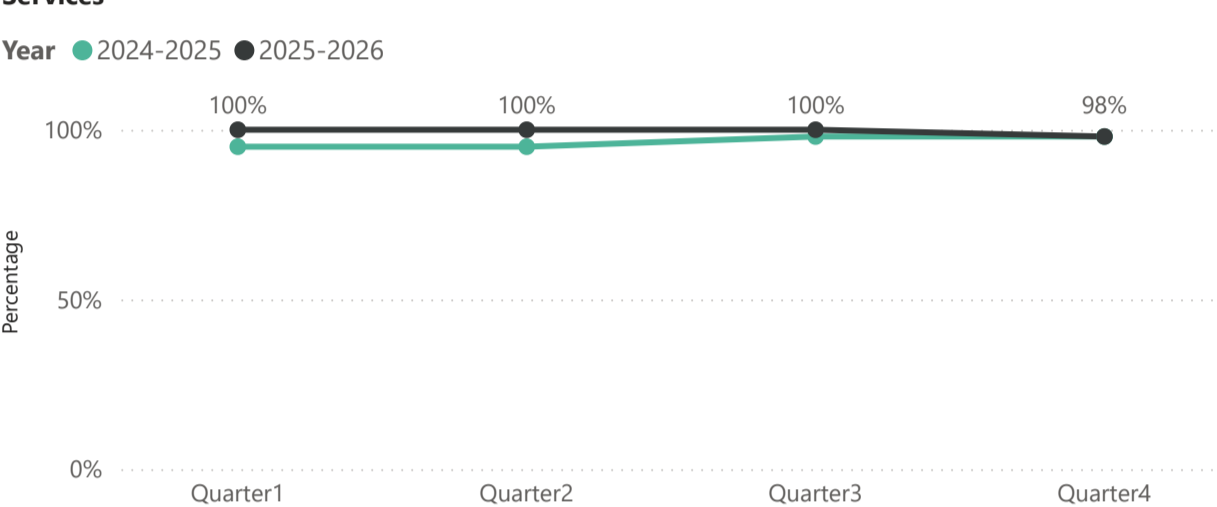
Comment

1,088 job applications were submitted during Quarter 4, and 73% of applicants completed feedback on their satisfaction with the job application process. Of this feedback, 94% were completely satisfied with the process. Of the remaining 6%, the comments noted are ones that we will not be taking forward at present, for example difficulties uploading a CV and dissatisfaction with the section for entering qualifications, as no further resources will be allocated to improve the current system. The new system that will be introduced at the end of the year will address some of these comments.

Thank you messages are being received from the public for the support of the Service Improvement Officer regarding the complaints procedure. The feedback is visible on the "Wal Lwyddiannau" on the Intranet.

CE03 - Satisfaction - Council Services (Quarterly)

"Are you fully satisfied with the service you received from the Support Service" - Council Services

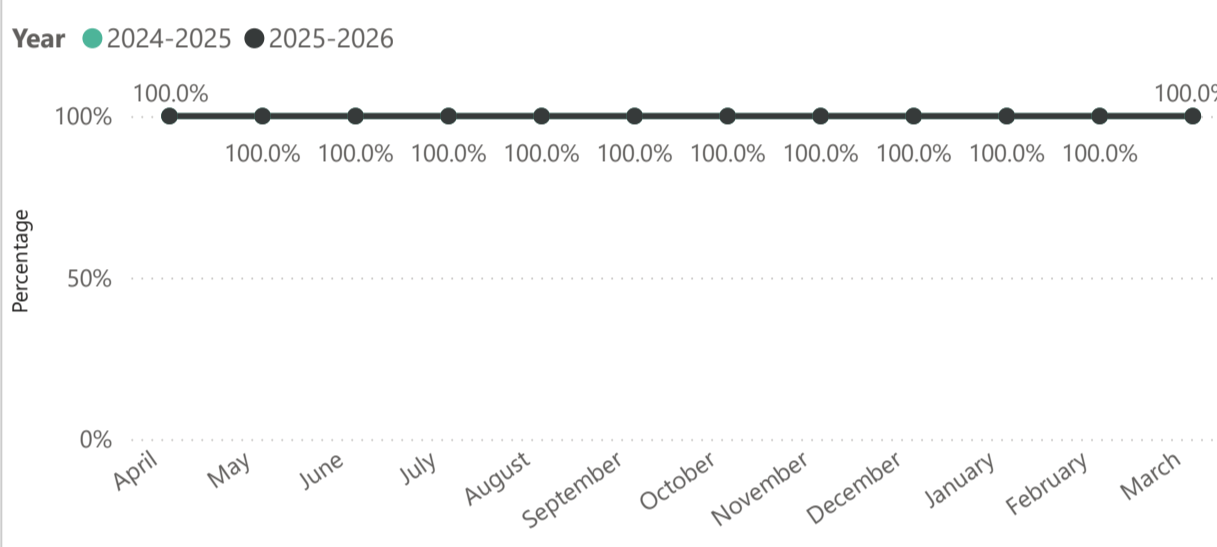


Comment

Praise and thanks are received by Staff and Managers for the support given to them by Support Staff when assisting them with enquiries or when completing work tasks. Attention is given to improve any service when a negative feedback is received.

CE04 - Finance and Administrative Team - Timesheets

Process "Timesheets" within the set deadline

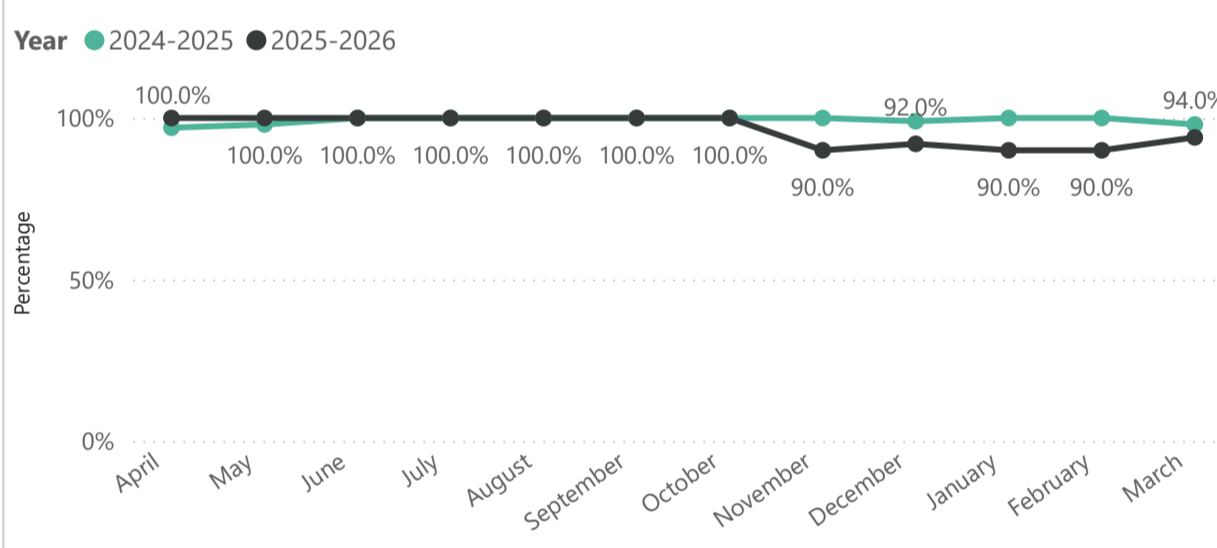


Comment

The timetables have been processed by the payroll deadline

CE08 - Finance and Administrative Team - HS11

Process "HS11" within the set deadline



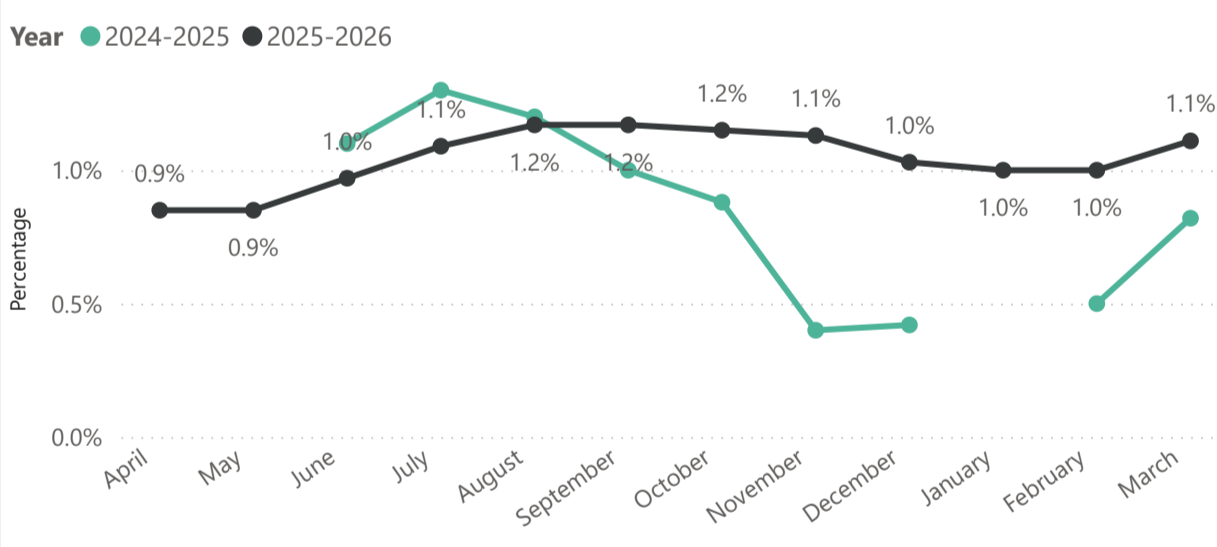
Comment

There has been a decline in performance due to a lack of resources to input the forms in a timely manner, as a result of a post being terminated due to savings. Attention is being given to ensure that priority forms are entered.

With the HS11 module becoming fully operational from 1 April 2026, the number of paper forms will decrease significantly over the following month, with the intention that they will eventually disappear completely.

CE09 - DBS

Percentage of staff who have not renewed DBS on time

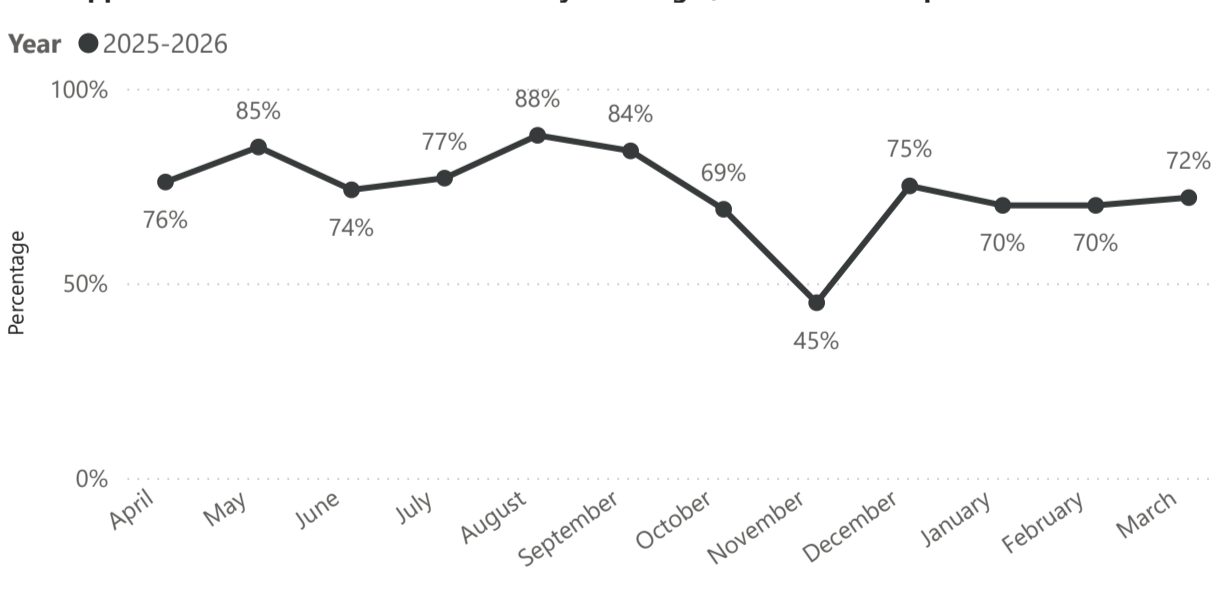


Comment

The current situation today is that 55 staff members have not renewed their DBS on time. There are 10 applications sitting in the DBS in Liverpool waiting to be processed. Another 45 applications are waiting for a staff member or manager to check the documents in order to release them for processing. The system generates an email to the staff member on the 5th day and to the manager on the 10th day, and every 5 days thereafter, reminding them of the need to complete the DBS form. The quarterly Safeguarding Executive Group discusses the DBS performance of the Departments. Following this Group, a sub-group was established to discuss DBS data. The figure changes daily because staff complete the forms and more other staff enter the renewal period window.

CE11 - Complaints and Achievements

Requests to the pay service for emergency payments as a result of an error in administration by the Support Service or late administration by a manager, as % of total requests



Comment

When Complaints and Concerns reach the Service, the Service Improvement Officer (SIO) records Formal Valid and Invalid Complaints as well as Informal Valid and Invalid Complaints on an Excel spreadsheet and forwards those complaints via email to the relevant Officers within the Services for attention. Concerns and Service Requests received are not recorded here. In accordance with the relevant Policy, the Service has 20 working days to investigate and respond to a complaint. The SIO monitors the response time and reminds the Services of the deadline as needed. At times, Departments fail to respond within the 20-day period, which can be due to various reasons, e.g. officers being unavailable to respond in time, the need for legal advice, the need for more information, or an internal investigation within the Service taking longer than 20 days. A report is presented to the Cabinet every six months on Complaint and Service Improvement performance. At that time, only Formal Valid Complaints and Ombudsman Complaints are included. Work is ongoing to ensure that Services strive to improve their performance in responding to complainants in a timely manner. It is hoped that the new Customer Charter will support this.

CE12 - Staff Well-being - Benefits (Quarterly)

Comment

With the changes that have been made to the Cycle to Work Scheme where the maximum amount has been increased to £5,000 and the hire period has been extended to 3 years, this has allowed staff to purchase electric bikes as well as traditional bikes. Since April 2025, 52 staff members have taken advantage of the Scheme compared to 37 staff in 2024/25 and 58 in 2023/24.

Council staff are able to pay Additional Voluntary Pension Contributions ("AVCs"), which provide a tax advantage to them. Approximately 11% of the workforce contributes annually and benefits from the Scheme. There will be a delay to the programme timetable that was due to be implemented over the coming months to promote the benefits of the Scheme and ensure that all staff are aware of the opportunity available through pension contributions, as the post is now vacant following the officer's departure from the Council.

CE99 - Other Activity by Support Service

Comment

We have received confirmation that the Council's new Human Resources and Payroll system is ITrent. Identifying our requirements and migrating data to the new system over the coming weeks will involve a significant amount of work and additional pressure on Service staff. We will be looking to familiarise ourselves with the system and to work in collaboration with the new company and the internal IT service to mitigate the impact of the transition on staff. We have begun to be introduced to elements of the system, and work will continue for months to come, alongside the continued provision of normal services to external job applicants, and to Council staff and managers.

There will be a period of delay with the work to promote the Benefits to staff while we review the arrangements following the post becoming vacant at the end of month as a result of the officer leaving the Council's employment.

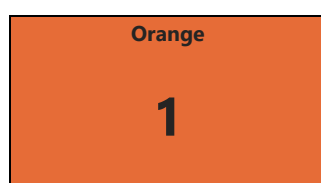


Purpose

To enable the Council to share information and hold a two-way dialogue with the people of Gwynedd and the Council's Elected Members.
To enable the public to self-service on Cyngor Gwynedd's website 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and offer a more cost-effective way to contact the Council for a service.

Newid i Gymraeg

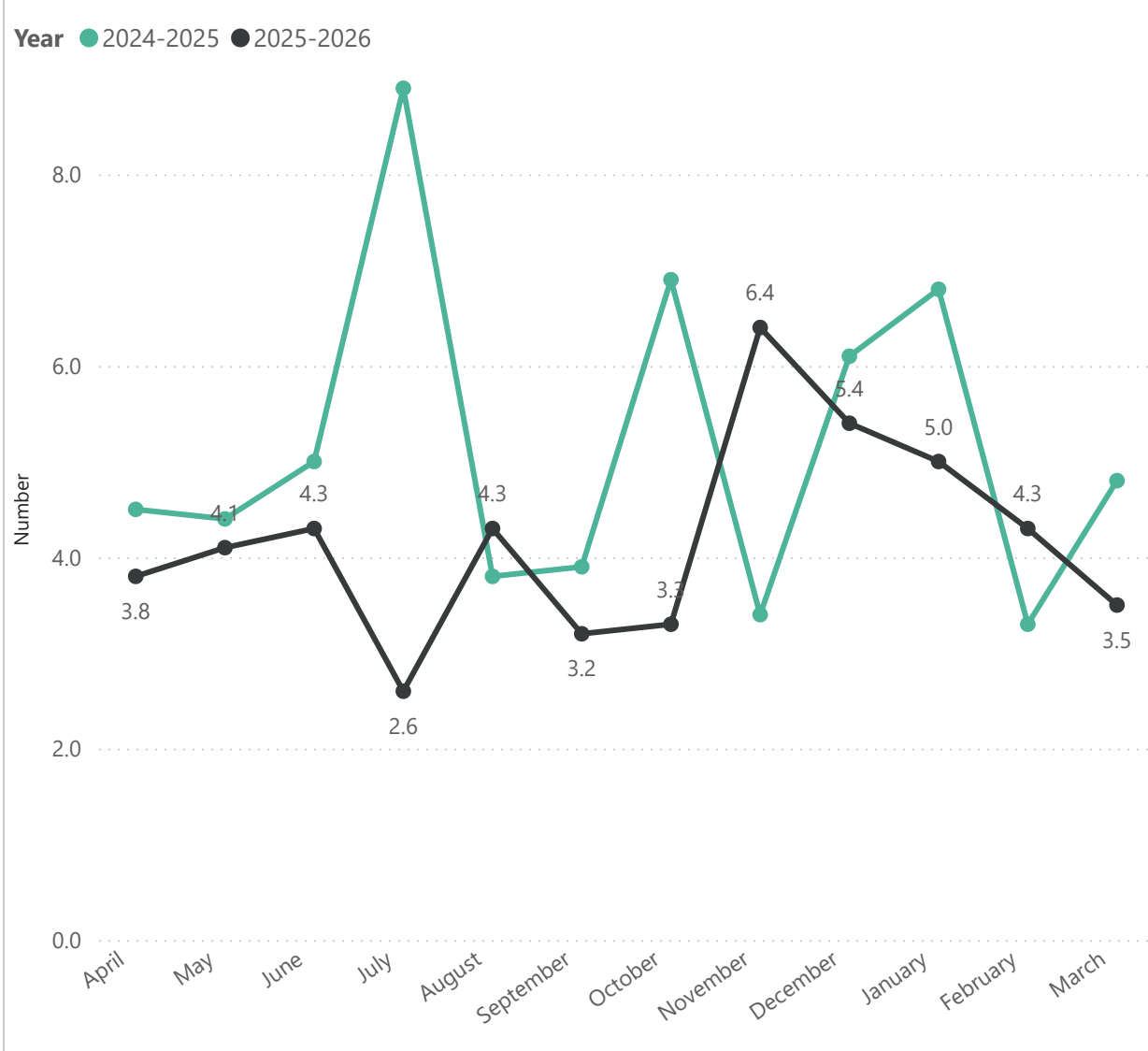
Current Risks



[Click here to see the risks](#)

CY01 - News items and/or Press Reports

An average number of news items and/or press reports resulting from proactive press releases issued by the Council during the month



Comment

Proactive press releases:

Over the past year, 101 press releases were issued which led to 416 news items in the press and media. This is a rate of 4.1 news item for each press release published.

During 2025-26, matters arising from the Council's Response Plan following the crimes committed by a former headteacher and the subsequent publication of the Child Practice Review (CPR) report "Our Bravery Brought Justice" attracted significant attention. This tragic case required a detailed communications plan and close working between officers, elected members and partners from other organisations. The press release issued following the publication of the CPR report (in November 2025) attracted the most attention during the year – 23 news items. A further press release, published in May 2025, outlining the progress being made by the Response Plan, also had significant traction, leading to 9 news items.

Other press release issued during the year, unrelated to this topic, which led to positive coverage were: information about the re-opening of the Lloyd George Museum in June 2025 following investment and refurbishment work (11 news items); the Cabinet's discussion on the Budget in February (9 news items); the launch of an app aimed at helping Neurodivergent people and their families (8 news items).

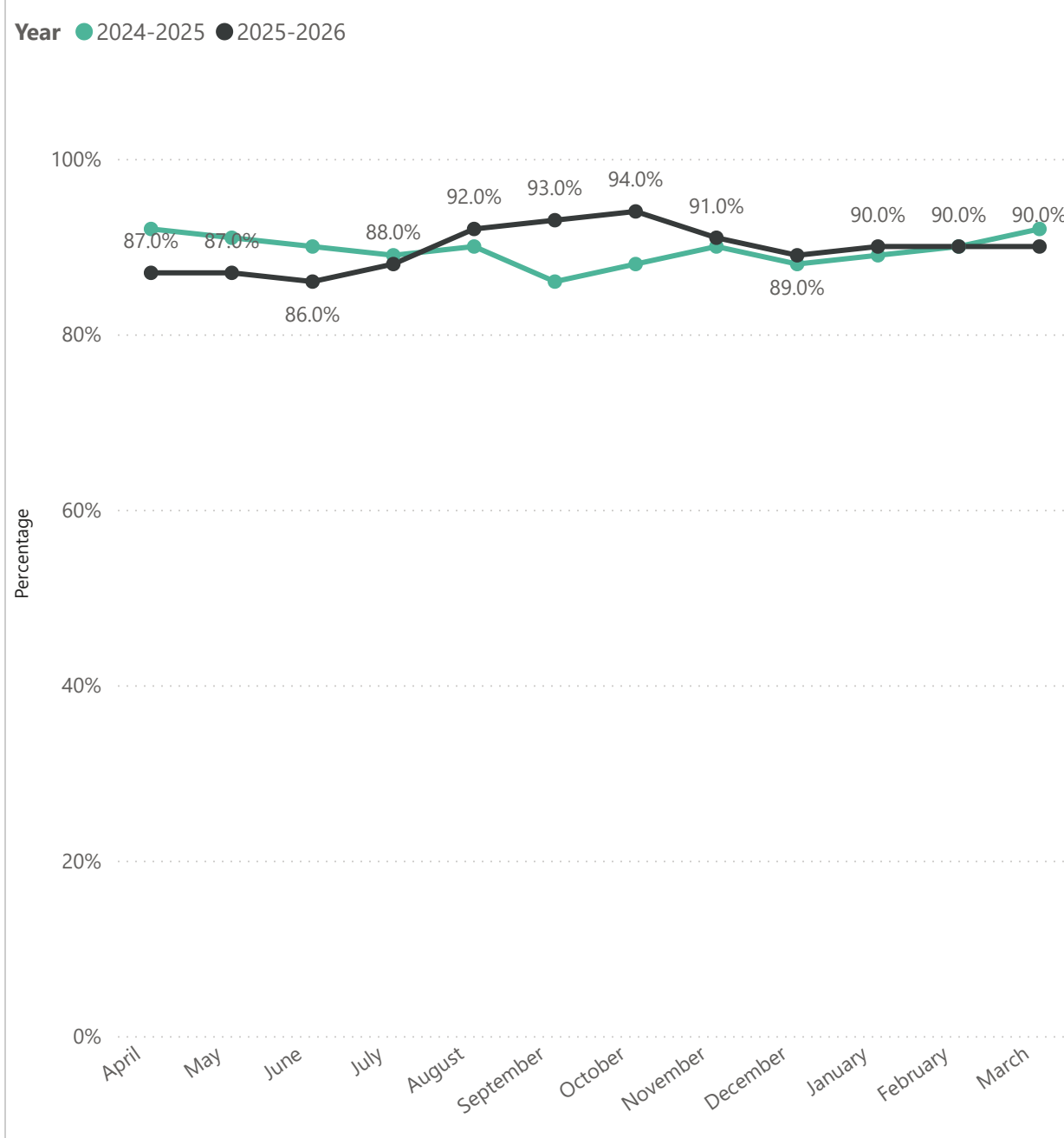
Reactive press work:

Over the past year, the Council responded to 534 media/press enquiries. Some of the matters which led to multiple enquiries were:

- The legal challenge made against the Council's decision to adopt the Article 4 direction and the subsequent refusal to appeal;
- Severe weather, including several storms which have affected the county over the last 12 months;
- Matters arising from Cyngor Gwynedd committees, including the Planning Committee;
- Operational matters, including projects to tackle homelessness; work arising from the situation at the Corbett Arms in Tywyn; problems arising from problematic parking.

CY02 - Website Satisfaction

Percentage of individuals reported a score of 5 out of 5 for the Council's website



Comment

Total visits to the website in 2025-26: 2,950,552

Total number of responses to the satisfaction survey in 2025-26: 1,474

Total number who gave a score of 5 out of 5 in 2025-26: 1,320 = 90%

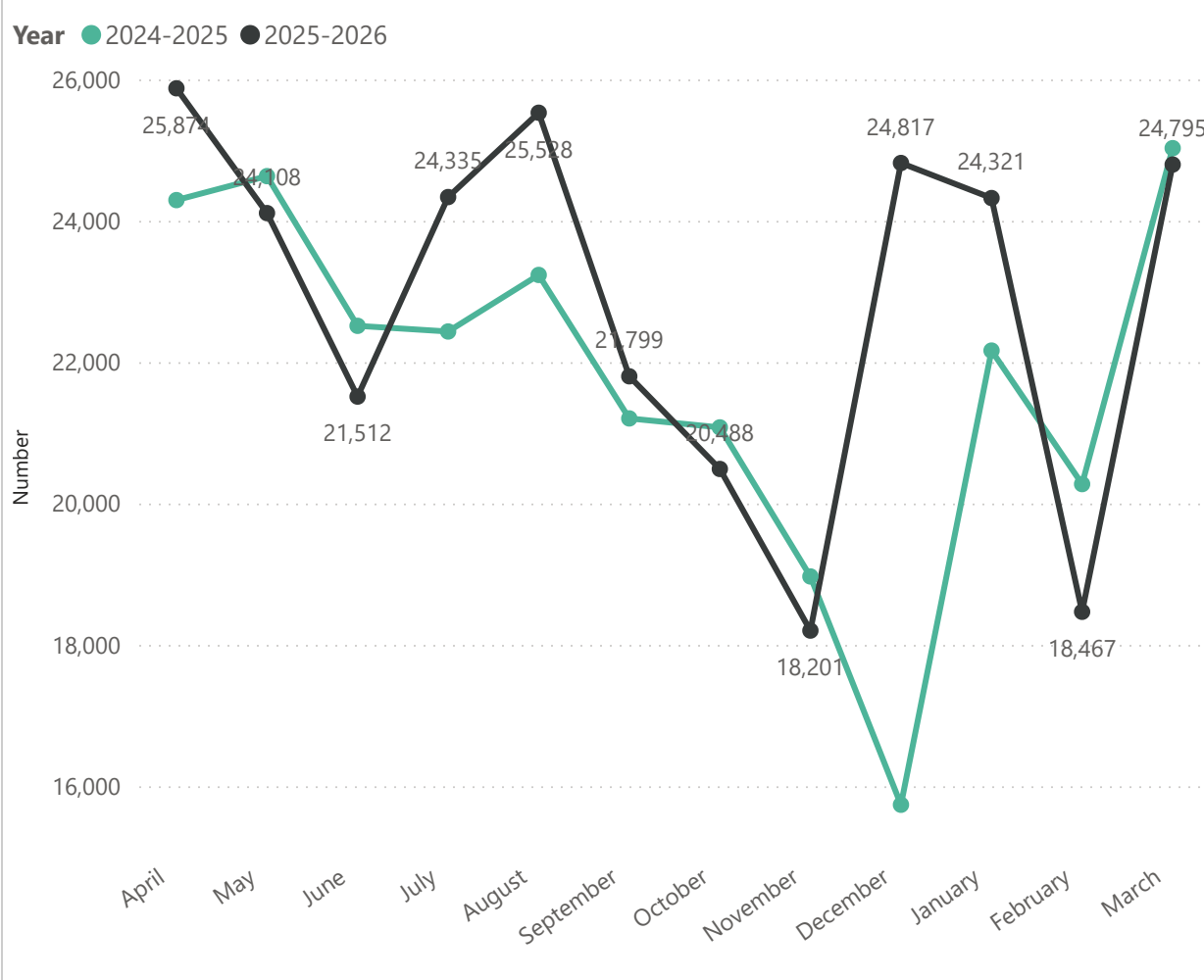
Details of respondents who gave a score of 4 or below in 2025-26:

- Complaint about the website (responsibility of the Communication and Engagement Service) = 42. Mainly from users unable to find information when using the search function. The Information Technology Service have been commissioned to create a new search tool using Artificial Intelligence to replace the current system.
- Complaint about the website (responsibility of a specific Service) = 34. These complaints vary from month to month, e.g. individuals wanting to receive a waste and recycling calendar by post, information on the website not being updated or being incorrect.
- Complaint about a specific Service = 48. These complaints vary from month to month, e.g. staff not answering the phone, the cost of the garden waste service, car parking charges, Article 4.
- Complaint about a third-party system = 30. These complaints mainly relate to being unable to find a planning application (Tascomi) or being unable to find committee papers (Moderngov).

We resolve the complaints that fall within Communications and Engagement's responsibility as quickly as possible. All other complaints are referred to the relevant Services, and we support them to resolve the issues where we can.

CY05 - Service Requests

Number of service requests submitted online



Comment

A total of 274,378 service requests were submitted in 2025-26, which is 12,829 more than in 2024-25.

Some services saw a decrease in the number of requests submitted, e.g. School admission applications: 162 fewer, Reporting a missed waste and recycling collection: 676 fewer and Booking a garden waste collection: 606 fewer than the previous year.

A number of services saw an increase in the number of requests, e.g. 16+ travel pass applications: 726 more than the previous year, Requests for waste and recycling equipment: 418 more, Reporting a pothole: 249 more and Reporting flooding: 152 more. One service — Booking a Recycling Centre Slot — saw a significant increase again this year, with 12,520 more requests than in 2024-25. This was partly because booking a slot was required over Christmas and the New Year in 2025-26, unlike the previous year.

In September 2025, a new online Housing Enquiry Form was introduced, used by the Housing One-Stop Shop, and 515 online enquiries were received up to the end of March 2026.

During 2026-27, a number of projects will receive attention, including: A new form for reporting a missed waste/recycling collection (as a result of the Environment Service purchasing a new back office system to manage work) and a new form for school admission applications integrated with My Account – Cyngor Gwynedd (as a result of the Education Service purchasing a new back office system to manage applications).

CY99 - Other Activity by the Service

Comment

Council website:

- Significant progress has been made to upgrade the content of the Council website to comply with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Apps) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 and the Equality Act 2010 and to develop a new corporate website.

Social Websites / Digital Communications:

- During 2025/26, there has been an increase of 2,549 in the number of people following the Council on Facebook, along with 190 new followers on Instagram. Facebook's average reach (the average number of times a day different people have viewed your content) increased to 17,661, an increase from 5,223 from the previous year. The most popular messages during the year were messages about gritting networks and severe weather with messages about the tourism advisory.
- 5 episodes of the Teulu Gwynedd podcast were produced and can be viewed and listened to on Spotify, Apple Music and Amazon.

Public Engagement:

- Support was provided for a number of engagement exercises including the Climate and Nature Emergency Plan, Waste and Recycling Strategy, Ageing Well and the Gwynedd Local Development Plan consultation.

Communication in an Emergency:

- Communications Plans were delivered for Storm Amy, Storm Bram, Conwy Tunnel Closure, Borth Bridge Closure and extended periods of ice and snow.

Celebrating Staff Success:

- A new initiative has been established to celebrate and recognise the success of Council staff. To date, visits have taken place to Bangor Crematorium, Bangor Flood Prevention Scheme, Cwm y Glo Depot, Goed Glynllifon Nursery and Afon Wen Depot.

Choose Year
2025-2026

Choose Quarter
Qtr 4

Choose Month
March

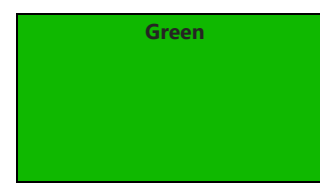
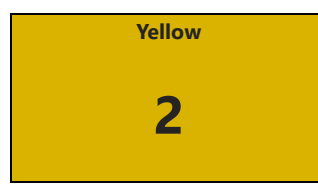
Customer Contact and Registration - Joanne Parry

Purpose

Purpose of the Service / Unit: Customer Contact: "To provide prompt and accurate support to our customers to access Council services, by providing solutions, guidance and service"
Purpose of the Service / Unit: Registration - "To hold ceremonies and enable the public to register events and provide copies of certificate in accordance with the requirements of the act"

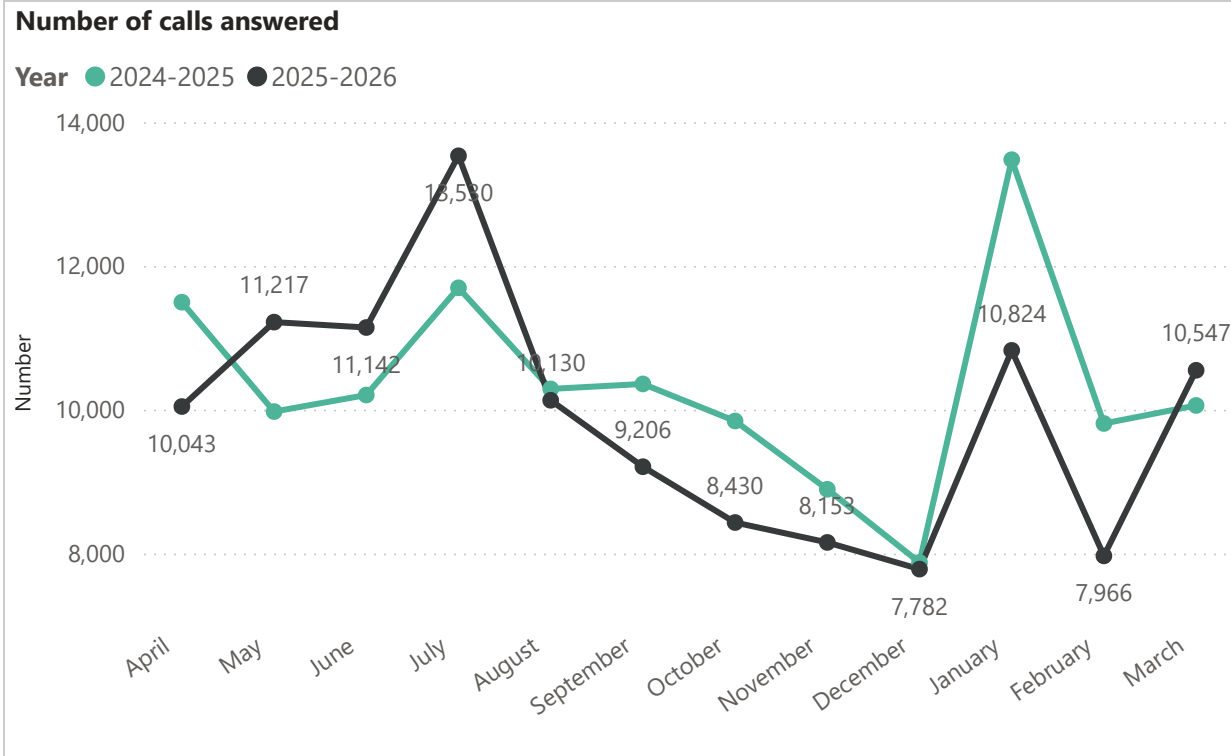
Newid i Gymraeg

Current Risks



[Click here to see the risks](#)

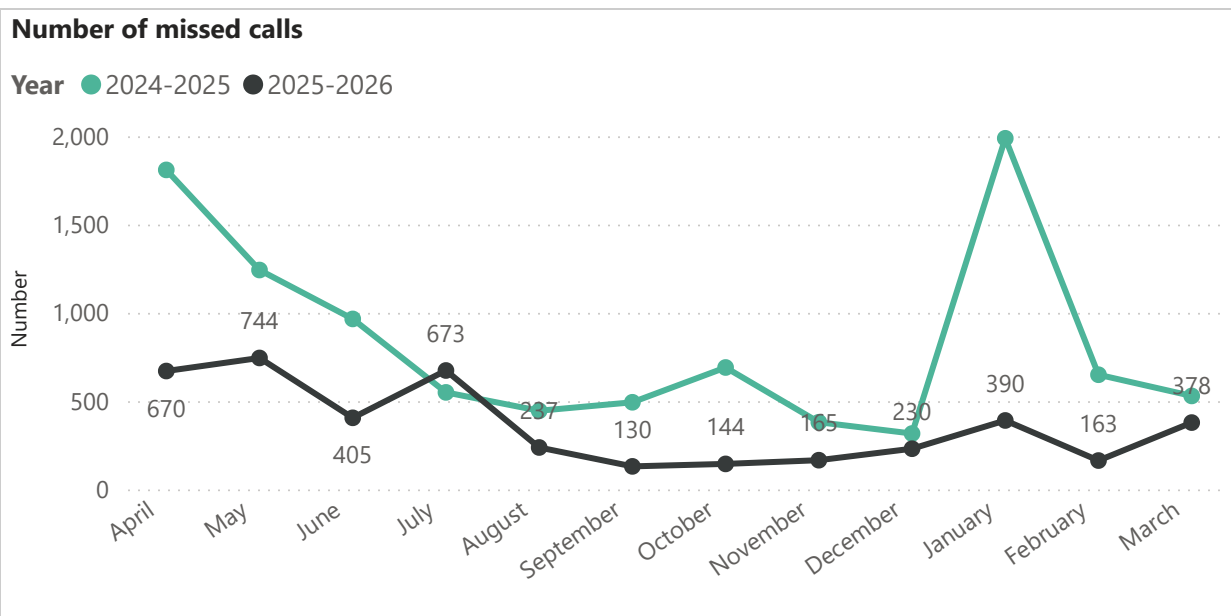
CC03 - Contact Centre Calls



Comment

Over the past year, Galw Gwynedd has received 125,173 phone calls, answered 120,805 and missed 4,368, meaning that we answered 3.61% of all phone calls that came into Galw Gwynedd. The number of calls answered is 5,929 fewer compared with the number answered during 2024-25, but the number of calls missed during 2025-26 has decreased (see indicator CC03a) compared to 9,603 calls missed during 2024-25 (a difference of 5,235). This suggests that customers have not had to phone back, as they were answered the first they called by Galw Gwynedd. In October 2025, the Housing and Homelessness One Stop Shop changed their working arrangements and the majority of their customers now go directly to the Housing phone number rather than Galw Gwynedd transferring calls to them. This follows the introduction of a new phone system, Webex, in May 2025, where the technology now enables us to work more efficiently when distributing incoming calls. This has led to an improvement in our performance, as shown in the graph. Of the 120,805 calls answered by Galw Gwynedd during 2025/26, approximately 72,000 of these were either logged as an enquiry in our CRM system or processed as a payment by Galw Gwynedd staff. This means that we deal with approximately 60% of phone traffic within the Contact Centre, without transferring the call to another Service. In addition to this, Galw Gwynedd staff also deal with administrative work generated through digital channels, as well as handling live chat enquiries.

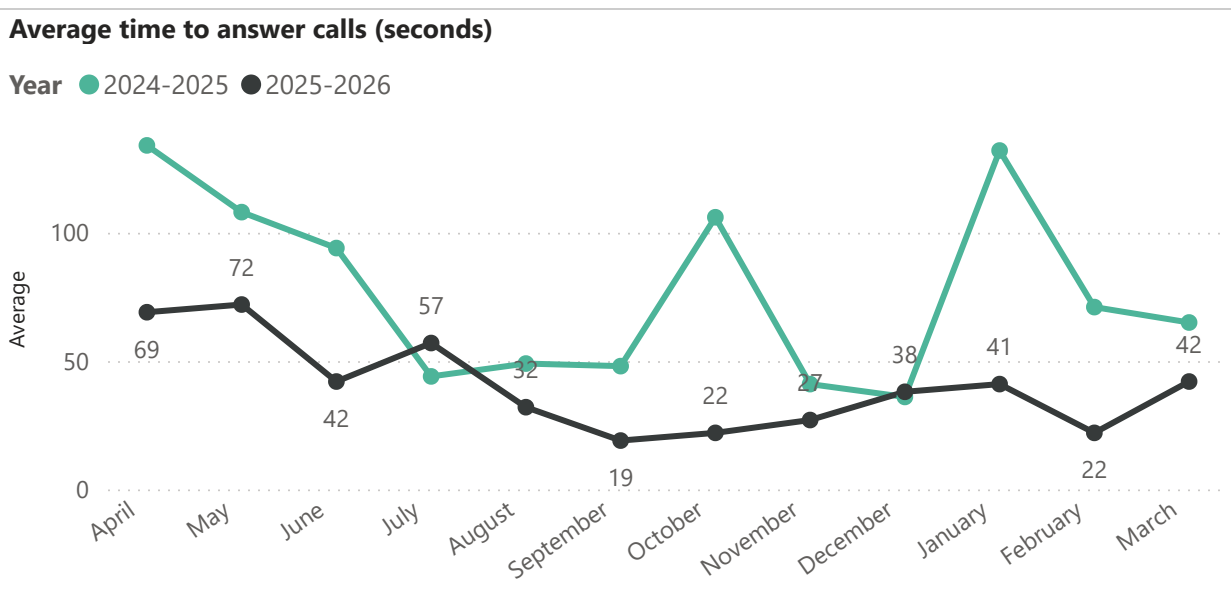
CC03a - Contact Centre Calls



Comment

As noted in indicator CC03, the number of calls missed this year is lower than the figure missed during 2024/25. The graph shows that our performance is more stable due to our improved ability to manage performance, following the introduction of our new telephony system during the past year. We are also working closely with frontline Services to try to avoid significant increases in call volumes. For example, when opening applications for garden waste for the coming year, we avoided launching during busy periods in order to cope with the volume of incoming calls. However, when Services introduce changes without communicating with us in advance, this has a negative impact on customers and leads to unexpected increase in call volumes, resulting in more missed calls. Digital system failures can also have the same effect.

CC04 - Contact Centre Calls

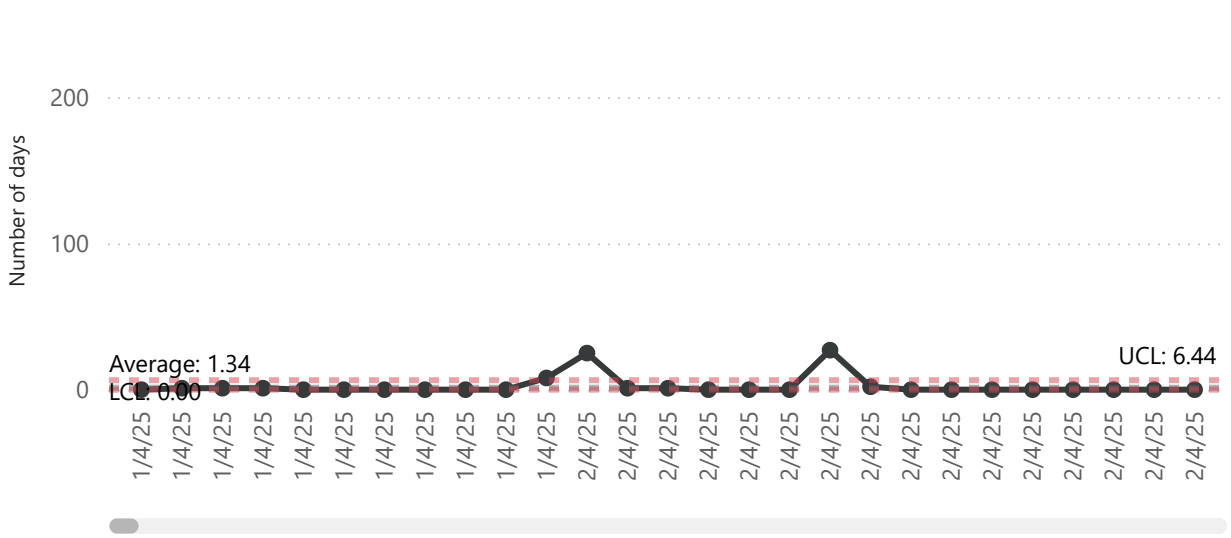


Comment

Performance has been stable over the past year and has met the new Customer Care standard, which is to answer phone calls as quickly as possible and within 1 minute. 42 seconds is an average figure, which means that some customers wait more than 1 minute before their call is answered. This will be the challenge for 2026/27: to reduce the number of residents waiting longer than 1 minute. Since the introduction of the Webex phone system in May, we have access to data that was not previously available. The "call distribution" report shows that Galw Gwynedd answered 87629 calls within 1 minute, which is 81% of all calls answered since May 2025.

CC05c - Blue Badges

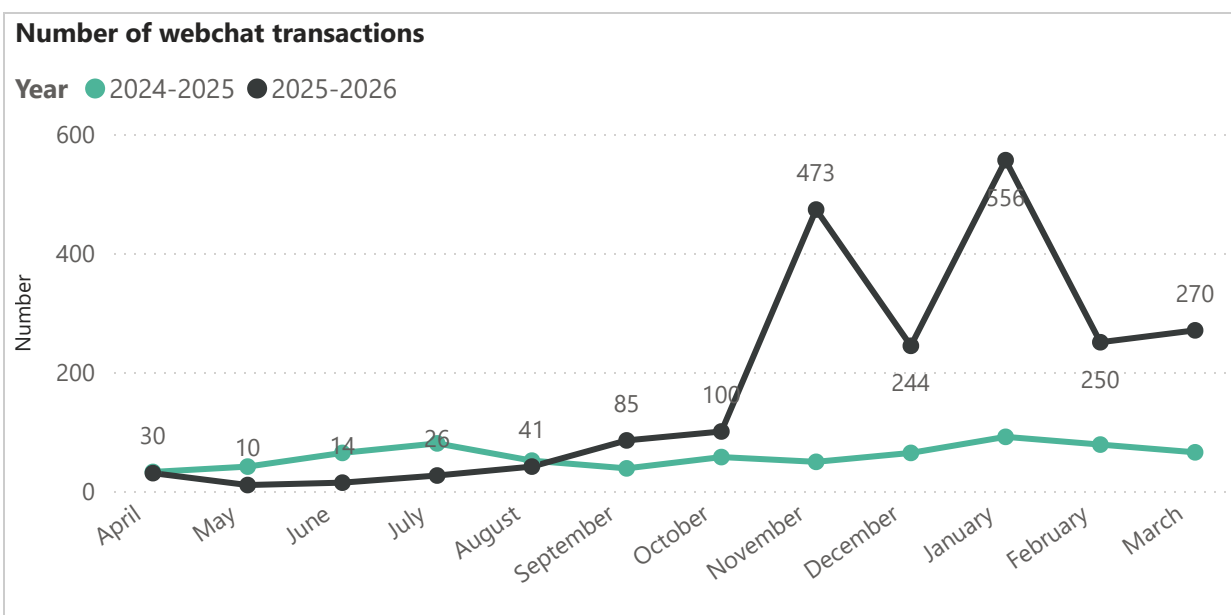
Number of days to reach a decision on an individual's eligibility, for a Blue Badge (applications for one year)



Comment

The past year has been challenging for the Blue Badge team, following an announcement by the independent assessment company Able 2 that they were stopping the assessment of applications with just one week's notice. This has resulted in a small number of customers waiting much longer for a decision on their application, as we did not have access to an independent mobility assessment service. A new company has now been appointed by the Welsh Government to carry out this work, and applications that we are unable to come to a decision on are being referred onward for further assessment. As outcomes begin to be received for individuals who have been waiting some time for a decision, we expect the number of processing days to increase initially, before stabilising again once the backlog of applications has been completed.

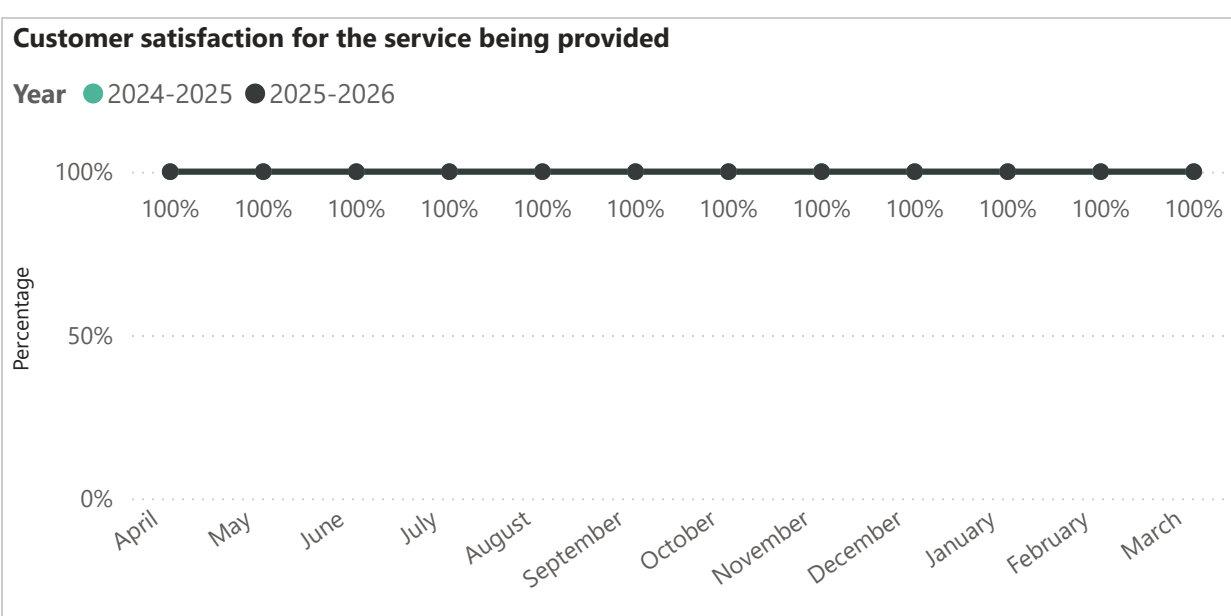
CC06 - Webchat



Comment

The number of webchat interactions has been at its highest this year, with 2,099 live chat transactions handled during 2025/26, compared with 710 during 2024/25. A significant increase is evident in November and again in January due to PSBA issues, during which time we lost the Self-Service system on the Council's website for a period (1 day in November and 1.5 days in January). However, the number of people using live chat has remained higher than the previous year, after these two events. We have two members of staff monitoring live chat between 9am and 5pm, where staffing levels allow.

CC09 - Customer Satisfaction - Registration Service



Comment

No dissatisfaction has been reported with the Registration Service over the past year.



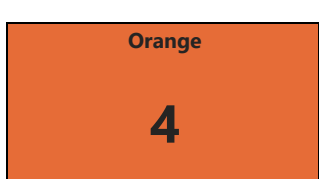
Back Forward

Purpose

- To support and develop individuals and teams to achieve their role to the best of their ability, in order to provide services of value to the people of Gwynedd
- To develop and foster a culture that enables staff and Members to give their best for the people of Gwynedd
- To attract and develop an appropriate workforce for the future
- To contribute to the development of plans that improve services for the benefit of residents and communities of Gwynedd and local businesses

Newid i Gymraeg

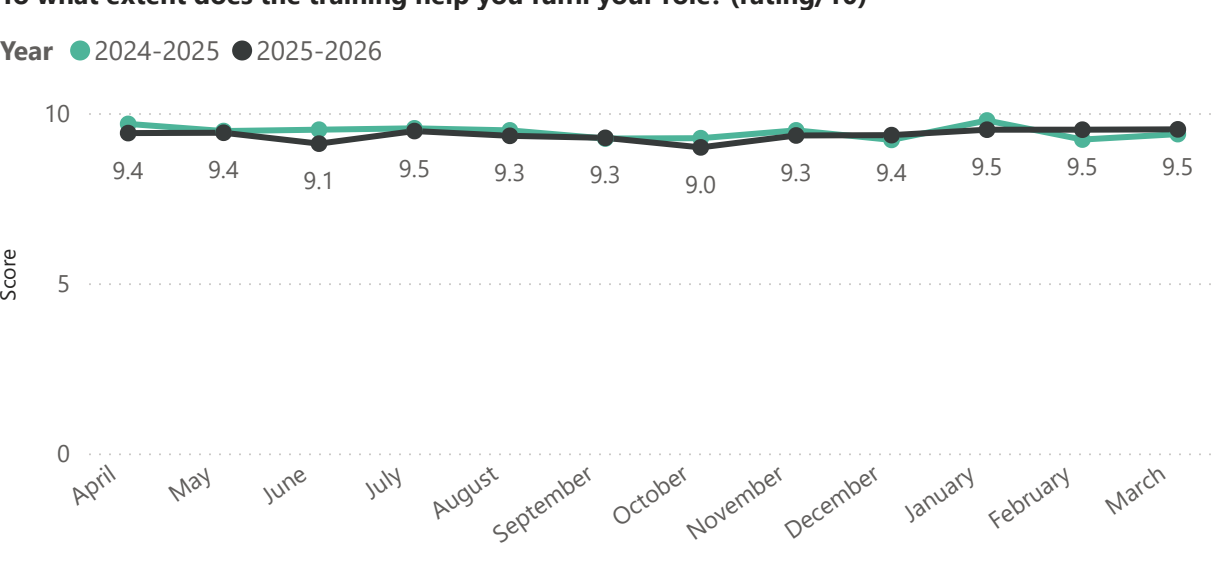
Current Risks



[Click here to see the risks](#)

DD1.1 - Training - Satisfaction

To what extent does the training help you fulfil your role? (rating/10)



Comment

When analysing monthly the score that attendees have given for the training they have attended, we see that many of the titles consistently receive 10 out of ten. These are courses that are mainly run by Council for Management staff.

The courses that receive the lowest score tend to be those run by external providers. The lowest score is 8 out of 10 – which isn't really low.

It is clear from this data that Council staff are mutually supportive and appreciate receiving training from experts in their field.

DD1.2 - Development Programmes

Comment

Apprenticeship Scheme and Cynllun Yfory – On the 16th of April, 20 apprenticeship and 6 Cynllun Yfory positions open. A promotion and engagement strategy is in place and hopefully a good response will have reached us by the end of May.

Staff Voice Survey – The survey ran for 5 weeks. Overall, the numbers who responded to the survey were a very similar figure to last year. On closer analysis, the numbers of responses from departments with high office staff increased e.g. Corporate Services and some departments failed to get many staff to commit to completion.

Welcome – A Project Group and Induction Document is in place to inform the Welcome Period Project to shape a consistent and fair structure for all new members of Council staff.

Managers' Network - Develop a more robust programme and organisation for the Managers' Networks including a first-time 'Paned with Managers' trial to encourage greater networking between Council Managers.

DD1.3 - Developments

Comment

- Learning**
- * Pilot sessions held
 - * Democracy for Managers Presentation (January 2026) – 'The course was brilliant, especially considering this was the first time it was delivered. It was completely practical, and the information presented at the right level'
 - * Having Difficult Conversations (February 2026) – 'I would recommend the training as I have learnt a lot of how to plan a difficult conversation, whatever the topic. It is information that can be transferred to a large number of situations'
 - * Procurement & Contracts (March 2026) – 'The training was adequate for my purpose, foundation and advanced sessions might be useful for those who need to get into the subject in more detail'
 - * IOSH Rheoli'n Ddiogo has been held entirely in Welsh for the first time, i.e. delivered in Welsh and with Welsh resources/materials (February 2026) – 'Welsh is my first language and Welsh is the council's internal language of operation so I think it is vital that all training materials are available in Welsh'
 - * Upcoming Pilot Sessions (all in-house trainers)

- Business**
- * Recently gone through the procurement process for 3 different titles (notice at Sell 2 Wales)
 - * An external provider commissioned to run the Conducting Difficult Conversations training (following a successful pilot starting in February). This training is specific to managers and team leaders.
 - * We have an external provider running a Disability training pilot session for us in May (this has been delayed due to unforeseen circumstances on the provider side)
 - * In discussions with an external provider who may be able to run Anti-Racism training for us.
 - * The intention is to go out and look for providers for the next Decisiveness training and Persuasion and Influence training.

- Digital Learning**
- * New e-modules live on the e-learning Portal – Information Management, Anti-Racism, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Trauma-Aware Practice in Wales
 - * Policies that have been accepted at The Center policy is fed to the Self-Service daily and automatically – technical development.
 - * Learning and Development Service 'Wordpress' page has been developed for frontline workers; The site is expected to go live in the coming months.
 - * MASTERCLASS - Delivering Effective Training on Microsoft Teams; piloted and run.

- Safeguarding**
- * Map out categories of posts covered for Protection and VAWDASV
 - * Discussions need to take place following this, with the Support and IT Team in terms of designating the category of each post, and ensuring that a filter is added on MODS where it shows the category of Safeguarding training
 - * A Safeguarding Page has been created which will give Council staff access to key safeguarding information
 - * Group A Safeguarding Training Video completed (English and Welsh) and piloted with the Department of Environment in the first instance
 - * The Corporate Protection Champion to go out to the Team Leaders of the frontline staff to go through the process (show the video, get the staff to sign an attendance register, and distribute promotional posters, record the staff on MODS)
 - * The other three Departments covered following the above (Education, Housing and Property, Highways and YGC)
 - * Sub Promotion Group meets 17/4 to discuss Safeguarding promotion plan

- Welsh**
- * Bilingual Teams Support Guide – draft completed and in the process of receiving feedback.
 - * Maes Gofal Project – expect to be able to continue for a year (not yet approved for funding). Mair Rees to continue as tutor. Over 80 have enquired about lessons and around 50 have received lessons so far (care home and domiciliary care staff).
 - * PowerBI Language Identifications Dashboard available to heads of department – message sent to all heads to point out.
 - * Cymraeg Clir – adapted two job descriptions of the field of care in conjunction with Nia Lewis from the Language Unit.
 - * A 10-session Language Refresher course scheduled from January-March 2026.
 - * Neurodiversity (April 2026)
 - * Good Decisions (April 2026)
 - * Technoleg Cymraeg (April 2026)

DD2 - Changing the Culture (contibution to Ffordd Gwynedd)

Comment

Work is underway to analyse the results of the recent Staff Voice Survey. This will assist us in creating focus groups and identifying a strategy as we move forward with this work.

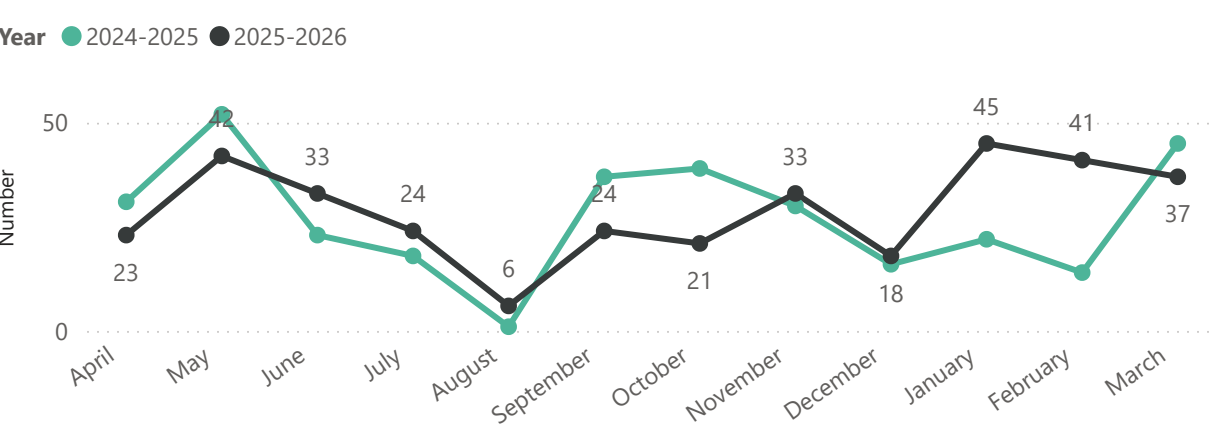
DD3 - Priorities

Comment

Implement and develop on the Learning and Development Framework (2025/2026) ensuring quality, refining bespoke engagement and advancing the work. Develop a Framework for Senior Officers and Members. Expand on our training/support provision frameworks by addressing the needs of the job level range. Continue to develop and support the work of Workforce Planning and Talent Development. Continue to establish and set up Business and Commissioning arrangements in order to obtain concrete steps from the commissioning of work and to ensure the quality of the work of the service.

DD4 - Training

Number of training courses delivered per month



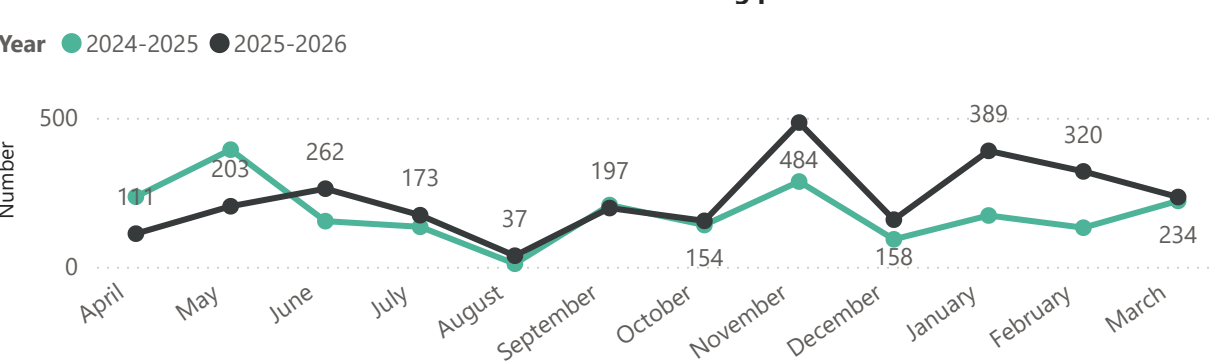
Comment

Higher numbers of training have been taking place since January than in the previous year. As the Learning and Development Programme continues to be unraveled and new titles arrive on the Panel, it is good to see that there is a greater variety of courses being run as well as more titles running.

January – Number of events 45; Number of Titles 23
 February - Number of Events: 41; Number of Titles: 21
 March - Number of Events: 37; Number of Titles: 28

DD5 - Staff and Councillors who have received Training

Number of staff and councillors who have attended training per month



Comment

The graph shows the numbers of unique individuals who have attended training courses. it is very encouraging to see more staff engaging with the Learning and Development Programme and benefiting from being able to attend the new courses being delivered.

DD6 - Feedback from Events

Comment

Does not include feedback from pilot sessions.

January
 DISC - Interesting to hear about the different types of employees. Be able to look at individuals' professional behaviour in a different way following the training. It will be a great help to me in my role to be able to communicate effectively with other team members.
 An Introduction to Democracy for Managers - A great session that everyone should have, especially as managers/team leaders, in order to properly understand the Council. I've worked in the council for over 15 years but I've learnt things I've never heard/understood before.
 Effective Presentations - Creative. Realistic exercises as good examples.

February
 Clear communication – Having enjoyed every aspect of the training in today, it was very helpful. My only suggestion is that we get a small message/update every 3-4 months so that the principles are still alive for us. The case studies were entertaining and the practice of trying sentence modifications. A practical and interesting session where I can use everything that has been discussed in work and real life. Thank you Llior – obviously an expert and explains the principles very well. Very practical - increase the size of the text on the slides. Explain technical terms earlier e.g. "Cystrawen" / "gylunu" - not everyone may know what all the terms mean.
 Data Protection - Useful and practical training that was easy to follow and offered useful information for day to day work. A very interesting course, a refresher as I haven't been on a data protection course for several years now. A great deal of good practice to use from the course.

March
 Leading Change – Training triggers one's interest to undertake a process of change, whether small or large. A practical and valuable course.
 *The fact that the course was very interesting and we got to do practical tasks that were really helpful to our team. The coach was very knowledgeable and obviously the interest of my new job as a team leader and it was extremely beneficial to join the rest of my team as we could work together.
 *Extremely entertaining training which is going to help me immensely in my work to lead the changes we have in the pipeline. Managing the change is a clearer and more orderly floor after I attended yesterday. It has given me the confidence to Plan and deliver the change to the team. Kotter's 8 steps will be very useful. I wonder if you can get a copy of the presentation please. A big thank you to Nia Meleri for a fun, relevant training full of information and advice.
 Procurement and Contracts - A clear session of the principles and purpose of procurement rules – a good starting point. A great help to understand when enquiries need to be made about the advice of those more experienced in the field and who the points of contact are. It might be beneficial to tailor short sessions to different levels within departments – so that there is a clear understanding at all levels of what the principles are, and what is 'right'. For a potentially confusing/heavy topic the session was clear and gave a comprehensive presentation... While I am not acquiring, rather following a framework, it is LGBT to understand what the principles are and the work that is going on 'behind the scenes'.
 Equality – LGBTCR+ – The coach was very knowledgeable of the subject. We had important conversations in order to understand which vocabulary is appropriate to use.



Choose Year
2025-2026

Choose Quarter
Qtr 4

Choose Month
March

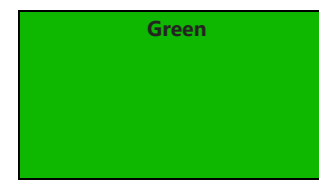
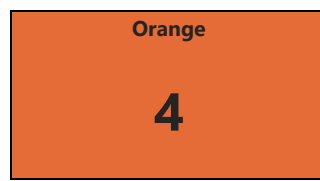
Democracy and Language - Vera Jones

Purpose

To support the Council's democracy arrangements and promote the Welsh language continuously.
Translation - To provide a standard translation service into Welsh and English both in writing and orally for staff, members and Gwynedd's residents.
Democracy - To provide quality support to Gwynedd Councillors
Language and Scrutiny - To promote and boost the use of the Welsh language in all parts of life in the county and lead on Gwynedd's scrutiny arrangements

Newid i
Gymraeg

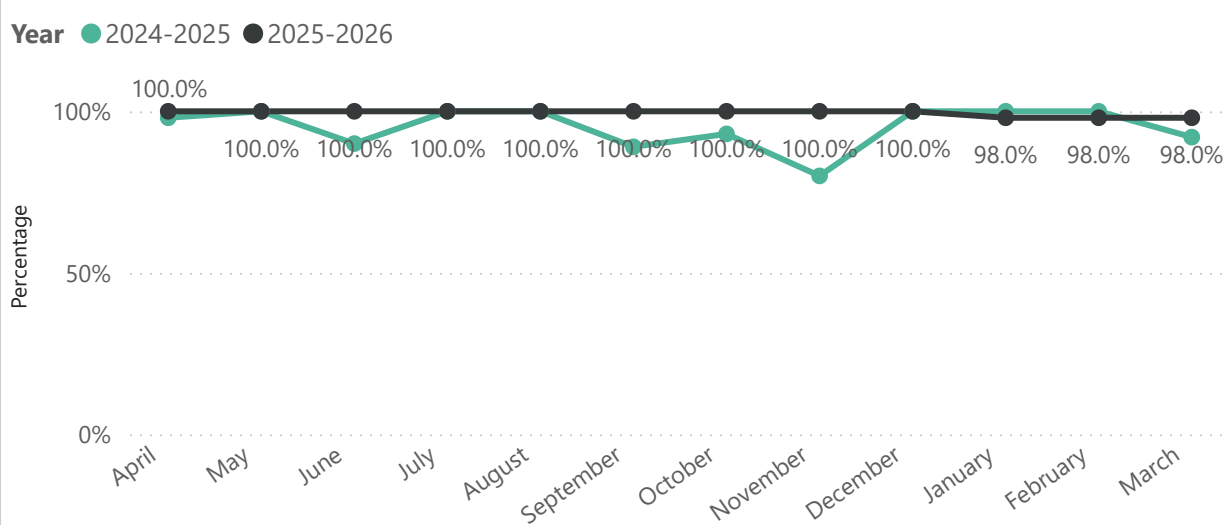
Current Risks



[Click here to see the risks](#)

DI1 - Decision Notices

Percentage of decision notices published bilingually within 5 working days



Comment

109 decision notices were published during 2025/26, with 3 only published late. They were published the following day on all three occasions. The delay was due to waiting for comments and problems with the publishing system.

DI2 - Satisfaction - Elected Members (Yearly)

Comment

Very good - 88%, good - 11%
Elected Members were asked for their satisfaction with the service delivered from the Democratic Team. A full report on the results was presented to the Democratic Services Committee in February 2026. 27 Members responded, with 88% noting that the service was 'very good' and 11% noting that it was 'good', which is progress from the previous year when one Councillor noted the service was 'sufficient'. The teams quick responses and availability were noted as good support.

DI3 - Translation Service

Comment

The team has remained very busy, with a high demand for our service, especially simultaneous translation, within the Council and regionally and nationally.

This year, for the first time in years, the team has been complete in terms of staff numbers, following the transfer of a very experienced translator from GwE in April 2025. In addition, a Trainee Translator who has been a member of the team since 2023 has now qualified and is playing a full part in the team's work in terms of written translation and simultaneous translation.

Unfortunately, the team has faced the same challenges again this year:

- The fact that officers within Council Departments use AI to translate their own formal documents occasionally, but not proof-read them in sufficient detail. There is a real risk for the Council as a result of this that mistranslations will go public - indeed instances of this have happened, or at least almost happened. Whilst the Translation Team uses software that now incorporates machine translation, which greatly speeds up our translation processes, we ensure that these translations are carefully proofread to ensure accuracy and that the usual standards are maintained.

- As previously reported, the technology in the Council's informal meeting rooms is insufficient to be able to hold hybrid meetings with simultaneous translation successfully. In addition, the simultaneous translation element within Teams is still unreliable. We are still waiting for answers from IT regarding these two matters.

The team has received very favourable feedback from our customers both within and outside the Council, including:

"Thank you so much to the interpreter at last night's meeting, she was excellent."
"Just a word of thanks for your translation service at our meeting yesterday. We really appreciate your cooperation and support as a team."
"Great service, thank you very much!"
"Received the translations. Thank you very much for the prompt service."
"I am about to leave Gwynedd Council after two years on an interim contract. I wanted to write to say that the service you offer is incredible. I have been amazed at the proficiency and professionalism of the staff supporting the CJC. Thank you for all your support and best wishes to you all."

DI4 - Scrutiny and Language Service

Comment

It has been a busy year for the team in terms of the scrutiny committees and the projects underway to promote the use of the Welsh language.

We were able to hold and support the usual scrutiny meetings throughout the year looking at a variety of topics, including each department's performance challenge reports, and as a result of a request from members two extraordinary meetings were held to scrutinise the Our Bravery Brought Justice report response plan. For the first time, a request for scrutiny at committee was received from a member of the public, namely the climate plan. The work of the Investigation into safeguarding arrangements in schools continued, visiting 6 primary schools, 3 secondary schools, 1 special school and 1 all-through school as well as holding two task and finish groups prioritised by the Scrutiny Forum – one looking at the education language policy in schools and the other on complaints from departments providing social services. An annual scrutiny report was submitted to the Council for approval later than usual, at the beginning of October, which outlined the improvements that have taken place to the scrutiny arrangements over 24/25. It was published three months later than usual as the team's resources had been prioritised to the work of the investigation and holding the sessions to form the scrutiny committees' work programme.

There has been a great deal of collaboration with officers from various departments and from external organisations in order to promote the Welsh language. The work of Fforwm Iaith Gwynedd which involves over 20 different organisations was co-ordinated. The forum worked on creating a language strategy and setting up sub-groups to look in more detail at the challenges faced by young people in using the Welsh languages, as well as in our communities, in the early years and in business. The young people sub-group, following a consultation with young people aged 16-18 who highlighted that they did not see Welsh as a valuable skill, is planning interventions to promote the Welsh language as a valuable skill. Prosiect 15, which seeks to influence young people's social use of the language on social media, has also been further developed with a focus on trying to get more suitable content, use influencers and increase followers.

We have contributed to the work of the Welsh Language Sub-Group of the Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board and the work of the Breaking the Myths about the Welsh language project which is a resource to assist organisations in recruiting Welsh-speakers in north Wales. Input was given to a group on increasing the internal use of the Welsh language by the Welsh Language Commissioner and also to a workshop held to create a language framework that intertwines with workplace education qualifications based on the latest CEFR framework. An officer provided input into the creation of the TUC Cymru's Welsh Language Growth Charter. A member of staff attended the launch at the National Eisteddfod and was a member of a panel discussing the importance of Welsh in the workplace and what others can do to increase the use of Welsh in the workplace. The Cabinet gave its approval for the adoption of the charter before Christmas.

Work has continued with the Welsh place-name protection project during the year with attention being paid to promoting place names in schools and increasing visibility through the installation of Welsh signage. The project ended at the end of March 26 but the work of installing Welsh language signs when they require updating will continue for some time. Comments were also made on 41 impact assessments submitted with planning applications. As usual, Cyngor Gwynedd's annual compliance report with the Welsh Language Standards was published and attention was paid to improving compliance in a number of areas including social media, website, impact assessments and complaints.

DI5 - Democracy Service

Comment

109 formal Committees were held during the year, with 48 of those meetings being hybrid meetings which were webcast. There were 22,052 views of the webcasts.

In the wake of the Our Bravery Brought Justice Report - 3 extraordinary meetings were held - of the Full Council, the Care Scrutiny Committee and the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee.

Two new members were elected during the year and there was a period of induction for both.

The technology in the chambers has been challenging throughout the year with ongoing network, external systems and audio problems being the main challenges. However, due to the persistence of the team, it was possible to hold all the committees as well as webcast the meetings to the public.

Preparations for the 2027 election have begun, with workshops with members to be held early in the new year to get their views on the

draft plans.



Back

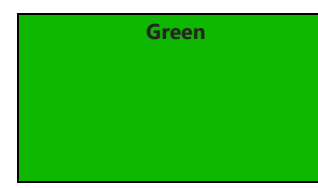
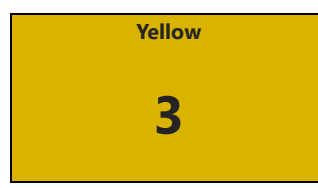
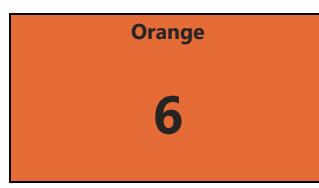
Forward



Purpose

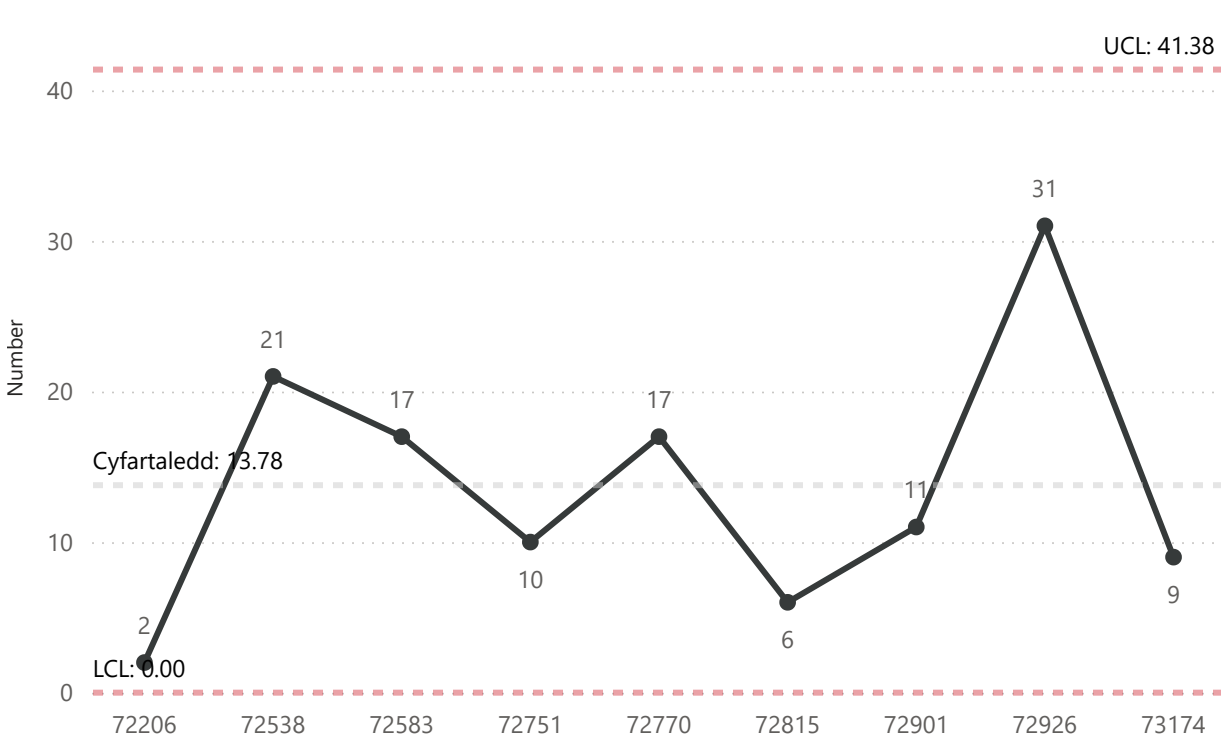
To provide expert guidance, advice and training in the areas of Health, Safety and Well-being in a proactive and efficient manner. This is to enable the Council to address requirements and reduce internal risks.

Current Risks



ID1.1 - RIDDOR Reports (Quarterly)

Average time to complete RIDDOR reports during the last quarter

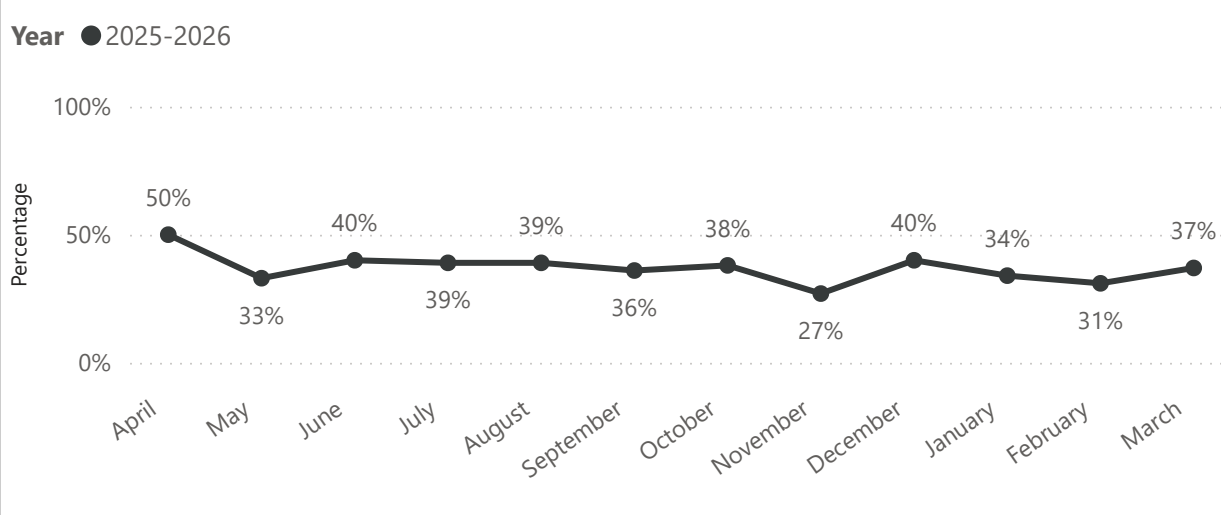


Comment

This is the time, in days, it has taken for the Health and Safety Unit to report the RIDDOR incidents of the last quarter of 2025-6 (i.e. the period between the date of the incident and the reporting date). Half have been reported within the legal timeframe (i.e. within 10 or 15 days depending on the nature of the incident). The other half was late. 72926 was the incident that took the longest to be reported (31 days) because it went unreported by the service for a month. 72538 and 72770 took 21 days because the line manager was late investigating the incident and therefore the information required to report under RIDDOR regulations was not available promptly. Incident 72583 (17 days) was slightly different, the nature of the situation had to be discussed back and forth with the relevant Headteacher in order to work out whether or not it fell under the RIDDOR regulations. We hope that the digital system will allow incident reporting and reporting under RIDDOR to be more prompt.

ID2.1 - Referrals to Occupational Health

Percentage of workers who have returned to work following advice from OH after being referred



Comment

Between April 2025 and March 2026, 1,070 referrals were received by the Occupational Health Unit.

704 members of staff attended an appointment at the Unit, and 451 of those 704 appointments related to staff who were absent from work.

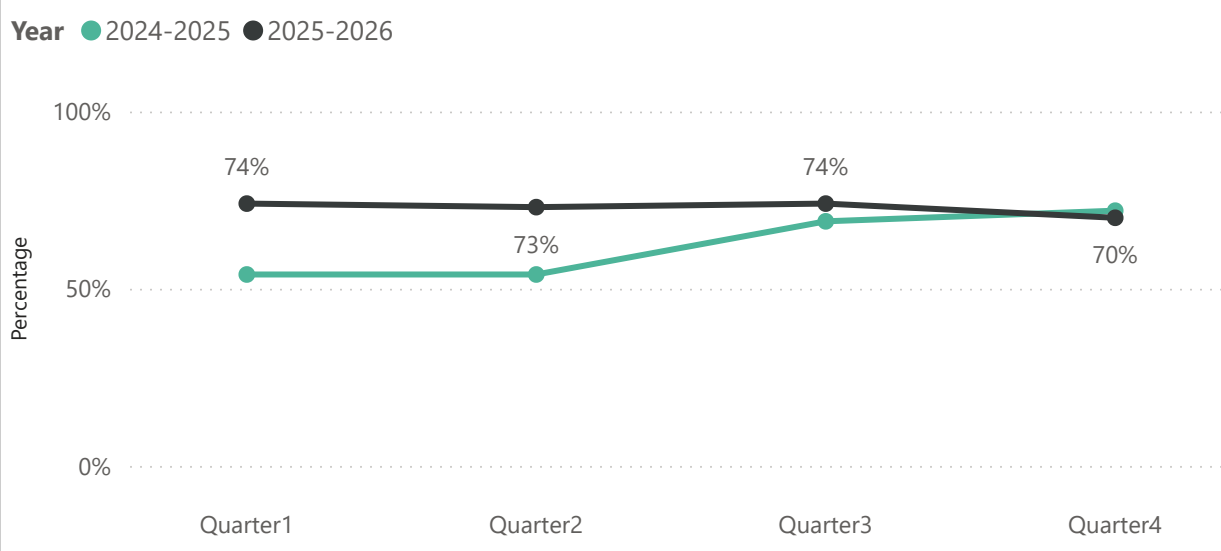
Following interventions such as risk assessments, phased return programmes and reasonable adjustments, 170 individuals have confirmed that they are returning to work.

There is currently a four-week waiting list for an appointment

This performance measur has been reviewed and updated information / data will be presented for the year ahead.

ID3.1 - IOSH Training (Quarterly)

Percentage of managers who have completed a Safe Management IOSH course



Comment

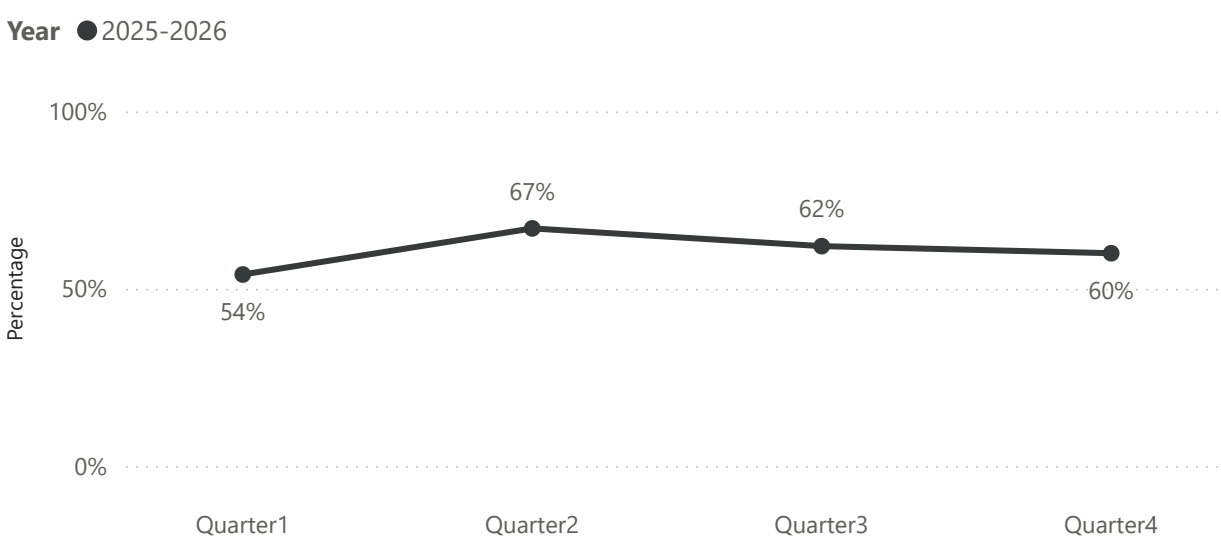
70% of managers (including Deputy Heads of Department, School Headteachers, Service Managers, Team Leaders/Supervisors, and Site Managers) have completed IOSH Managing Safely training within the last three years – either the original course or a refresher course. This is a decrease from 74%.

Unfortunately, even though courses have run since the last performance meetinf with courses fully booked for some months before hand, a high number did not turn up on the day or sent their apologies last minute, leading to a reduction in the percentage. For 2025-26 course, 20% of delegates did not turn up on the day. This is despite efforts by the Health and Safety Unit to target managers and to let Heads of Departments know which manages have not attended, and efforts by Learning and Development to raise a fee if delegates do not provide a reasonable excuse for not attending. It is possible that turnover in managers also adds to the problem.

Over the next quarter, the courses are again fully booked, with 85 managers registered to take the original course or a refresher. Without allowing for any turnover, this would mean an

ID3.2 - Site Management Training (Quarterly)

Percentage of managers who have completed a Site Management course

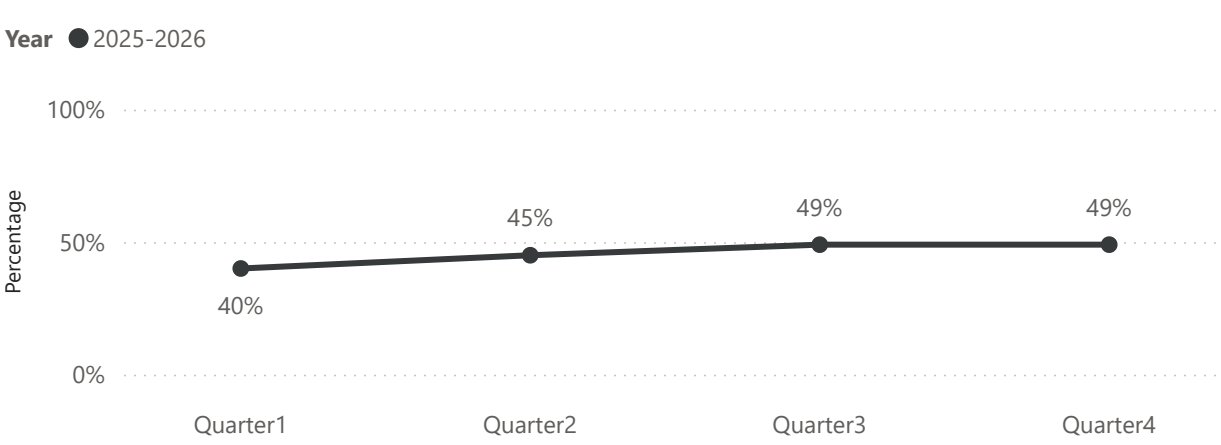


Comment

60% of site managers have completed the Site Management Training in the last three years - a decrease from the 62% reported in the last quarter for similar reasons to IOSH. This includes site managers who have completed an online refresher course (this has been available since the end of 2024). If every manager who needs a refresher completed the elearning modue available for this purpose on-line, the percentage would be over 80%. We have endeavoured to raise awareness with direct email messages and via Heads of Departments. There are three further face to face courses programmed for this year, and with full attendance it would be possible to increase the percentage to over 75%.

ID3.3 - i-Act Training (Quarterly)

Percentage of managers who have completed i-Act course

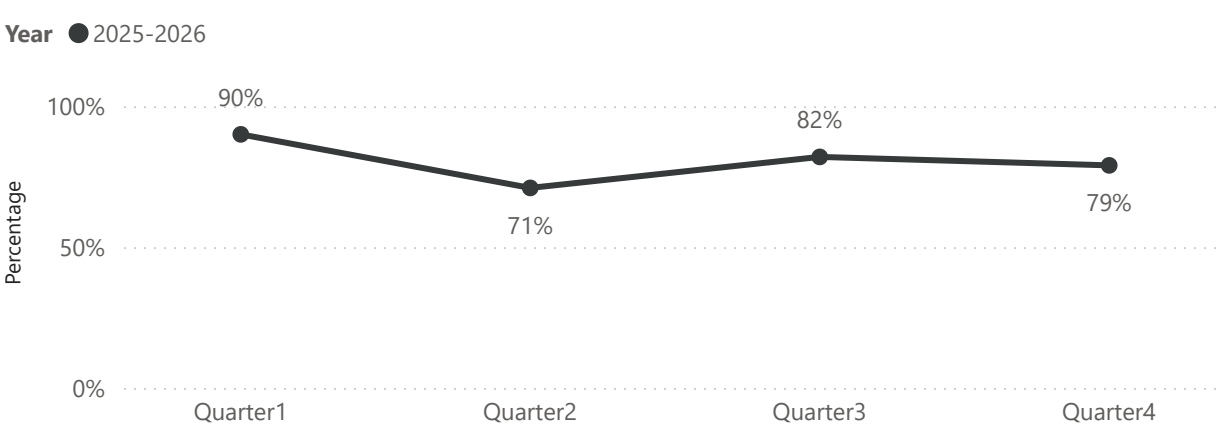


Comment

A meeting has been held with the Learning and Organisational Development Service to discuss further promotion of the course.

ID4.1 - Hearing Tests (Quarterly)

Additional hearing tests that have been conducted following a change in the law

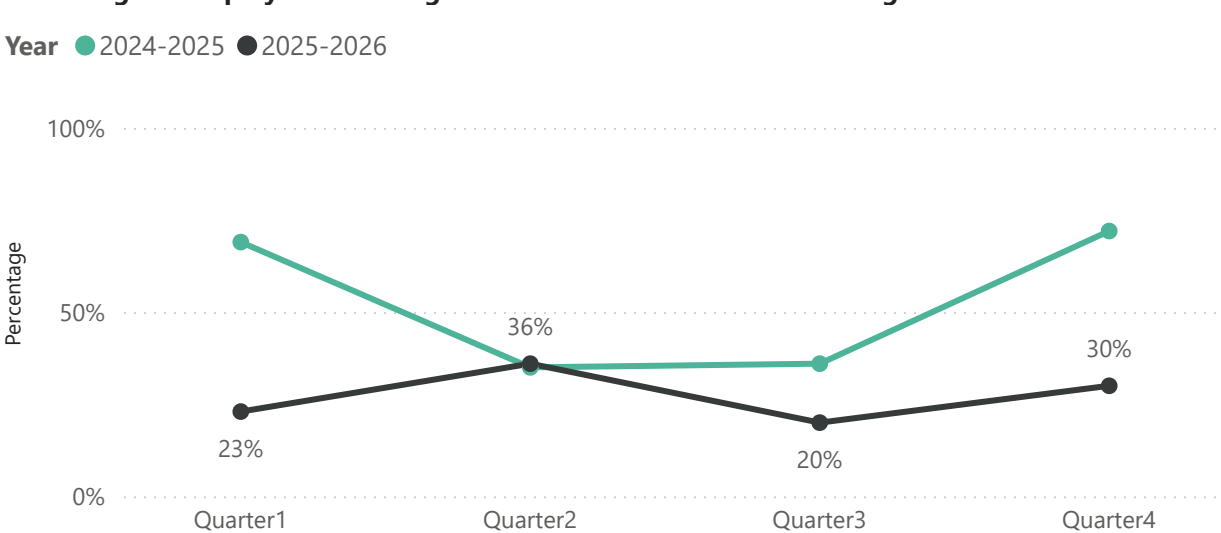


Comment

This year, 439 individuals have received health surveillance tests. Due to the change in legislation, 350 individuals need to be recalled for additional hearing tests

ID5 - Counselling (Quarterly)

Percentage of employees receiving more than the four core counselling sessions.

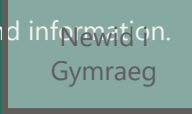


Comment

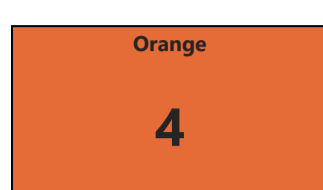
Between April 2025 and March 2026, 409 Council staff were referred for the confidential counselling service. Of those, 122 received additional sessions beyond the four core sessions

Purpose

Enabling the Council to handle and manage information in line with statutory requirements and to use it to make the best possible decisions, and enabling the public to get access to data and information.



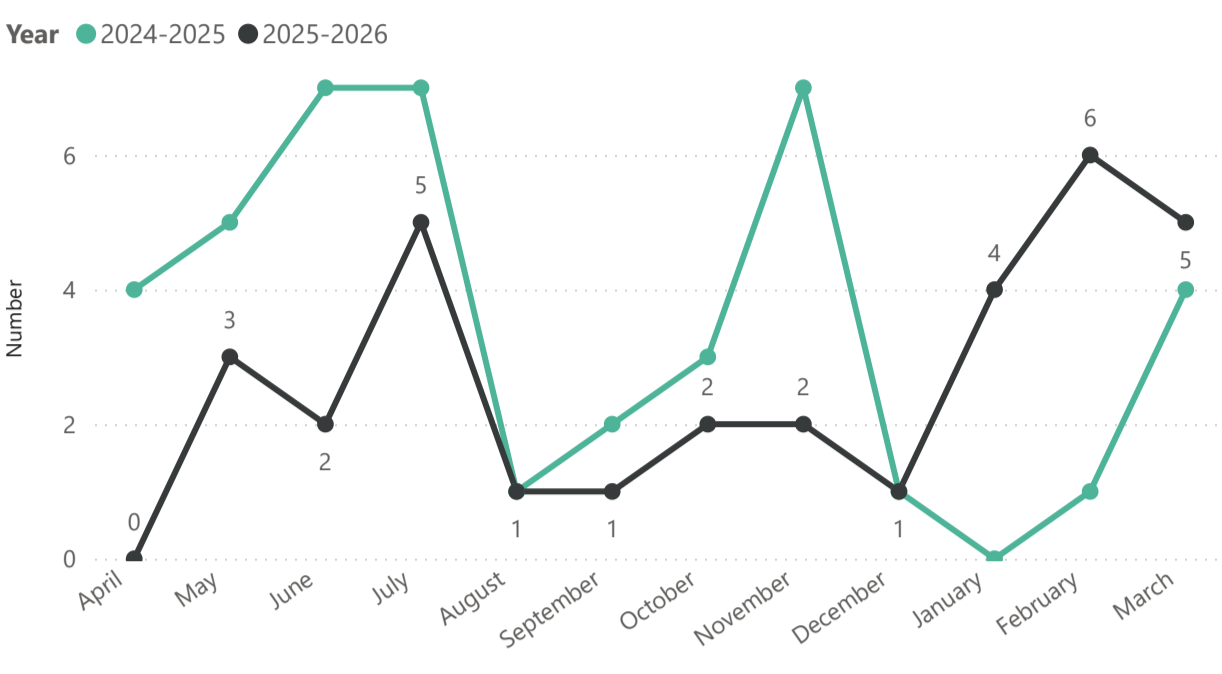
Current Risks



[Click here to see the risks](#)

YG1 - Data Breaches

Number of data breaches reported to the Data Protection Officer



Comment

Despite the fact that slightly more breaches were reported in January – March than in previous months, over the year as a whole there was a significant decrease (29 in 2025/26, compared to 42 in 2024/25).

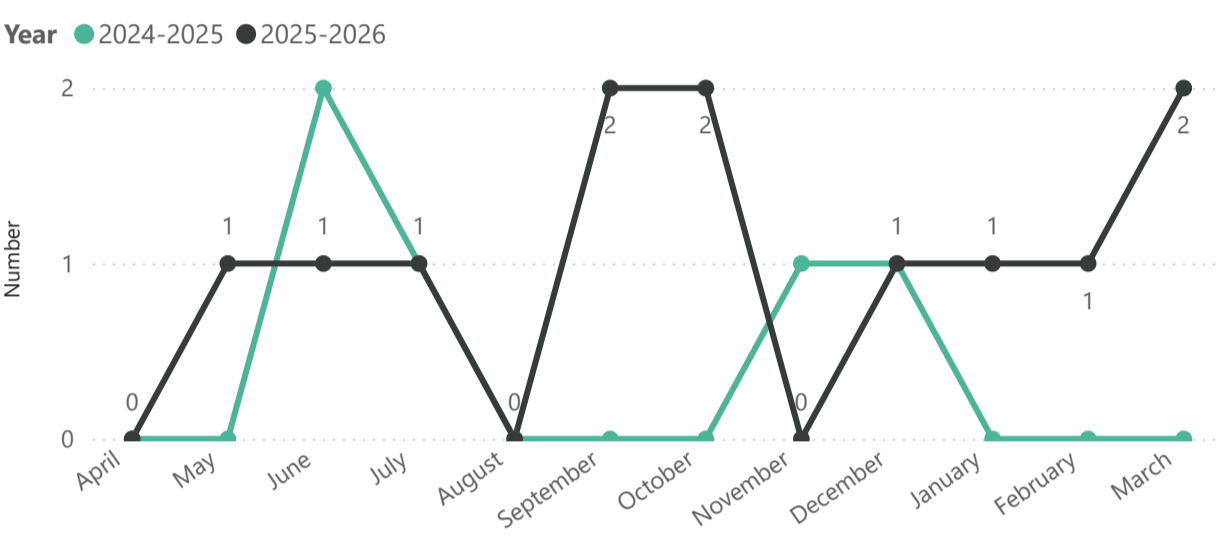
This pattern is very encouraging, particularly as it has taken place at a time where we are aware that incident reporting arrangements have been improved and strengthened in a number of Council departments. It suggests therefore that efforts to train and raise awareness of this area are bearing fruit, and we will continue to pay attention to this.

In terms of Departments, 9 of the breaches were in Corporate Services, 5 in Education, 4 in Adults, 3 in Housing and Property and the remainder 1 or 2 in all other Departments.

The majority of incidents (18 out of 29 in the year) continue to result from emails being sent to the wrong recipient - although this number has decreased slightly following awareness raising and changes to the email system, it seems to be very difficult to achieve a further reduction in this element. However, with over 5 million emails being sent in the Council annually the errors relate to a very small proportion of them.

YG1a - Data Breaches - Schools

Number of data breaches reported to the Data Protection Officer



Comment

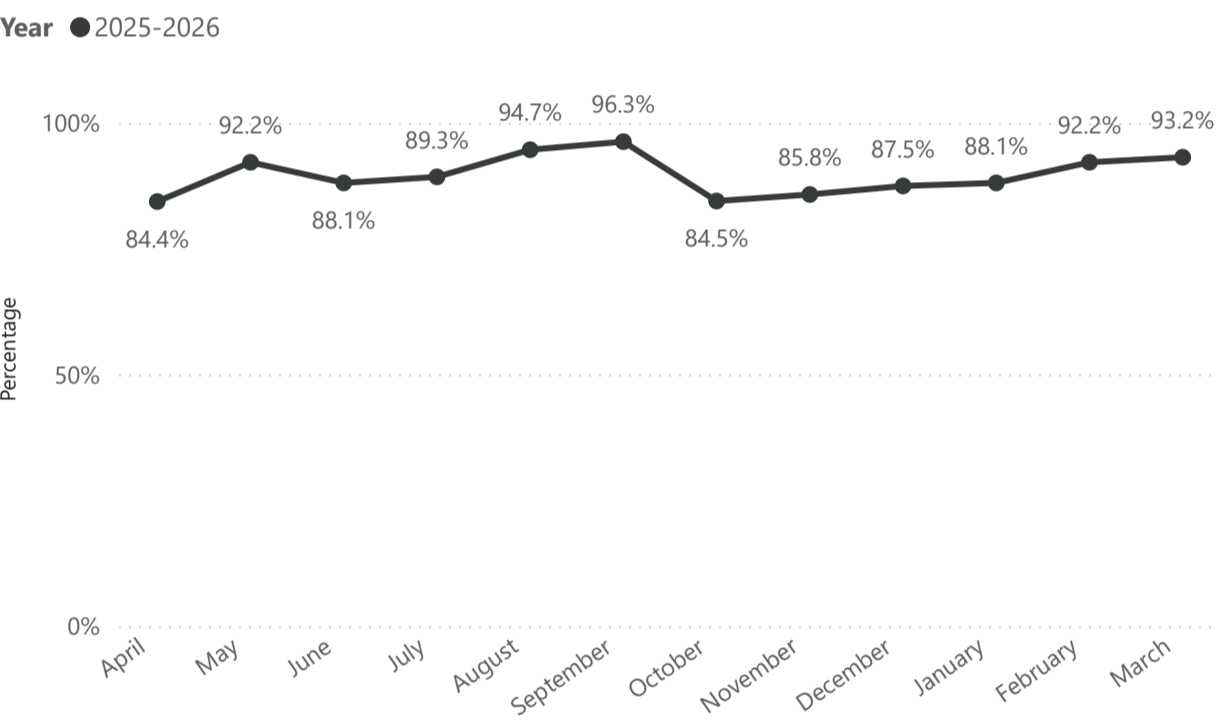
There were 12 information breaches reported by Schools in 2025/26, compared to 5 breaches in 2024/25.

On the face of it therefore performance would seem to have deteriorated, but we have been going around schools during the year to hold training sessions to raise staff awareness of the need to report breaches, and arrangements for recording and reporting breaches in schools have been significantly strengthened this year.

We will be keeping an eye on the pattern of events over the next year and continue to raise awareness.

YG2 - Freedom of Information Requests

Percentage of Freedom of Information Requests answered within 20 working days



Comment

** March figure is currently provisional (target date of some applications submitted in March has not yet been reached) **

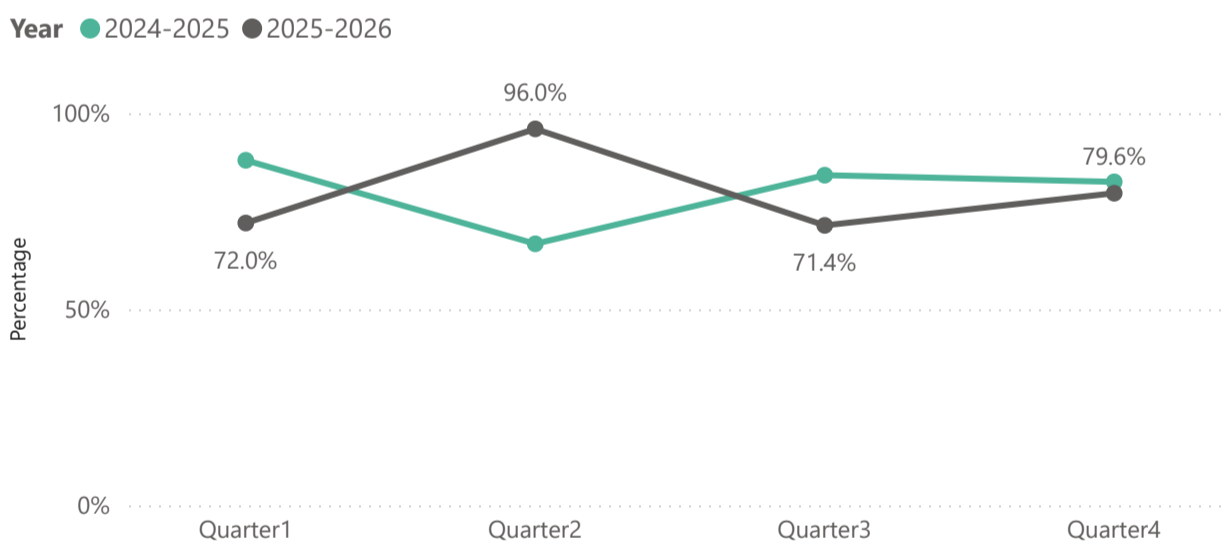
The level of performance has improved significantly this year (the 2024/25 figures are not shown in this chart as it could not be measured on a monthly basis, but the percentage for the whole of 2024/25 was 76%; the 2025/26 composite percentage was 89.9%). This is also in the context of an 8% increase in the number of applications received (from 1,132 in 2024/25, to 1,222 in 2025/26).

We continue to be of the view that this improvement stems from efforts to raise awareness of the field, strengthen arrangements and policies and introduce a new mandatory training course for staff; as well as the higher profile of the field in general following the Information Commissioner's Office audit during the year. The 'live' performance dashboard published during the year has enabled officers to keep a constant eye on the situation and respond to any reasons for delays as they arise.

To improve the percentage even further, it would be necessary to either increase the capacity to respond in the Departments (which is unlikely) or be proactive in publishing more information on the website – so we will be focusing on that over the next year especially as the Council will be launching a new website.

YG3 - Data Protection Requests (Quarterly)

Percentage of Data Protection Requests answered within the timetable



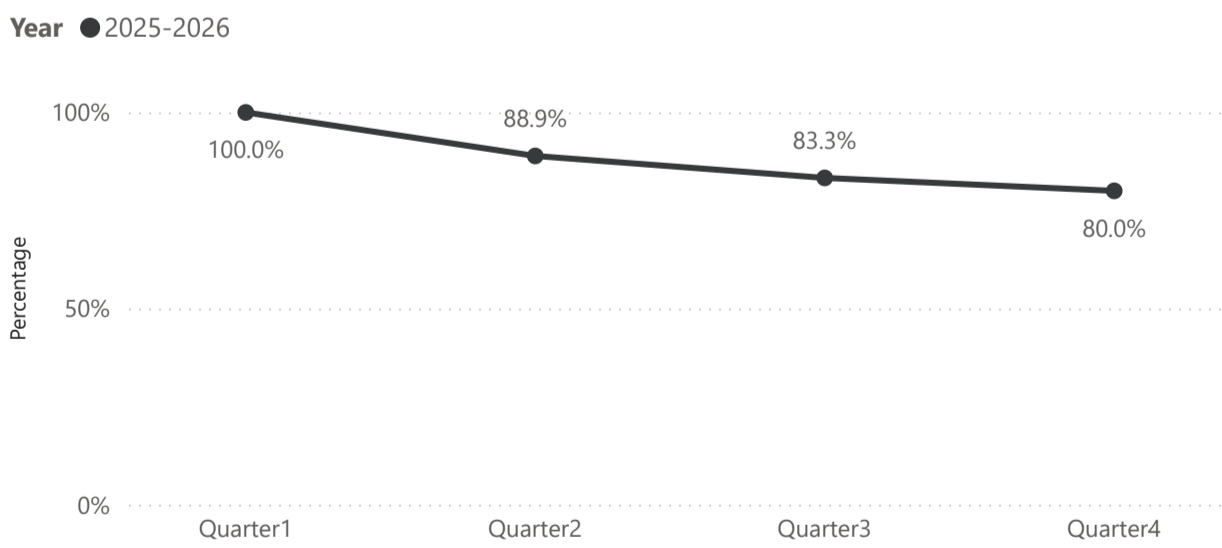
Comment

The number of applications doubled compared to the previous year (113 in 2025/26, compared to 57 in 2024/25). Given this, the fact that performance has remained more or less constant (80% in 2025/26, compared to 82% in 2024/25) is very commendable and reflects the attention and hard work that has had to be devoted to this area during the year.

Other councils in the region have also reported seeing similar increases in numbers, across a range of different services – much of the increase appears to be related to the increasing use of AI by applicants to help them prepare applications. This, and the implications in terms of the resource needed to fulfil the requests, will need to continue to be monitored over the next year.

YG3a - Data Protection Requests - Schools (Quarterly)

Percentage of Data Protection Requests answered within the timetable



Comment

Of the 25 applications responded to in the year, 20 were answered within the timetable (Provisional figure as a further 5 applications are still open and currently still within the timetable).

This figure is very close to the percentage for answering data protection requests across the Council (measure YG3 above), with similar issues arising in terms of the complexity of some requests and the resource available to respond to an increasing number of them.

YG4 - Research and Information Projects

Comment

Gwynedd is the first local authority in Wales where all schools have adopted the Personal Information Sharing Accord (WASPI) – this ensures that, whenever sensitive information needs to be shared to protect a pupil, it will be done in a totally standardised way, securely and with absolute legal confidence. A note of thanks was received from the Welsh Government stating that this displays a commitment to the appropriate sharing of personal information in order to protect students and stems from the dedication of the Schools Data Protection Officer along with the Education department and school leaders.

Following work over the year on achieving the 'Information and Data' element of the Council's Digital Plan there has been a significant increase in the use of dashboards with 25 dashboards now established and maintained by the team including reporting on staff completing mandatory training, data on local areas of Gwynedd, and analysing the results of the Llais Staff survey. There will be further work in this area in the next year including the ability to share dashboards more widely in a secure way.

We have visited the management teams of all the Council's departments recently raising awareness about different elements of iGwynedd and the potential to use it to facilitate service improvements. There has been positive feedback to these sessions and we will follow up on the various points raised.

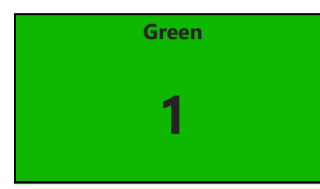
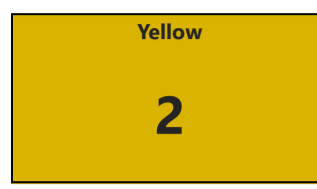
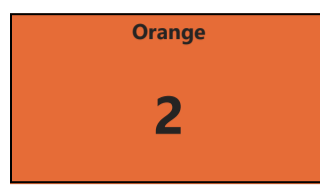
We have been part of the Llechen Las (Identifying the opportunities for services for children with disabilities) project group contributing analysis and research into demographic changes and trends in the numbers of disabled children and the demand for services locally and nationally.

Purpose

To support managers and staff to be satisfied and productive in their work, by providing advice and guidance on employment and equality issues and promoting good practice in both areas
To lead the work of developing local working conditions, and ensuring that equality issues are central to the work of all our services.

Newid i Gymraeg

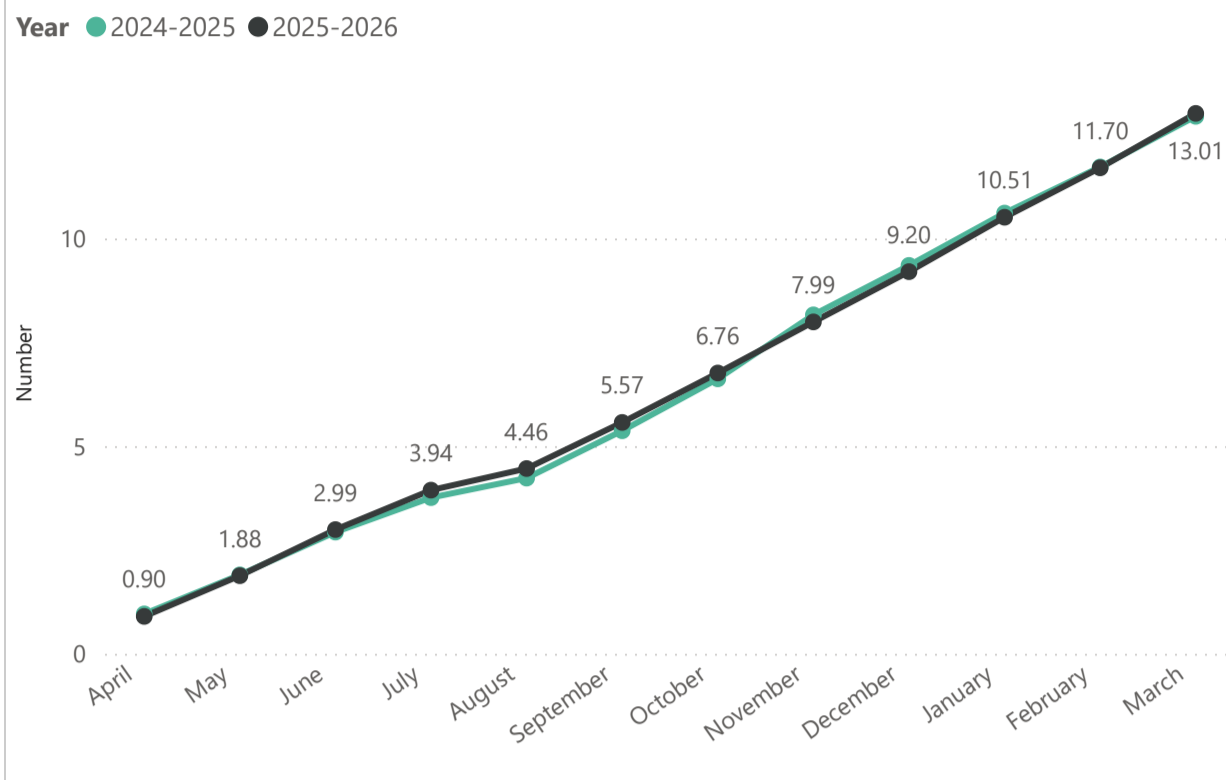
Current Risks



[Click here to see the risks](#)

AD01 - Sickness Days

Average number of staff sick days per person in the Council



Comment

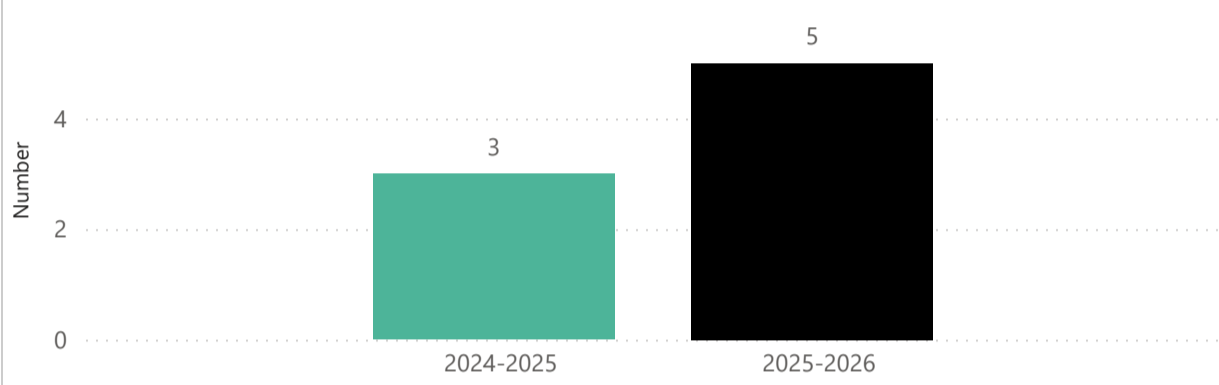
The Council's level of sickness absence continues to rise, with the cumulative total up to the end of March 2026 standing at 13.01. This pattern has been consistent for several years now. This is a cause for concern, given last year's estimated cost arising from sickness absence, not to mention concerns regarding staff health and wellbeing and the potential impact on service resilience.
The following initial steps have been put in place to address this situation:

1. The situation has been escalated to a high level on the corporate risk register.
2. Sharing analysis of departmental sickness levels and actions with the corporate management team and departmental management teams.
3. Investment of time with managers and team leaders to follow processes and to hold timely and effective conversations with staff. Research in the human resources field shows that holding timely and effective conversations with staff, and following processes correctly and consistently, leads to a reduction in sickness levels over time.

A great deal of good work is already taking place within departments and through a number of support services in this area, but the current situation calls for specific intervention to complement this work.

AD02 - Employment Appeal Committee (Yearly)

Number of appeals decisions supporting the employer's decision (employment cases referred to the Employment Appeal Committee)

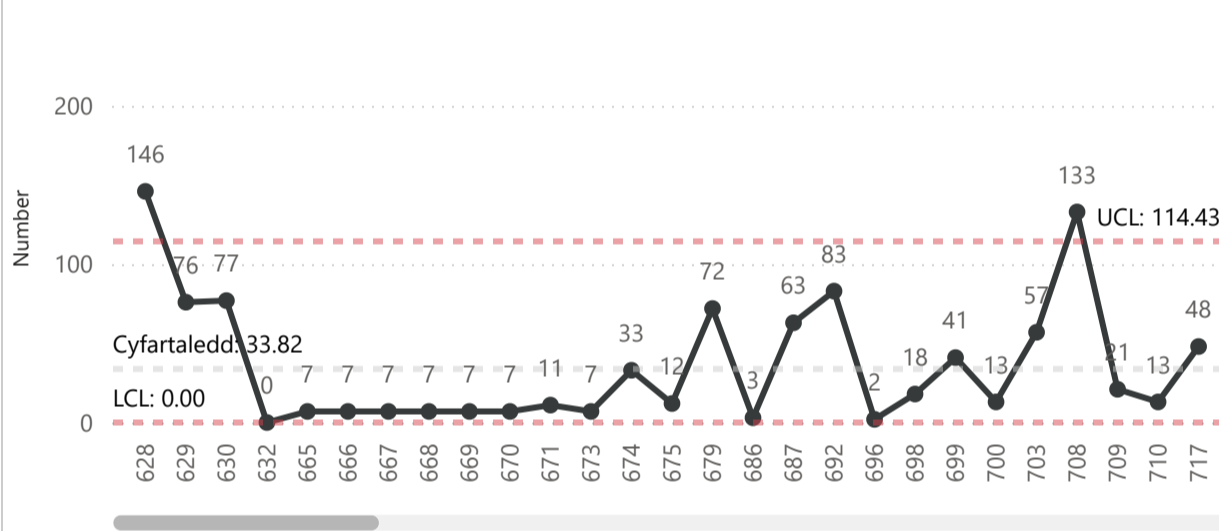


Comment

This measure shows how many decisions made by the Employment Appeals Committee result in a change to the Council officers' original decision in relation to employment cases. The work of this Committee can highlight concerns about decisions or patterns of events and cases within the Council generally or within specific departments.
During 2025/26, the Committee dealt with 7 cases, with 5 decisions being consistent with the original decision of Council officers and 2 decisions overturned (29%).

AD03a - Disciplinary

Number of days taken to complete staff disciplinary proceedings



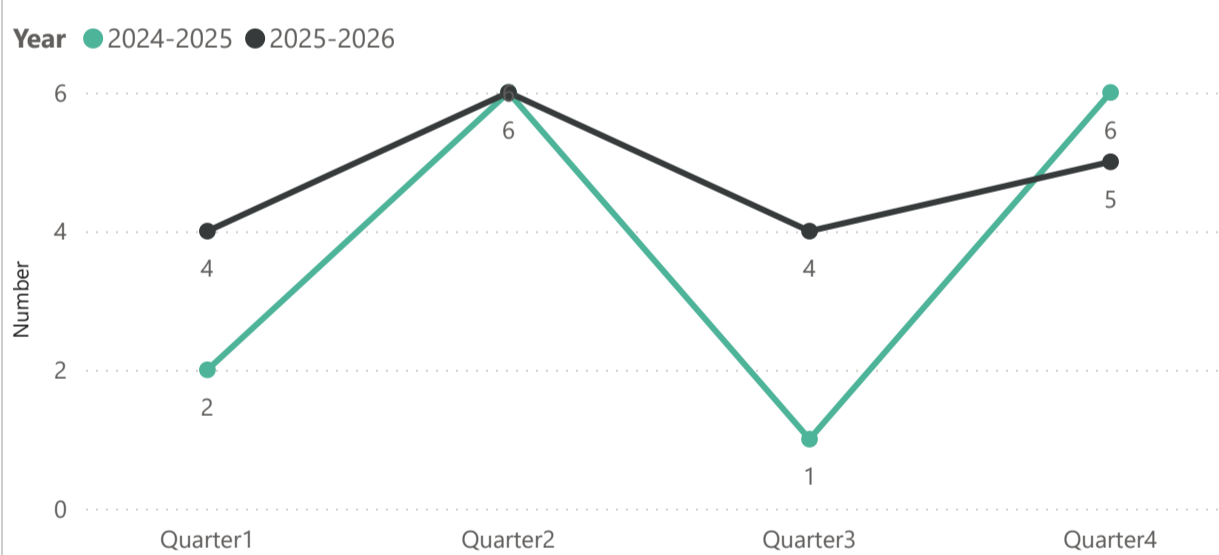
Comment

During 2025/26, 148 new disciplinary cases were recorded, with 115 cases closed and 33 remaining open. The graph shows that 4 cases during the year to date exceeded the upper time limit for completion.

As a team, we will review the circumstances of these cases and reflect on whether there was anything we could have influenced in order to resolve them sooner. A number of cases can be very complex, but we believe it is important at the very least to challenge ourselves as an employer regarding how we deal with situations of this nature in the future, and whether there are any improvements we can make to our processes here at Gwynedd Council.

AD03b - Complaints (Quarterly)

Number of staff complaints

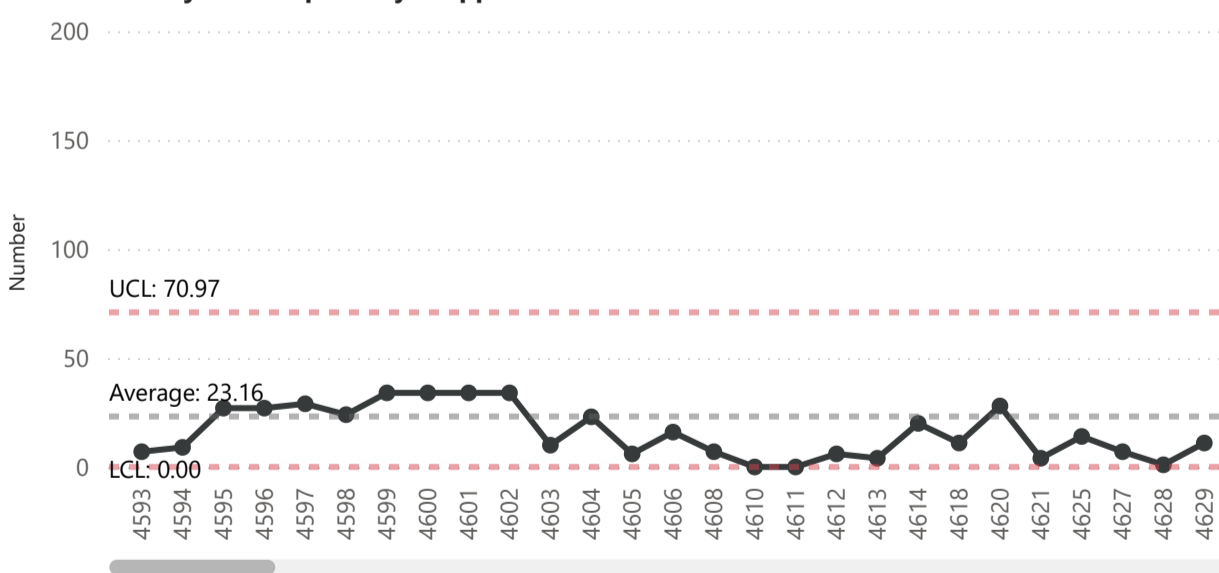


Comment

A total of 19 formal grievances were dealt with during 2025/26, with 5 of these cases being received during Quarter 4. The number of grievances is slightly higher than the previous year, when 15 formal grievances were submitted. Despite this, figures remain relatively low, considering that they include formal grievances submitted within schools as well as across the wider Council services.
The comments made in this report regarding the impact of processes on staff wellbeing in relation to disciplinary cases are also relevant to grievance processes. We will work with the trade unions to explore how processes in this area can be improved where possible.

AD04 - Completion of Job Appraisals

Number of days to complete a job appraisal



Comment

During 2025/26, 218 requests were received from managers to carry out job evaluations, and 182 of these were completed. Completion times continue to vary, with an average of approximately 23 days. Six evaluations took significantly longer than the average to resolve, and as a team we have already reviewed those situations.
The main impact of such delays on departments is their ability to amend roles or restructure services. Understanding how important this is, we as a team seek to prioritise those evaluations, sometimes at the expense of requests to backdate job adjustments and pay changes for individual members of staff. Amid the wider demands placed on the Service, job evaluations tend to receive the lowest priority when there is significant pressure on the team.

2025/26 – 218 evaluations received, 182 completed
2024/25 – 147 evaluations received, 126 completed

AD99 - Other Activity by the Service

Comment

Human Resources:

The team has continued to have challenging periods in terms of capacity over the past year due to periods of absences and resignations. In addition to this, the operational element of Human Resources work continues to be heavy on the team's resources. New members have now joined the team on a temporary basis to help increase capacity and to help move forward with some of the team's key projects. These are some of the main successes of the Human Resources team over the past year;

- Continue rolling out a training program for Managers and Team Leaders on the Sickness Absence Policy
- Service has been part of the design and running of several chief officer appointment processes, within the Council and regionally
- Collaborate with the 5 Councils on the dismantling of the GwE service with TUPE implications/restructuring/and redundancies. There was no tribunal case following the dismissals.
- Assisting with North Wales Ambition Board TUPE to CJC

Equality:

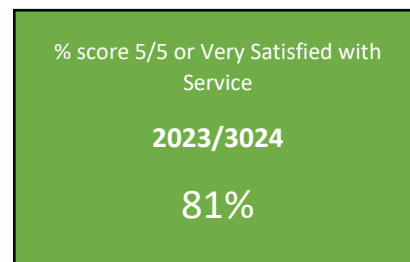
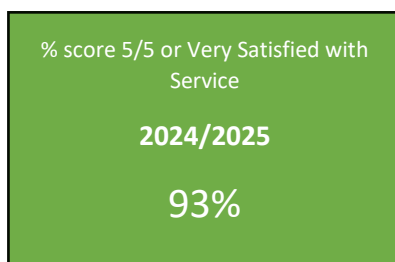
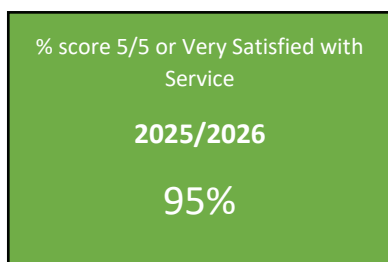
- Work continues to respond to the judgment of the Supreme Court in the case of For Women Scotland vs The Scottish Ministers. Although the ruling came into effect immediately on its publication in April 2025, in practice the ruling means that organizations need to consider how they can meet the requirements of the relevant laws in full. The publication of detailed guidelines by the Commission is key to that, especially due to the fact that their interim guidelines have been withdrawn.
- An Equality Forum has been established with a program of quarterly meetings and specific items relating to live employment issues within the Council e.g. the development of human resources policies.
- Achieve Level 2 Accreditation of the Disability Confident standard and aim to achieve Level 3 Accreditation next.
- Training was provided on new areas - e.g. LGBTQ+

MEETING	Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee
DATE	18 June 2026
TITLE	Corporate and Legal Cabinet Member Performance Report
REASON FOR SCRUTINY	To report on the performance of Legal Services .
AUTHOR	Iwan G D Evans – Head of Legal Services
CABINET MEMBER	Councillor Llio Elenid Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Legal and the Welsh Language

LEGAL SERVICE

Nia Grisdale – Legal Services Manager

Purpose : To provide the Council with a legal service that enables it to work effectively for the benefit of the people of Gwynedd "



2025-2026														
Score	Percentage [%]	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
Very Satisfied 5	95%	19	11	7	8	7	9	8	5	10	18	20	18	140
Satisfied 4	5%	1		1	3		1							6
Fairly Satisfied 3														
Dissatisfied 2														
Very Dissatisfied 1														
Total questionnaires returned		20	11	8	11	7	10	8	5	10	18	20	18	146
Number sent out		40	29	23	74*	77*	25	15	7	28	26	74	76	494

The performance of the Service is monitored by seeking the feedback of the Departments who use the service. Opinions are measure against a scale of 1-5 in the form of a simple email and the monitoring procedure has improved. (5 = Very Satisfied down to 1 = Totally Dissatisfied). It is also possible for sections to add a comment along with a rating. During the 2025-2026 financial year, the result were 100% very satisfied or satisfied with the service.

A new system of soliciting feedback by filling out an email questionnaire has been brought into force since March 2024. In 2024-2025 only about 14% of questionnaires had been returned, which is clearly low but over the year work has been done on promoting and encouraging Clients to complete responses. Over the year 30% were returned.

There were also specific comments about the service including:

- Accessible, easy and easy to access quickly, well explained and supportive.
- Communicate quickly and clearly.
- Very timely response. Particularly good collaboration. Specialist legal advice for specific clients. have helped to get positive responses and outcomes which mean better outcomes for the individual and have been able to save money for the Council
- Quality service at all times.
- Received valuable guidance on many complex areas over the past year
- [particularly good] relationship with staff and trust in the council

There were also comments on room for improvement:

- Speed of response to requests.
- Explain the costs of outsourced services.
- We are getting more complex cases and need a lot more legal support, the support we are getting is excellent but we need more specialist legal resources to support
- Set a timetable for the work.
- Arrangements for responding to queries and consistency in the quality of guidance
- Track queries and response time. Staff would appreciate knowing that a request had been recorded and when they would likely receive a reply or guidance.

These responses will be discussed at the next team meeting considering action points and any changes to our systems to ensure it meets the requirements of client departments. In addition, an invitation has been extended to all heads of department that any further conversation or discussion about the provision is welcome.

In addition to a questionnaire at the end of each case, an annual questionnaire has been sent to the Heads and Managers of the department asking for their views on service as a whole. The questionnaire was sent out in mid-February and received about 33% of responses. There have been very positive responses with all responses saying that the service currently being offered is good or very good.

- We receive legal advice and assistance in matters of education modernisation and education properties, leases etc
- I think the contact has improved recently and responded to our questions sooner. The contact is friendly and easily talk to them.
- The guidance is of quality and thorough.
- I feel we are receiving a great service – a timely and always supportive response to the service.
- Excellent, extremely supportive and valuable

- Over the past year we have had quite a bit of support from the legal department, and the process has been very smooth
- It's been a big help to be able to get in touch with one lawyer for all the support and this has made things easier excellent support. prompt and thorough response

In terms of a suggestion on how to improve the service into the future and what the challenges are, there have been responses to consider it as well as a positive one

- The biggest challenge is their capacity and there is sometimes time between responses creating delays, and as it happens we have a number of questions raised at the end of the day
- No need to improve
- More resources will be needed to deal with the department's upcoming workload in the coming months

DEPARTMENTAL PLANS

We will continue to develop the Legal Team to build resilience within the Team

What has been achieved?

The department has been part of the Cynllun Yfory scheme for some years and has benefited from employing a trainee who has then progressed to qualify and works within the department as a solicitor.

Further, the department has also taken advantage of the apprenticeship scheme and hired the department's first paralegal apprentice. This is working well, and the apprentice is a great help to the department's lawyers.

The service has moved on from it's previous recruiting issues and can concentrate on providing and improving the service for the Councils Departments.

Following some of the comments received as a result of the questionnaires and feedback from Heads an assessment of capacity and expertise within the department will be considered regularly to ensure that we meet the requirements of our clients.

We will be looking to complete work after surrendering Lexcel accreditation for maintaining professional standards of appropriateness and standards

What has been achieved?

The department has now incorporated a new case management system and has looked to incorporate features of the Lexcel accreditation that would benefit the department. We are specifically looking at a form of supporting each other through colleagues' feedback on cases through file reviews (the accreditation was surrendered as a saving) There is no intention to seek the Lexcel accreditation but rather to use some of the principles to develop the way of working and to strengthen systems.

What we've been doing, examples:

What we've been doing, examples:

- Child protection cases – increase in cases involving young people – complex applications before the High court. Many cases are more complex and involve international elements.

- Supporting several Housing Strategy projects – Purchase of an additional 8 properties with a tight timetable before the end of the financial year.
- New work of creating intermediate rental leases, again in order to secure homes for the people of Gwynedd.
- An increase in DOLS applications before the Court of Protection and "ordinary residence" matters ensuring that other Authorities accepted responsibility for individuals who were not the responsibility of Gwynedd.
- A successful agreement has been reached with a Health Board for a significant care package following a legal challenge.
- Directions received for 2 £3.1m purchases to be completed by the end of March
- A first Closure Order was issued to the Council in relation to a shop selling counterfeit tobacco.
- Supporting and amending the Constitution , reformatting the online version
- Traffic Orders
- Parking Order and agreement with communities council
- Legal support stems from Friars' position.
- Dealing with the legal challenge to the Article 4 Direction
- Advising on the drafting of the Staff Whistleblowing Policy review
- Orders in changing the network of public rights within the county.
- Advising on new Legislations – Procurement Legislation 2023; Special Processes under the Public Health Act;

PROPRIETY

Iwan Evans – Head of Legal Services – Monitoring Officer.

Purpose : To maintain the confidence of the people of Gwynedd in the Council by ensuring and promoting the appropriateness of its activities and the highest standard of behaviour among councillors.

DEPARTMENTAL PLANS

We will continue to support and advise on the Council's functions in terms of ensuring constitutional, legal and administrative propriety.

What has been achieved?

This work is ongoing but in particular a series of "Penderfyniadau Da" course are being held . The aim of the courses is to explain the fundamentals of decision-making in public bodies as well as the constitutional and regulatory framework on reporting to e.g Cabinet. The course is now being held for officers with sessions having been held and planned.

We provide comments and opinions on all Cabinet and Full Council reports to ensure legal and constitutional appropriateness as well as generally advising on issues such as the correct decision-making body and policy and strategic issues. This work includes supporting and providing guidance at the highest level to key issues affecting the Council and advising on issues such as a correct democratic path and requirements around key decisions.

We will work with the Standards Committee, Leaders of Political Groups and Members along with relevant officials to maintain and support high standards of behaviour among councillors.

What has been achieved?

The work is ongoing and meetings have been regularly held with Group Leaders during. The fruits of this work will be reported to the Standards Committee but the results are positive and the level of collaboration is good.

We will be completing the training of Gwynedd Council members in Code of Conduct matters by offering in-depth training sessions on the Code to non-attending members.

What has been achieved?

Courses were held in December and January 24/25 and a recording was also provided for the use of the members available online with a test to complete. It is one of the core courses but there are still members who have not taken advantage of the course and this is being discussed with individual Political Group Leaders to highlight and encourage the members to complete the training. We continue to work with the Leaders to press members who have not yet taken advantage of the online course to complete the work. There will be a renewed emphasis on this as the induction programme is prepared for the 2027 elections.

We will support the Standards Committee to develop arrangements to implement its responsibilities towards Town and Community Councils by offering training sessions.

What has been achieved?

The Standards Committee undertook a review of the joint relationship with Town and Community Councils and identified that there was a need for action to strengthen this partnership. To complement this, a virtual training course has been prepared for them. This provision will be a standing arrangement for the Town and Community Councils going forward.

We will review and ensure adequate resources to support requirements on the Service arising from regional work

What has been achieved?

The requirements and responsibilities of a Monitoring Officer and providing legal support to the CBC had increased significantly in the last 12-18 months. This meant that there was a significant impact on capacity to fulfil the role of Head of Legal in Gwynedd or to adequately provide for the CBC. As a result it was agreed that the CBC would establish a full-time internal role to meet their needs and release the Headteacher back to work in Gwynedd. These arrangements were put in place during February. The role of Monitoring Officer has now come to an end.

We will continue to keep the Constitution under review aiming to complete the main tasks by December 2025

What has been achieved?

This will include:

Review of Officer Delegation Plans - **completed**

Review the provisions of Section 11 Officers within the Constitution in conjunction with the Human Resources Service. **Need to be completed**

Contributing to the revision of the Bell Singing Order - **completed**

Update as needed

In addition, the Principles of Conduct and Code of Conduct were reviewed following statutory changes published in January.

It must be recognised that this work is on-going and also responds to changing demands.

What we've been doing, examples:

- To give a propriety opinion on all Cabinet and Council reports
- To support and advise on constitutional issues that arise as necessary
- Provide appropriate guidance on Leadership Team issues
- Revision of the Constitution
- Advising the Management Team on corporate issues across a range of issues
- Responding to an increase in the speed of bringing projects forward following a review of the work of the CBC Portfolio Office
- Lead on the establishment of a Joint Regional Scrutiny Committee for the WBC
- WBC – advising on governance and establishing a new Constitution for the body
- Supporting Members with Code of Conduct issues

ELECTIONS AND ELECTORAL REGISTRATION

Siôn Huws Attribution and Elections Manager

Purpose : To ensure that the people of Gwynedd have the opportunity to vote easily, and that their vote is counted in the way they intend.

DEPARTMENTAL PLANS

We will work to support the Returning Officer and the Electoral Registration Officer in particular addressing :

Holding Elections

What has been achieved ?

County By-elections were held in Barmouth and Bethel Felinheli

Senedd Election 2026

The election was conducted on the basis of new constituencies and using a proportional voting system. The new 'Gwynedd Maldwyn' constituency is a combination of the UK parliamentary constituencies of Dwyfor Meirionnydd and Montgomeryshire and Glyndŵr, and involves parts of four local authority areas. The Chief Executive was appointed as the Returning Officer for the constituency, and there were significant implications for the service due to the geographical size of the constituency, the number of voters and the necessary cross-border arrangements. The Service supported the Returning Officer to hold the election in accordance with the requirements with a count and result on 8 May 2026.

Carrying out a Statutory Community Review

We will undertake a Statutory Community Review process looking at the boundaries of certain specific communities and the electoral arrangements (wards and councillors) within the communities across the county.

What has been achieved?

Following initial information gathering, collation and engagement work the intention and terms of reference to undertake a community review and a review of electoral arrangements in parallel were approved. Since then the following statutory actions have been taken:

- November/December 2024 – First consultation period on the terms of reference
- March 2025 - Approval of draft proposals
- March – May 2025 - Consultation period on the draft proposals

Next steps

There has been a slippage in the timetable which meant that the final proposals were submitted to the Full Council on 3rd October 2025. Any changes to community boundaries will have to receive the approval of the Democracy and Boundaries Commission for Wales which has the power to make the necessary order. The changes will take effect in 2027 in time for the next local elections.

Welsh Government Automatic Registration Pilot Scheme

We have volunteered to be one of four authorities across Wales that are part of the scheme. The Elections and Elected Bodies (Wales) Act 2024 has introduced an automatic electoral registration system ('automatic registration') for local government and Welsh Parliament elections, but the procedure must be piloted before it can come into force for the whole of Wales in order to assess the practical implications.

The Act imposes a duty on Electoral Registration Officers to register electors without receipt of an application, where they will have sufficient details. An eligible individual will receive notice and have an opportunity to object to the registration within 60 days.

What has been achieved ?

There are two main streams to the work.

1. The core process of collecting and matching data to identify individuals and register them.
2. Identify and engage with individuals who are unlikely to be identified by the data matching process, and encourage and help them register. Only Gwynedd does this aspect.

Timetable

The pilot period was from January to December 2025 with the registration and engagement activities taking place between June and September. The Welsh Government will then proceed to assess the pilot's advances.

The period during which automatic enrolment was possible ended on 30/09/25. Some engagement work will continue until the end of October where registration support will be offered to individuals delivered through patrols in the voluntary sector.

The Annual Canvas

The Annual Canvas was completed and the Annual Register was published.

Renewal of Postal Votes

As a result of the statutory changes around 13,000 electors have been written to inform them that their postal vote is ending in relation to UK elections. This is in addition to the normal annual process of renewal of postal votes which is coming to an end.

CORONER

Sion Huws Propriety and Elections Manager

Background

The North West Wales Coroner's Area covers Gwynedd and Anglesey. The service is jointly funded by both authorities, but Gwynedd takes the lead role as the statutory 'relevant authority'. This places a duty on Gwynedd Council to ensure adequate resources for the service. The Senior Coroner and Assistant Coroners are appointed and paid by the Council. The service is the responsibility of the Senior Coroner himself. North Wales police provides 'Coroner's Officers' who liaise with families, police, witnesses, doctors, hospital staff etc on its behalf.

Kate Robertson is the Senior Coroner and the Assistant Coroner is Sarah Riley. We employ one full-time member of staff as a personal assistant to the Coroner with additional support coming from the Administrative Unit and the Elections Unit.

We will continue to provide and improve the support available to the Coroner

What has been achieved?

We have continued to work to strengthen the administrative support, by looking at specific processes and developing experience and skills within the Administrative Unit. We have also been reviewing the arrangements with the funeral organisers working on behalf of the Coroner including holding a meeting to give them the opportunity to raise any issues with the Coroner, the Police (who are responsible for calling the undertakers out to death) and the authority.

While agreeing pay is a matter for each Senior Coroner and their authority individually, in practice this has been happening through a Joint Coroners' Negotiation Committee, where the local authority side and the coroners' side are represented, who have agreed a model and scale of pay for England and Wales and the annual pay increase. In March 2025 it was announced that the coroners' side had withdrawn from the Joint Committee because they considered it was no longer an appropriate method of setting their salaries. In consequence it fell on local decision making to address the issue although we were in communication with other Coronial Authorities in forming a response. This was completed with local agreement by the end of the financial year.