



Annual Report

Education Department

2022-23



EDUCATION ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23

CONTENTS

- 1. FOREWORD**
- 2. CONTEXT**
- 3. PRIORITY PROJECTS OF THE COUNCIL'S PLAN**
- 4. THE WELSH LANGUAGE**
- 5. SAFEGUARDING**
- 6. EARLY YEARS**
- 7. THE MODERNISING EDUCATION TEAM**
- 8. LEADERSHIP**
- 9. DATA UNIT**
- 10.SCHOOL GOVERNANCE SUPPORT SERVICE**
- 11.CONTRACTS AND PERSONNEL UNIT**
- 12.CATERING AND CLEANING UNIT**
- 13.EDUCATION TRANSPORT**
- 14.EDUCATION BUSINESS CENTRE**
- 15.CHILDREN IN CARE**
- 16.YOUTH SERVICE**

GWYNEDD AND ANGLESEY ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS AND INCLUSION DEPARTMENT

17.ALN QUALITY SERVICE

18.ALN&I ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE

19.EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE

20.EARLY YEARS SERVICE

21.EARLY YEARS ASSESSMENT AND OBSERVATION SERVICE (ABC UNITS)

22.COMMUNICATION AND INTERACTION SERVICE

23.SENSORY / PHYSICAL AND MEDICAL / SPECIFIC ALN SERVICE

24.SCHOOLS COUNSELLING SERVICE

25.WELFARE SERVICE

26.ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE SERVICE

27.INCLUSION SERVICE

FOREWORD

We are proud to present this Annual Report on Education Services in Gwynedd, which reflects the efforts and progress of our education services over the past year. It looks at the challenges faced, our successes, what has been achieved, and offers a general direction for the future in terms of developing our various education services here in Gwynedd.

During the year we have faced an Estyn inspection and have received a positive report on our Education Services here in Gwynedd. We are proud of what is highlighted as good practice in it, such as our work promoting the use of the Welsh language but accept that there is work to be done in other aspects, such as attendance and inclusion.

This annual report gives a thorough look at the current situation of the Department of Education's individual services. Not all elements of the day-to-day work that the service fulfil are included.

We value the support and contribution of our headteachers, staff, parents, and local communities in implementing our educational strategies. The future will be increasingly challenging as we respond to the challenge of financial austerity and a reduction in the number of learners here in Gwynedd. However, we will ensure that education in Gwynedd remains strong, also continuing to innovate for the benefit of our children and young people.

Thank you for your continued interest in the work of the Education Department, we look forward to your comments and feedback on the progress made over the past year.

Many thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Gwern'.

Gwern ap Rhisiart
Head of Education

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Beca'.

Beca Brown
Cabinet Member for Education

CONTEXT

THE VISION OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT: Gwynedd children and young people attaining the highest standards in order to maintain the language, culture and economy locally.

PURPOSE: *Promote the attainment and welfare of Gwynedd children and young people by ensuring effective governance, leadership and management of our schools*

SERVICES WE PROVIDE: Raising Standards, Support Services, School Staff Salaries and Contracts, Teachers' Pensions, School Catering, School Cleaning, School Transport, Health and Safety, School Admissions, Support for Governors, Financial Support for Schools, Information and Communication Technology, Data Unit, Human Resources Support for Schools and the Education Department, Attendance and Behaviour, Education Welfare Service, Additional Learning Needs, Child Protection, Leadership, Management and Training, Modernising Education and the Welsh Language.

WHAT DOES THE DEPARTMENT DO?

- Support children and young people to attain the highest standards.
- Ensure that pupils with Additional Learning Needs receive the most suitable support.
- Ensure that pupils with emotional and behavioural needs are fully included within Gwynedd schools.
- Ensure that pupils within Gwynedd schools are safe.
- Provide appropriate support services for the Gwynedd Education Service.
- Develop leaders and support the workforce in the schools.
- Support for school governing bodies to enable them to act as effective governors.

In 2022-23, there were 79 primary schools, 12 secondary schools, 1 All-through School and 2 Special Schools in Gwynedd.

In a statement from the Minister for Education, Jeremy Miles MS, it was noted: *'Qualification award data will not be used to report on attainment outcomes at school, local authority or regional consortium level and should not be used to hold schools to account for learner outcomes'*.

Therefore, in line with the Minister's statement, the Authority cannot discuss any results in order to measure the performance of schools and compare standards as a part of this annual report.

PROJECTS OF THE COUNCIL PLAN 2018-23

During the period of this annual report, the 2018-23 Council Plan period ended on 31 March 2023. Consequently, a report on what was achieved in terms of the Council Plan improvement priorities during the 2022-23 year can be seen below.

Post-16 Education Provision in Arfon

What did we say we would do?

The variety in the quality of the education and experiences of learners across the post-16 education system in Arfon affects outcomes and learning pathways.

The Cabinet has already given permission to commence engagement with stakeholders to discuss the vision for post-16 education in Arfon. The informal engagement was held during the Autumn Term 2020.

We are continuing to hold informal discussions to discuss and air potential options with the profession using these discussions to determine how best to continue to keep momentum going with this important project.

What progress was made in 2022/23?

During 2022-23, we re-visited the case for change, updated data and information that formed the basis of this project, including any relevant new considerations due to the pandemic.

A report was submitted before the Cabinet on 7 March 2023 seeking permission to do further work with the stakeholders which form the Gwynedd and Anglesey Post-16 Education Consortium in order to develop potential models for the post-16 education system in Arfon.

This work contributes to the following Well-being Objectives -

- Enjoy a happy, healthy and safe life
- Receive education of the highest quality which will enable us to do what we want to do
- Live in natural Welsh society.

Bangor Catchment Area

What did we say we would do?

Despite the pandemic the new Ysgol y Garnedd building opened its doors in October 2020 becoming the new educational home for up to 420 primary age learners in Bangor city. The school site also offers a nursery education and wrap-around childcare provision in a bespoke environment with the best possible resources. Also, space has been planned carefully for specialist units on the site to further support child development. This project kept within the budget that had been allocated for it.

The project was nominated for three Construction Excellence in Wales 2021 awards and won two two, namely: Digital Construction Award and Client of the Year Award.

We will arrange an official opening with the school when it will be safe to do so.

As part of the arrangements in the Bangor catchment area Ysgol y Faenol also received a substantial extension. Although there has been a slippage in the schedule as a result of the pandemic, completion was soon achieved in 2022. The school is able to admit 315 learners as a result of the extension, which is an increase of 129 learners. The building has also been planned to act as a hub for the local area, with a new community centre and space for the early years being built as a part of the development.

In light of the recent investment in Ysgol y Garnedd and Ysgol y Faenol, the Council recognises the need to invest further and to improve resources and the learning environment at Ysgol Hirael also. This will be a means to improve the learner's experience and enable the school to provide education and the curriculum in the 21st century.

The Council has already recognised that Ysgol Tryfan does not have the resources we would like them to have and that that affects the learner experience. Furthermore, the Council will consider the options available to improve secondary resources in the city of Bangor to ensure a world-class learning environment together with buildings and resources to be able to deliver education and curriculum in the 21st century.

What progress was made in 2022/23?

- **Ysgol y Garnedd:**
Work has been ongoing during the year to arrange an official opening for the school, as this was not possible previously due to the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic. A date for the opening has now been confirmed for 18 May 2023 and the Minister for the Welsh Language and Education, Jeremy Miles AM will officially open the school.
- **Ysgol y Faenol:**
The Ysgol y Faenol building was completed during the year, and the school's capacity has now increased to accommodate up to 315 learners. However, legal issues regarding land transfers and a lease remain between the Council, the Church in Wales and the Community Council, therefore it is not possible to move forward and demolish the Community Centre and create a dedicated car park for the school until these issues have been resolved.
- **Ysgol Hirael:**
To improve the resources and learning environment at Ysgol Hirael, on 14 February 2023, the Cabinet allowed £3m of a total budget to be set aside from Bangor's Phase 2 budget, the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme (Band B) to invest in Ysgol Hirael. This as well as a commitment to confirm a £1m contribution from the Council's Asset Management Plan for 35% match funding to realise the project at Ysgol Hirael.
Following the Cabinet, approval was received from the Welsh Government to transfer the budget from Phase 2 Bangor to Ysgol Hirael as well. However, the budget for Ysgol Hirael is subject to submitting a successful business case to the Welsh Government and the work of drawing up the business case will continue in 2023-24.
- **Ysgol Tryfan:**
Informal discussions were held regarding the possible options available to strengthen and improve secondary resources in the Bangor area.

This work contributes to the following Well-being Objectives:

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- Live in a natural Welsh society

Cricieth Catchment Area

What did we say we would do?

The condition of the current building and learning environment at Ysgol Treferthyr is poor, affecting the learner experience. We will therefore build a new school in Cricieth to improve the learning environment and ensure the best resources for learners to thrive.

In 2021/22, a statutory notice was issued and the Cabinet confirmed the final decision to relocate the school. We have engaged on plans and confirmed a budget towards securing an Early Years Unit on the site. We have also appointed a contractor and a geophysical inspection of the site has also been carried out.

In 2022/23, as a result of land purchase and receipt of planning consent, it is intended to commence the work of building the new school, aiming for the school to open on the new site in September 2023.

What progress was made in 2022/23?

A planning application was submitted for the development of the new school at Cricieth, and before planning permission could be granted, archaeological inspections of the site were required as well as further work carried out on safe routes to the school. A safe route to school survey was carried out and the report was submitted to the Planning Unit. Archaeological work was carried out at the site and a chest grave was discovered, following which further archaeological work was carried out resulting in delays in the timetable for the development of the new school. Consequently, the planning application was approved.

As a result of a significant increase in building materials costs and the impact of Brexit and Covid-19, it emerged that the costs of building a new school in Cricieth had increased significantly, and in December 2022, the Cabinet approved increasing the budget for the project to £8.1m, following which approval was also received from the Welsh Government to increase the budget for the project.

The contractors started on site on 20 February 2023 and they are making good progress. A turf cutting ceremony was held on the site of the new school on 6 March 2023.

As a consequence of the delay in the timetable, Ysgol Treferthyr Governing Body agreed to change the opening date for the new school to 1 September 2024.

This work contributes to the following Well-being Objectives -

- Enjoy a happy, healthy and safe life
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Meirionnydd Collaboration

What did we say we would do?

There is a risk that matters relating to the current system affects the experiences of Meirionnydd learners, e.g. the Meirionnydd secondary schools find it difficult to recruit teachers, middle managers and leaders. If there is no resolution to the situation, the impact on the resilience of the education system and leadership conditions in the area will continue.

The obvious challenges of the Covid period and busy nature of secondary schools as a result have impacted the progress of this priority.

During 2021/22, we have gathered the views of Headteachers and representation from the Governors of each secondary school on the potential challenges facing them in terms of providing a quality secondary education in the Meirionnydd area. During this work, we paid particular attention to identifying the challenges facing the schools from the perspective of recruiting teachers, middle managers and leaders.

By the end of 2021/22, we will have gathered the views of pupils and parents on the quality of the experiences that children have in these schools, as well as the views of staff on the experience of working within these schools. To ensure a fair comparison we will ask the same questions to the staff, parents and children in the Dwyfor and Arfon schools as well.

The direction and actions of this priority for 2022-23 will be based on the views of all key stakeholders. Should a situation arise where no substantial concerns have been highlighted, we will consider the propriety of this priority as part of the Council's Plan for the future.

What progress was made in 2022/23?

When the project was started back in 2019 there was concern that there could be issues with the current set-up affecting learners' experiences in Meirionnydd e.g., Meirionnydd secondary schools are struggling to recruit teachers, middle managers and leaders – particularly in some areas. The project was designed to look at the challenges this area faces (if any) and model possible options for meeting these needs in the future.

Progress on this project has been slow and has been impacted by the obvious challenges of the pandemic and the busy nature of secondary schools. A number of changes in the leadership of Meirionnydd secondary schools also affected the progress of the project. Nevertheless, we were able to gather the views of headteachers and representatives of all the governing bodies of every secondary school on the potential challenges they face in providing quality secondary education in the area, such as teacher recruitment, middle managers and leaders. We also circulated and analysed a questionnaire to try to establish the views of learners, staff, parents and headteachers.

As a result of opinion-gathering, the headteachers did not highlight obvious concerns in providing quality secondary education in the area. In addition, representation of the governors from each secondary school did not highlight obvious concerns in the provision of quality secondary education in the area.

The analysis of the education services questionnaire did not highlight any aspects that would merit further research either. This was mainly because the response from the secondary sector was less than expected and particularly so from the Meirionnydd area.

Since no significant concerns were highlighted, Meirionnydd will not continue as a priority in the Council's Plan from April 2023 on, although the Department for Education will continue to work with the secondary schools in Meirionnydd to ensure the future resilience of the system.

This work contributes to the following Well-being Objectives -

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- Receive education of the highest quality which will enable us to do what we want to do
- Live in natural Welsh society.

Free school meals for primary pupils

What did we say we would do?

In November 2021 the Government announced its intention to provide free school meals to all primary pupils. While the scheme is welcomed, considerable work needs to be done in terms of the practicality of the scheme.

No detail has reached us yet in terms of the timetable for realising the scheme, but the agreement between the Labour party and Plaid Cymru is in place for a period of three years, therefore it can be assumed that priority will need to be given to this project over the next three years.

On average, approximately 50% of primary pupils choose school meals with the other 50% bringing a packed lunch from home to school. This scheme will potentially double the number of primary pupils choosing school meals.

During 2022/23, we will consider what providing free school meals to primary school pupils will mean for the Council and what will need to be done to deliver on the commitment while carrying out scoping work.

What progress was made in 2022/23?

A review of the kitchen space of all primary schools in Gwynedd was carried out identifying which kitchens needed upgrades to their major appliances such as ovens and dishwashers as well as lighter appliances. As of July 2022, 38 combi ovens have been installed and 20 dishwashers.

Since July 2022, the following schools have received an extension to the kitchen/dining space:

- Ysgol Yr Hendre
- Ysgol Bethel
- Ysgol Bro Lleu
- Ysgol Maenofferen
- Ysgol Llanrug

In addition, Scottish Power upgraded fuses at some sites where electricity supply was insufficient, but this work continues, with the timetable largely in the hands of Scottish Power.

Since 1 September 2022, all Reception and year 1 learners at Gwynedd schools receive free school meals if they wish.

Since 1 January 2023, all year 2 learners at Gwynedd schools receive free school meals if they wish.

This work contributes to the following Well-being Objectives -

- Enjoy a happy, healthy and safe life

Transforming the Additional Educational Needs and Inclusion provision

What did we say we would do?

There is a risk that we will be unable to make suitable provision for each pupil with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) because no resources were received from the Government to meet the increase in the need for statutory provision (ALN and Tribunal Act, 2018).

It is also possible that children and young people will not have the correct access to specialist staff (e.g. Bilingual Educational Psychologists, Sensory Teachers) and key roles in terms of statutory posts within the code (Early Years Lead Officer, ALN Coordinator), due to the combination of recruitment and funding difficulties and an increased workload.

During 2021/22, we have:

- developed the co-working processes with the Health Service by collaborating with the Designated Educational Clinical Lead Officer (DECLO) within the Health Board
- held a number of stakeholder training events
- implemented the necessary systems to identify needs early in the early years, and preparation in the Post-16 sector continues
- also the development of a working curriculum and assessment link between the mainstream and the Special Schools has developed and continues to develop
- innovative work continues to take place in the system's use and ongoing development of the on-line Individual Development Plan system, with the system driving the entire process for the schools, parents, external agencies and other education provisions (e.g. the early years)
- the work of looking at the methods of funding the Additional Learning Needs provision in the mainstream continues to take definitive steps towards September 2022, as well as national collaboration on ensuring training and recruitment of specialist bilingual staff (e.g. Psychologists).

Elements of the Legislation have been live since September 2021, but with a three-year transition period up to September 2024. During 2022/23, we will:

- continuously review the implementation processes to ensure systems are as simple and useful as possible
- continue to develop suitable systems for legislative change with a focus on the Post-16 partnership with parents and agencies, and the most suitable funding mechanism for the legislative requirement, working closely with the Further Education Colleges
- establish a funding method - review the funding method to obtain a model that provides better stability of provision
- continue national discussions, and continue to pass on the message about the concern regarding training and recruiting specialist staff.

What progress was made in 2022/23?

The purpose of this project was to transform the additional learning needs and inclusion service, so as to ensure that children and young people who need the service receive the most suitable support to enable them to fulfil their potential. The project also focused on preparing for the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act (2018). This Act came into effect in September 2021, but with a period of three years to transform, up to September 2024.

During 2022-23 the Welsh Government's ALN Act Readiness Review showed very strong progress in the Authority's preparations for the Legislation. The Authority ensured that the requisite statutory posts were in place since January 2021 and operated effectively. The collaboration with the Health Service has progressed well through collaboration with the Designated Education Clinical Lead Officer (DECLO). A number of stakeholder training events were held to detail specific aspects of the Final Code. There has been work on the dispute resolution pathways to ensure these are operational. In the early years sector the necessary systems for early identification, and the establishment of clear processes have been achieved, and preparatory work in the post-16 sector continues. Also, the development of a working link, curriculum and assessment between the mainstream and Special Schools has developed and continues to develop.

Innovative work continued in terms of the use and continuous development of the on-line IDP system, with the system driving the whole process for the schools, parents, external agencies and other education provisions (e.g. the early years).

Given that the new legislation came into force in September 2021, by 2022-23 Gwynedd was firmly placed in terms of implementing the new requirements, and therefore this ceased to be a project in the Council's Plan from September 2022 as it has now been fulfilled and the requirements attached to the legislation have now been transferred into the day-to-day work of the Education Department.

This work contributes to the following Well-being Objectives -

- Enjoy a happy, healthy and safe life
- Receive education of the highest quality which will enable us to do what we want to do
- Live with dignity and independence for as long as possible.

Children and Young People's Well-being and Attainment Gap

What did we say we would do?

There is concern that some children and young people can be left behind in terms of their educational attainment, and some will need extra help to close that gap along with support with their wellbeing.

Parents are concerned about sending them to school or they decide to home-school, and there is an increase in safeguarding concerns.

We are aware that the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown have exposed the vulnerability of the early years sector, and beyond school we also realise that the 16-24 age group has been disproportionately affected by the crisis, more than any other age group.

During 2020/21 we have established project boards for the Early Years area and for the post-16 young people's support area. The project boards have identified the priority areas and clear work

plans have been drawn up for the majority of them. We have also focused our efforts for the 5-16 age group by supporting the schools to implement the Accelerated Learning Programme with funding from the Welsh Government. This will enable us to respond to the impact of lockdown on the wellbeing and attainment of certain groups of learners.

Work has been undertaken to address the wellbeing of pupils aged 3-16 and as a first step, discussions have commenced with a range of partners, including the health service, to map out in detail who is supporting and responding to a wide range of wellbeing needs of our young people.

In 2022/23, we will have introduced a strategy for the early years field, which will secure the best start for families and children aged 0-5 years in Gwynedd.

We will also have updated our engagement framework for our post-16 learners and devised a strategy to provide them with wellbeing, mental health and homelessness support.

We will have agreed the most effective support model for supporting the wellbeing of school-aged pupils.

What progress was made in 2022/23?

The work of forming a strategy for Early Years progressed during the year with agreement on the main work streams. As part of that, we consulted internally with key officers on the basics of our strategy.

During the year a detailed assessment of demand for pre-school care and play provision was completed, together with a detailed assessment of the agreements / leases that are currently in place with existing providers.

We also modelled the running costs of quality provisions, along with modelling funding models for our care and play and education provisions across Gwynedd.

We carried out detailed multi-agency mapping to highlight areas of need that require attention and sub-groups have been established to address specific aspects.

There was a delay in the formulation of a revised engagement framework, this was as a result of the guidance from the Welsh Government that reached us late in the year. We have however responded to the requirements of the engagement framework particularly for homeless young people and low-level mental health needs.

We have come up with a new strategy for responding to the needs of a learner at risk of disillusionment from education, training or employment. Accompanying the strategy is an application to the shared prosperity fund for funding of a scheme that would provide practical support to our young people based on good practice evidenced through TRAC schemes.

This work contributes to the following Well-being Objectives -

- Enjoy a happy, healthy and safe life
- Receive education of the highest quality which will enable us to do what we want to do
- Earn a sufficient salary to be able to support ourselves and our families
- Live in natural Welsh society.
- Live with dignity and independence for as long as possible.

Digital Learning Strategy

What did we say we would do?

There is a risk of providing a sub-standard education for the children of Gwynedd due to a failure to maximise the opportunities afforded by digital learning. The aim of the strategy is to give the best digital provision to support our learners and teachers to foster a range of skills to use technology confidently, creatively, and critically.

In light of revising the curriculum, digital competence is a statutory responsibility across all areas of learning and needs to be considered in all aspects when designing and introducing the curriculum. The quality of school networks and the quality and number and availability of devices for teachers and learners is varied. There is a varied understanding of the medium amongst teachers. The procedure of maintaining the equipment does not ensure seamless access.

The Digital Education Strategy has been approved and the work of implementing it has progressed considerably during 21/22. Key work on the infrastructure across all of our schools has drawn to a close, with new devices distributed to the majority of our learners in the primary and special sector. A new support model has been drawn up with the work of establishing it about to commence so that it becomes fully operational from April 2022 onwards. An agreement has been reached on a sustainable funding model in order to ensure that the digital devices do not become dated, without a way of updating them, which is co-funded by the Council and the schools.

Our priorities during 2022/23 will be to establish the support system and move to introduce devices to every teacher and the majority of pupils in the secondary sector.

What progress was made in 2022/23?

Put simply, the strategy, when implemented fully, will provide all children from year 3 to year 11 with a suitable device each to enable digital learning. Gwynedd will be one of the first authorities in Wales to do this, and it is something we can take pride in.

Over the years there has been significant investment in school network infrastructure. A significant number of devices have shared in accordance with the strategy. For some time, enough ipads have been shared to give one to every four learners in the Foundation Phase, with enough Chromebooks shared so that every learner from year 3 to 6 gets a device each. All teachers have had a standard device for some time. Enough devices have now been shared or ordered to ensure that all pupils in the secondary sector have access to a standard device.

Not all secondary schools have succeeded in sharing devices with the learners. There are challenges in terms of ensuring that they are charged at school as well as how they could be transported safely back and forth from home. The schools that have succeeded in overcoming these challenges share their experiences with others and we are certain that other schools will release the devices over the coming months.

It is expected that the devices ordered at the start the financial year will reach the schools early during the spring term. The delay is due to the Welsh Government's purchasing procedure.

As a result of the decision to internalise support for all devices, and as a result of a recruitment process, the Schools Digital Services team has now been established and is already operational and providing digital support to our schools. The hope is that these devices will further spark imagination, ingenuity and effectiveness in aspects of digital learning across the sectors.

Considering that the devices have now been shared with the learners and teachers at our schools, and that the Schools Digital Service has been established, the aims of this project have been completed by the end of September 2022, and following that the work has been transferred as part of the day-to-day work of the Education Department and ICT.

This work contributes to the following Well-being Objectives -

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- Live in natural Welsh society.

Promoting the Use of Welsh by Children and Young People

What did we say we would do?

The skills and confidence of learners (more specifically in non-Welsh speaking homes) in Welsh have deteriorated as a result of lockdown and COVID-19.

In 2021/22, we have succeeded to establish a baseline of the current situation of the Welsh language as a result of the impact of lockdown and Covid-19 and we have started to support schools to draw-up a Strategy and Action Plan to respond to the situation.

During the process of setting a baseline, we also saw that concern was highlighted about the oracy skills and confidence of pupils in Welsh. We will respond to these concerns as a priority in 2022/23 by assisting schools to support pupils' oracy skills and confidence. We will provide additional training or support for teachers and assistants and collaborate with individual schools to draw up action plans to respond to the needs.

What progress was made in 2022/23?

During the year there was the formulation, consultation and publication of the Welsh Language in Education Strategic Plan which became effective from 1 September 2022 for a period of 10 years. In January 2023, an Action Plan was submitted to the Welsh Government detailing the actions for each outcome.

The non-statutory procedure of school categorisation according to the Welsh-medium provision was introduced in September 2022 with the intention of reporting via the PLASC in January 2024. In due course, schools will receive further guidance from the Welsh Government in terms of what is required in the context of reporting on this. It is emphasised that noting the category is basically an administrative process for schools.

During the year the Department worked in partnership with Ysgol Friars to support them to increase their Welsh language provision and support staff to develop and improve their skills in Welsh. A Welsh teacher has been appointed at Ysgol Friars to provide the support, and as a result of an initial appraisal of progress, the Department is happy that the school is making progress.

This partnership will continue for the next two years subject to acceptable progress by the school.

An experienced teacher has been appointed to work with 3 primary schools in the Bangor catchment area to improve and empower Welsh language provision in the Foundation Phase. The teacher collaborated with Foundation phase staff at Ysgol Ein Harglwyddes, Ysgol Hiracl and Ysgol

Glancegin to plan for the development of the Welsh language within the principles of Foundation Stage learning and teaching. Although the resource has only been in place since 1 January 2023, so far the feedback from the schools to the scheme has been very positive.

This work contributes to the following Well-being Objectives -

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- Live in natural Welsh society.

THE PRIORITY PROJECTS OF THE COUNCIL PLAN 2023-28

During the period of the annual report, on 1 April 2023 the new Council Plan was published for the period 2023-28. The plan's priorities address the Department's main risks, the well-being of children and young people, together with investing to adapt schools, or build new schools so that the children and young people of Gwynedd can be educated in the best possible learning environment.

Below is a report on what was achieved in terms of the Council Plan's new improvement priorities from April 2023 to the end of August 2023.

Transforming Education for Children in their Early Years

What did we say we would do?

The early years are key to the social development of children, and the importance of this phase was particularly seen during the pandemic.

We will transform this service and we will be collaborating with the health service and Mudiad Meithrin to ensure that all of the county's children have the best possible start to their time in education.

What progress was made up to 31 August 2023?

A work programme has been drawn up for the commissioning and development of a Regional Information Platform for the Early Years.

A workshop was held with our partners in April 2023 to carry out a self-assessment of the Early Years sector in Gwynedd.

A draft Action Plan was drawn up in response to the recommendations of the *Early Intervention Foundation* to shape a new strategy for the Early Years.

A Business Case drawn up and approved by the Welsh Government to bring the entire Flying Start package to one new area in Gwynedd.

Free School Meals

What did we say we would do?

All the county's primary school children will get free school meals, and we will also consider if it is possible to extend this to secondary pupils.

Consequently, we will need to upgrade our kitchens and dining areas to cope with the higher numbers who will be having school meals.

What progress was made up to 31 August 2023?

The Education Department in partnership with the Property Development Team and the schools has achieved the following:

A review of the kitchen space of all primary schools in Gwynedd, identifying which kitchens needed upgrades to their large appliances such as ovens and dishwashers as well as lighter appliances (43 combi ovens and 23 dishwashers have been installed since the start of the project).

The following schools have received an extension to the kitchen/dining space:

- Ysgol yr Hendre
- Ysgol Bethel
- Ysgol Bro Lleu
- Ysgol Maenofferen
- Ysgol Llanrug
- Ysgol y Gelli
- Ysgol Felinheli
- Ysgol Chwilog

Scottish Power upgraded fuses at some sites where the electricity supply was insufficient, but this work has not been completed in all schools (a very slow process).

A work programme was completed over the 2023 summer holidays, to ensure that all primary schools in Gwynedd were able to offer free meals to all pupils from Reception year to year 6 from 1 September 2023 onwards.

Modernising Buildings and the Learning Environment

What did we say we would do?

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.

We will also complete our review of post-16 education arrangements in Arfon to ensure that they offer the best arrangement for the area's learners.

What progress was made up to 31 August 2023?

Bangor Catchment Area

Ysgol y Faenol

The completion of the Faenol project has been delayed due to legal issues between the Church in Wales and Cyngor Gwynedd. The Council's Legal Unit has sent comprehensive correspondence to the lawyers of the Church in Wales in an attempt to move the project forward to its completion.

Ysgol Hirael

A conceptual design has been created by the Property Development Unit and an application has been submitted to cost the work. As a result, an estimate was received for the designed work costing £5.7m, i.e £2m higher than the budget for the project.

A site visit was arranged for 18 July 2023 to Ysgol Hirael in order to consider whether there are alternative options to develop the site and to resolve the potential funding gap.

Ysgol Ein Harglwyddes

The SOC/OBC business case has been presented to the Welsh Government as a first step for the release of the funds for the realisation of the intention to secure a new school for Ysgol Ein Harglwyddes on the site of Ysgol Glanadda which has now closed.

A meeting was held with the Catholic Diocese of Wrexham to request an increase in their financial contribution to realize the project due to an increase in construction costs. Related to that, an application to increase the project's budget was presented to the Welsh Government.

Bangor Secondary

Conceptual designs have been drafted by the Property Development Unit since 2020 to make improvements to Ysgol Tryfan, but there is real concern that the initial estimates do not seem affordable due to an increase in the costs of building materials and market prices.

Cricieth

As a result of the Cabinet's approval to increase the capacity of Ysgol Trefferthyr to 150 learners, and to build a new school due to the poor condition of the current building. The work of building the new school started in February. There has been good progress with a large majority of the work on the shell of the building close to completion. The work will continue over the coming months, and we are confident that it will be possible to open the school in September 2024. In response to local concern about a road that leads to the school, the Highways Department will issue an order and start a consultation on the proposal to restrict use of the lane early in the new year.

Post-16 Education in Arfon

A report was submitted before the Cabinet on 7 March 2023 seeking permission to do further work with the stakeholders who form the Gwynedd and Anglesey Post-16 Education Consortium in order to develop potential models for the post-16 education system in Arfon.

Following receiving Cabinet approval, working groups with Arfon secondary school headteachers to develop potential models were organised for June and July, and the invitations were circulated on 12 May 2023.

Two working groups were held with the headteachers of the six secondary schools in Arfon in order to discuss the current situation, highlighting some positive features together with the challenges and obstacles the system faced. Common principles were also discussed, together with

potential models that can be considered for post-16 education in Arfon for the future based on the findings of the first working group.

Promote the Well-being of Children and Young People and Reduce the Cost of Sending Children to School

What did we say we would do?

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.

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, equality, mental health, transport issues, and securing work experience and job opportunities.

What progress was made up to 31 August 2023?

We have established a task group to investigate and gather information to identify the true financial, emotional and psychological cost of attending school.

We have drawn up questionnaires for the stakeholders of Gwynedd schools to identify the costs and financial challenges of attending school.

Extending Opportunities for Play

What did we say we would do?

Opportunities for play are important to a child's development and providing quality playing fields is one way to promote these. We will therefore review all our playing fields and develop a plan that will consider how we can improve and maintain them.

We will also look at how the new provision for Youth is working across the county and what outcomes this delivers for young people.

What progress was made up to 31 August 2023?

Following the restructuring of the County's Youth Service, and a period of implementing the new model, it is intended to review how the new provision for youth is implemented across the county, identifying and evaluating the outcomes it delivers for the young people of Gwynedd. As part of the engagement work, a questionnaire has been provided for the children and young people of Gwynedd to report whether the current provision meets their needs as well as what services they want.

Modernising and Extending the Immersion Provision to Teach Welsh to Children

What did we say we would do?

It is essential that learners who are newcomers get 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 to support the Welsh language expanded in schools that serve communities 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.

What progress was made up to 31 August 2023?

A Business Case was presented to the Welsh Government to release £1.1m of Welsh Medium Capital Grant funding to invest and improve the learning environment in the three primary immersion education sites in Gwynedd.

The work of developing Aberwla and the virtual medium is continuing.

On 7 July, training was held in the Language Immersion Unit on the Ysgol Eifionydd site at the request of the Welsh Government in order to share on a national scale this innovative VR and Aberwla resource used in our Immersion System. Representatives from Denbigh, Powys, Ceredigion, Carmarthen, Conwy and Wrexham Education Authorities attended the training. Ten Pico 3 headsets were shared to each representative, funded by the Government. Aberwla was launched on the Gwynedd stall at the Llŷn ac Eifionydd National Eisteddfod on 8 August 2023.

THE WELSH LANGUAGE

Purpose

Ensure that the children of Gwynedd receive a Welsh-medium education and have opportunities to use the Welsh language in their everyday lives.

Good features

- **Welsh in Education Strategic Plan**

The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) is a statutory document for every local authority in order for us to strategically plan over a ten-year period for growth and progress in Welsh-medium education. The WESP is part of Wales's long-term vision for Cymraeg 2050. To support the planning process, the plans have been organised around seven outcomes that reflect a learner's education journey and match the policy areas of Cymraeg 2050 and Our National Mission.

The new plan came into force on 1 September 2022 and will end on 31 August 2032. During 2021/2022 the department prepared the new plan following a schedule and programme set by the Welsh Government.

A full consultation on the new draft WESP was held in the autumn term of 2021 and concluded before Christmas. The WESP was submitted to the Cabinet for approval in March 2022, and to the Language Committee at the beginning of the summer. It was finally approved by the Minister for Education and Welsh Language on 24 June 2022.

The Welsh Government and the minister will continue to monitor our progress and the steps taken annually. But our aim in Gwynedd is that the WESP is a living, ambitious document which reflects Gwynedd's unique situation and drives our operations in favour of Welsh-medium education in the county.

- **Language Centres**

Purpose

Promote the achievement and well-being of children and young people to acquire the Welsh language, continuing to ensure the provision of quality immersion education to enable primary and secondary newcomers to benefit fully from the Welsh-medium and bilingual education system in Gwynedd.

During the year a new head and deputy were appointed to the Immersion Education System. Following a consultation process, a new staffing structure was confirmed for the System which will become operational in January 2023.

In collaboration with the Modernisation Team, considerable construction work has taken place during the year to realise the vision and plans of the Council's Cabinet, including Welsh Government capital expenditure of £1.1 million to establish new immersion education sites in Bangor, as well as improving resources at the Eifionydd immersion education site. The Eifionydd and Bangor buildings have now been completed and the quality of the sites is excellent and the learning environment first class, including a modern and up-to-date provision, e.g. screens and interactive resources to facilitate learning and teaching. They have been purposefully designed to provide an innovative and contemporary immersion education in strategic areas of the county, of linguistic significance. The facilities ease the

delivery of the Curriculum for Wales in the classrooms as well as the outdoor area. They are also within reasonable reach of facilities such as Gwynedd Libraries, Byw'n Iach Centres, shops, clubs, and social enterprises. Visiting these places will be a great opportunity to broaden learners' experiences and bring the Welsh language to life for them. Unfortunately, the new language unit on the Ysgol Uwchradd Tywyn site will not be completed in time to welcome the learners in January. However, we trust that the centre will be ready during the summer term. In the meantime, the centre will be temporarily located on the Bro Idris Secondary site.

In the Cabinet's meeting on 19 July 2022 unanimous support was received to proceed to submit a full business case before the Welsh Government to secure an additional £1.1m funding from the Welsh Medium Education Capital Grant which has already been pledged in principle to reconcile capacity and improve the learning environment of the remaining primary Language Centres in the county, namely Maesincla, Llangybi and Dolgellau.

In addition, a great deal of exciting work has been undertaken during the year in the context of the Welsh Government's revenue grant funding. The System's staff have been working closely with author Anni Llŷn to write a new immersion plan for the language units that will bridge learners within the primary and secondary sector. This new plan is based on an imaginary village called Aberwla and incorporates appropriate language patterns within the language continuum in the Curriculum for Wales. It is a plan relevant to the twenty-first century and reflects contemporary Wales. The plan was launched at the Llŷn ac Eifionydd National Eisteddfod in August 2023 and will replace the current plan in the following September. To support the plan, in collaboration with the 'Animated Technologies' company, we have developed a virtual element for the village. This is an innovative project that enables our latecomers to step into Aberwla on a virtual platform to practise language patterns in the supermarket. They will receive an opportunity there to play games together as they fill their baskets by reading instructions and following a shopping list. This special project was launched in the Science village at the Tregaron National Eisteddfod in the summer of 2022 in the company of the Minister for Education and the Welsh Language, Jeremy Miles. Later in August, we were very fortunate that our application to evolve this project was approved and work is underway to develop three other locations in the village of Aberwla, namely Tyddyn Swnllyd Farm, glamping site, garage and gadgets shop.

Welsh Government officers are very eager to share this innovative resource on a national scale and discussions are ongoing to do so in the near future. To this end, they are keen to finance the development of all the locations in the village in addition to the original grant. This is recognition of our innovative vision, and as an organisation we are proud of this pioneering virtual resource and of the opportunity to share it for the benefit of learners and to support the Government's Cymraeg 2050 goal the length and breadth of Wales.

- **Categorising Schools according to Welsh-medium Provision**

The Welsh Government is introducing new arrangements for categorising schools linguistically from September 2022. The number of categories is reduced to three in the primary sector and three in the secondary sector. One intention with the new categorisation system is to encourage schools to increase their Welsh-medium provision, and one of the

core principles of the system is that no school should offer less of a Welsh language provision in the future than it did in the past.

The education department in 2021/22 planned and responded to the new system for the primary and secondary sectors and completed that process with the schools and the Welsh Government during the summer term – for its implementation from September 2022 onwards. Follow-up work will take place over the next year to ensure that the system develops and is embedded in order to achieve Gwynedd's ambition in this area.

- **The Welsh Language Charter and the Secondary Sector Language Strategy**

We have been promoting and increasing the use of the Welsh language among young people within the curriculum and socially, by leading on the Welsh Language Charter and the Secondary Sector Language Strategy in order to increase children's social use of the Welsh language in primary and secondary schools.

We have been collaborating with secondary schools to take action on specific steps to increase the use of the Welsh language in formal and informal situations. Attention continues to be given to the language medium of the provision across the curriculum in Key Stage 3, 4 and 5. The proposal was agreed to re-establish Language Forums in all secondary schools in order to promote and strengthen the use of the Welsh language in the schools, and to respond to priorities outlined in the WESP. Language Awareness and Bilingualism sessions were held with some pupils across the county.

- **Additional Learning Needs**

Every pupil with additional learning needs (ALN) has access to Welsh-medium services. Welsh-medium and bilingual provisions and services are available for all ranges and varieties of ALN.

- **Education Workforce Language Skills**

We have continued to support the language skills of the workforce by collaborating with external providers to structure a provision that responded to the needs highlighted across the county. In addition, Language Refresher and Immersion Methodology trainings were held for schools in all catchment areas across the county.

Priorities for the next period:

- Ensure that the new 'Welsh in Education Strategic Plan' in September 2022 drives the work of the department effectively as we plan and operate in favour of Welsh-medium education across our schools.
- Ensure that the system for Schools' Categorisation according to the Welsh-medium provision is embedded and sets out Gwynedd's ambition for each of our schools and ensures continuity in the pupils' Welsh-medium education as they transition from KS2 to KS4 and beyond.
- Continue to expand and develop the Gwynedd Immersion System to provide a quality contemporary immersion education to all newcomers in the county, addressing the primary age language centres.

- Plan a series of training workshops based on the principles of language immersion for the use of all teachers in the county.
- Continue to support learners who need an additional boost to increase their confidence and oracy skills in the Welsh language.
- Continue to support our schools to complete and implement their Welsh Language Charter and/or Secondary Sector Language Strategy plans in order to promote and increase children's informal use of the Welsh language.
- Continue to support teachers and assistants to develop their skills and confidence in the Welsh language.

SAFEGUARDING

Purpose

- Safeguarding the welfare children and young people of Gwynedd.
- Ensuring that every child feels safe in the Council's schools and education centres.
- Ensuring that everyone who works in the field of education in the county follows the Wales Safeguarding Procedures (Children) 2020.

Good features

- Confirmation from Estyn Inspectors that safeguarding arrangements within the Education Service are sound and that effective collaboration takes place between the Education Department and Children's Services;

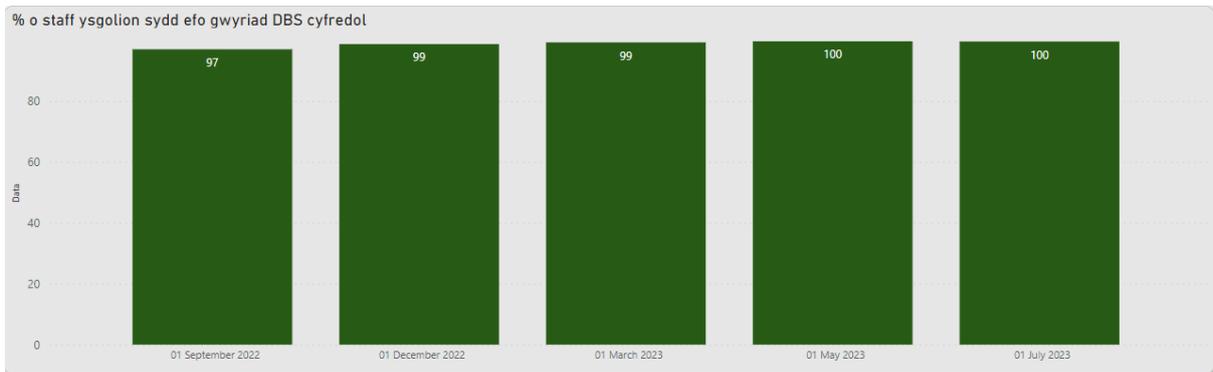
Safeguarding arrangements within the education service are generally sound. Officers understand their roles and responsibilities in this area and work effectively with children's services officers.

Estyn 2023

- A new basic training package has been created and distributed to schools. Positive feedback from school staff about the training package with 769 completed with an average of 9.4/10 reporting that they are confident that all the children at the school know to whom they could turn should they have safeguarding concerns.
- All designated School Safeguarding Persons and Governors' designated Persons have completed safeguarding training within the last two years.



- Visits regarding quality occur regularly, with Estyn's follow-up visits confirming robust safeguarding arrangements and standards in the schools.
- Robust arrangements in place to ensure a DBS check for staff working in the schools. 3083 of the workforce have a current DBS check (99.16%).



% of school staff with a current DBS check

Priorities for the next period:

- Raise awareness and provide training/resources to schools to support online safety including the use of mobile phones, games and social websites.
- Continue to carry out quality check visits and support schools on a two-year schedule.
- Continue to review model policies presented to schools, paying specific attention to safeguarding issues.
- Add guidance on preventing racism to the annual training that is provided to the schools.

EARLY YEARS

The Early Years Unit plans to ensure the Authority fulfils the statutory requirement of securing a nursery place for every child from the term after his/her third birthday. The nursery education provision is offered in 54 settings across the county with all settings being members of Mudiad Meithrin and regularly monitored.

Good features:

- A Senior Advisory Teacher (SAT) has introduced a Communication Friendly Settings strategy to all settings.
- Resume the support to be communication friendly settings so that all settings come together led by their advisory teacher to discuss ideas and strategies for ensuring language development in the settings.
- A cohort of settings have attended Elklan and Makaton training. An early years teacher and assistant are working on accreditation to be able to train Makaton to Level 1 and 2 in each setting.
- SAT has attended meetings – early years advisory teachers with Estyn.
- SAT has attended and chaired all-Wales FLAG meetings.
- SAT has presented training on the Curriculum for Wales 2022 to all settings.
- SAT has held training on following the child's path for nurseries and childminders.
- SAT has held one engagement visit as part of the work for Estyn.
- The teachers team has attended various sessions/training, namely 'Professional learning resources in the Foundation Phase' (CfW).
- All settings have received training on assessment arrangements for non-maintained funded nursery settings.
- All settings have received training from the Authority on safeguarding.
- All settings and advisory teachers have attended training on Child Development – Kym Scott.
- The Lead Officer for Early Years ALN has delivered training to all new leaders.
- Settings create One Page Profiles for every child with ALN and follow the new arrangements associated with the new legislation.
- The advisory teachers supported each setting in implementing the requirements of the ALN code including support at targeting level.
- All settings that have been subject to joint inspections (CIW/Estyn) since January 2021-2022 received a judgement of 'good' for each theme, with the content of some reports pointing to aspects of excellence.
- 28 Nursery Education providers received a total of £239,167 in small capital grants for a range of improvements/development.
- All settings have received books and jigsaws.

Priorities for the next period:

- Revisit 'Our purpose' following restructuring. Our vision as one team and consider measures to match.
- Train extended childcare settings using the play, learning and early childhood care in Wales document.
- Support the nursery education settings in implementing the statutory assessment requirements.
- Support the settings on their journey to becoming Communication Friendly settings.
- Further training on the role of the adult.
- Look at quality assurance tools by considering the play, learning, and early childhood care document in Wales.
- Continue to coordinate the Early Years capital investment which is in the pipeline at Ysgol Cricieth and Ysgol Uwchradd Tywyn.

- Submit the 2022-25 Early Years capital plan to the Government.
- Distribution of small capital grants to settings.
- Implement the Recruit, Recover and Raise Standards grant scheme for non-maintained settings.
- Review the funding formula for nursery education reconciling with the Childcare Offer and Flying Start.
- Implement the priorities of the Early Years transformation work programme such as reconciling leases on school sites.

EDUCATION MODERNISATION TEAM

Purpose

To realise a series of projects to fulfil the aspirations of the Education Strategy

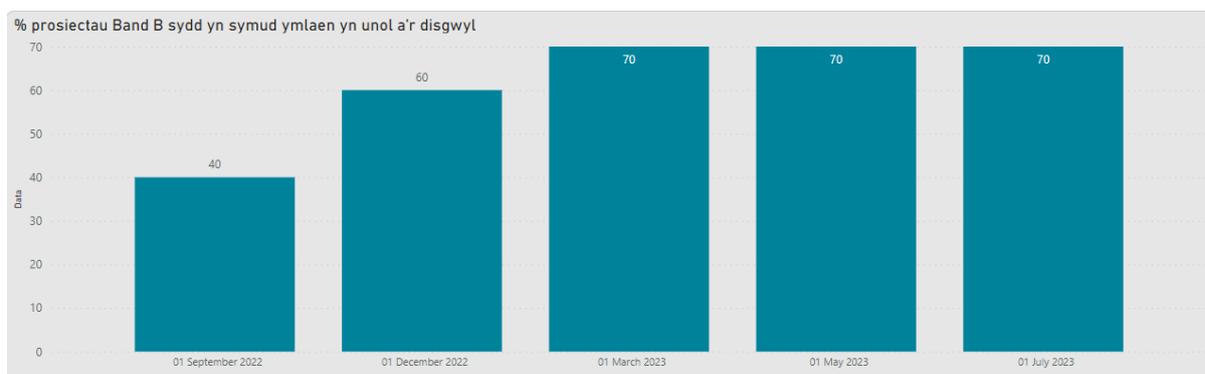
Some of our school buildings are old and unsuited to meet the needs of the Curriculum for Wales and learning and teaching in the twenty-first century. The purpose of this service is to plan and realise innovative projects to adapt or build new schools for Gwynedd's children and young people to be educated in the best possible learning environment to enable them to thrive.

Over the last 10 years, more than £73m has been invested in Gwynedd schools to improve the condition, suitability and learning environment of Gwynedd schools.

Good features:

Band B Sustainable Learning Communities Programme:

- An investment of £8m to secure a new school in Cricieth, and work has started on the site.
- 9 schools across the county have received investment to improve the condition and suitability of the buildings in order to meet the requirements of the Curriculum for Wales.
- A commitment to invest significantly in Ysgol Tryfan in Bangor due to the poor condition of some of the buildings.
- A commitment to secure a new school for Ysgol Ein Harglwyddes on the site of the old Ysgol Glanadda.
- Secure a budget to make improvements to Ysgol Hirael.
- Work has progressed with secondary school headteachers in Arfon to try to identify potential models for post-16 education in Arfon.

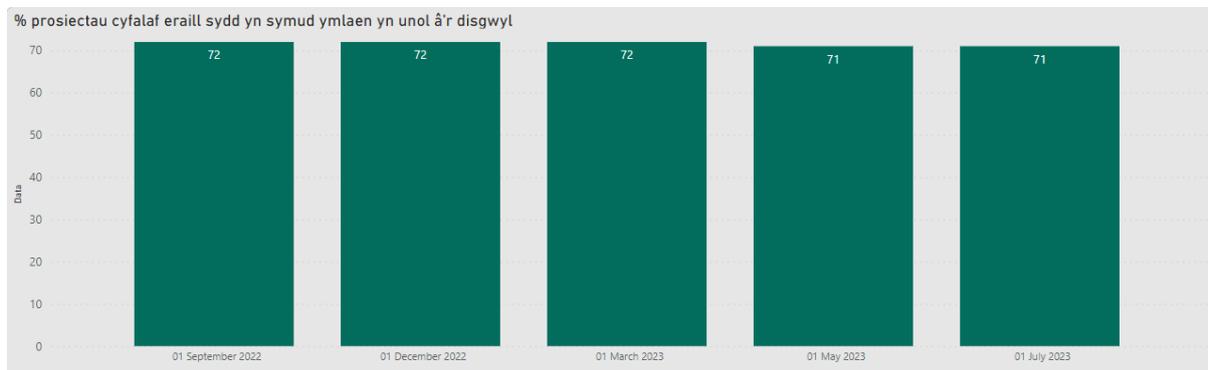


% of Band B projects that are progressing as expected

Other Capital Grants:

- Succeeded in attracting £12m of Sustainable Schools Challenge capital funding from the Welsh Government to secure investment to establish a new Community Campus in Bontnewydd.

- Invested £2.7m of the free school meals capital grant to upgrade the kitchens, equipment and dining halls of our primary schools to enable them to offer free school meals to all primary school children from September 2023 onwards.
- Secured an investment of £1.1m from the Welsh Government's Welsh Medium Capital Grant for investing in and improving the learning environment of the county's Primary Language Centres.
- Secured an investment of £1.8m from the Welsh Government's Welsh Medium Capital Grant to increase the capacity of Ysgol Chwilog, Ysgol Bro Lleu and Ysgol Llanllechid.
- Invested £0.9m of the Welsh Government's ALN Capital Grant to improve accessibility in some of the county's secondary schools.
- Invested £0.9m of the Community Focused Schools Grant across the schools system to facilitate access and use of school facilities by communities across the county outside of school hours.



% of other capital projects that are progressing as expected

Estyn:

Reference was also made to the wider work of the Modernising Education Unit in the context of improvement plans as part of the Estyn report. The report stated:

In some improvement plans, there are productive strategic actions to address priorities, for example as within the school modernisation programme...

There are positive examples of leaders implementing beneficial strategies that have led to improvements. These include... work on modernising schools.

Priorities for the next period:

- Secure successful business cases for the remaining Band B projects which will release the funding from the Welsh Government.
- Ensure that all Band B projects and other capital projects are realised within the budgets available to them, managing any increase in costs in a timely manner.
- Draw up a Strategic Outline Case for the next phase of capital funding from the Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme, ensuring match funding for the application.
- Undertake processes to monitor the benefits after projects have been realised to assess whether or not they have been completed successfully. There will be a need to ensure that all necessary procedures are in place to monitor benefits and that they are noted continuously.

LEADERSHIP

Purpose

The aim of the leadership plan is to ensure that all Gwynedd leaders have the ability to ensure that each child under their care is able to reach his or her full potential. The Authority has identified the need *"to work jointly to create a culture that enables leaders to thrive; and can inspire and influence children at all levels"*.

The department over this last period has identified leadership as a priority that needs attention in order to ensure leadership succession on every level and ensure that skilled and ambitious individuals follow the leadership programmes. By doing this, the aim is to increase the number of qualified and appropriate applicants for leadership posts and specifically school headteacher posts.

Good features:

- Particular emphasis is placed on ensuring a planned and developed system to ensure appropriate leaders to inspire at all levels.
- Particular emphasis is placed on ensuring consistency in providing the best experiences and opportunities for Gwynedd's learners.
- Particular emphasis is placed on ensuring effective methods that develop existing leaders and equip future leaders.
- Particular emphasis is placed on ensuring that specific conditions are in place to enable leaders to thrive.

By now, the developing leadership programmes for school leaders are a continuum of professional learning, that is offered regionally. It includes the following:

1. Middle Leadership Development Programme

The programme promotes highly effective leadership by way of self-evaluation and reflection, by investigating the relationship between leadership, successful schools and the wider community. Participants will:

- develop their understanding of the role;
- further develop their understanding of the national reform agenda;
- develop their practice in accordance with formal leadership standards;
- prepare for effective engagement with bespoke elements of specialist knowledge and skills; AOLEs, ALN, Welsh, faith schools, small schools etc.

2. A National Development Programme for Senior Leaders

Once again, this programme promotes highly effective leadership by focusing specifically on self-evaluation and reflection. Participants will:

- further develop their understanding of the senior leader role;
- develop the information and skills that an effective senior leader should know and be able to adopt;
- get the opportunity to develop the leadership behaviours required for an effective senior leader;
- further develop their understanding of the national reform agenda;
- develop their practice within the formal leadership standards.

3. A National Programme to Develop Prospective Headteachers - Prepare for NPQH 2022-2023

This programme is available to all experienced school leaders that believe that they show attainment against the Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership and that consider Headship as a realistic next step in the near future.

This programme will build on previous experiences, in order to foster:

- their understanding of an effective headteacher's role;
- their skills and attributes by self-evaluating against the Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership;
- their understanding and ability to apply a range of leadership skills in an effective manner;
- their collaboration skills by way of effective participation in peer networks;
- their knowledge and skills for developing their schools as learning organisations and ensure the success of the national reform agenda.

The Programme will allow participants to reflect on their own professional practice and ensure that they have prepared well when applying to undertake a formal assessment for the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH).

4. Newly Appointed Headteachers and Temporary Headteachers Development Programme

This is a programme that is run over two years and available to support each newly appointed headteacher and temporary headteacher in their work. The programme:

- has been planned in accordance with the Regional Professional Learning Model;
- based on the Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership, Developing Schools in Wales as Organisations that Teach and Educate in Wales: Our National Mission;
- with progression of the learning activities consistent across Wales;
- with general expectations about participants' progress and how this will affect their leading practice.

5. Experienced Headteachers Development Programme

Once again, this is a programme that is run over two years, but this time for headteachers who are already experienced to be an even more effective headteacher. The participants will:

- reflect on their own leadership method and how their leadership impacts others;
- reflect on the impact of a range of leadership methods;
- understand change theory and reflect on how that impacts their leadership on the transformational reform journey;
- work with others to effectively lead their schools and have a positive impact on leadership across Wales;
- embed culture and appropriate innovation practice across and beyond their schools.

Priorities for the next period:

- Ensure there is clear intertwinement between this leadership development plan and principles adopted by the Cabinet, to ensure that we have arrangements to develop and identify leaders who inspire for our current system and the future.

EDUCATION DATA UNIT

Purpose

To ensure support for the Education Department by providing a data infrastructure and information of high quality that drive decisions and performance.

Good features:

- Have appointed an Information Management system provider for the Authority.
- Input and make the Admissions and Transport module of the new system live and have contacted School SIMS to find Schools' data for the Authority.
- Develop and present Power BI for the Modernisation, ALN and Well-being Team.
- Develop Attendance Reports that compare the attendance of different groups, i.e. free school meals, Looked-After Children and ALN.
- Respond to requirements to monitor attendance weekly by developing and presenting a dashboard that meets the Well-being Service's daily needs, as well as ESTYN needs.
- Continue to develop Power BI skills within the Unit.
- Provide and submit developing GCSE and A Level results reports.
- Support the Business Centre with PLASC and SWAC responses.
- Complete statutory responses (PLASC, SWAC, Post-16 Data Collection and attendance) within the timetable.
- Manage the system and process of presenting data to Challenge the Performance of the Education Department.

Priorities for the next period:

Our work plan will continue to be led by inputting the Information Management system. With this in mind, these will be our priorities for the next period:

- Ensure connection between the online IDP and the information management system.
- Input a Case Management module and the ALN element of the system.
- Establish a work programme to review the capacity of Gwynedd Schools.

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE SUPPORT SERVICE

Purpose

To support the Governing Bodies of Gwynedd Schools to be effective in their work.

Good features:

- Offering assistance and support to Governing Bodies and their schools as required.
- Offer mandatory and additional training virtually by increasing the numbers that attend, and respond to the demand in some areas.
- Assisting Governing Bodies in the performance of their statutory functions, and advise and serve as a helpline on governance matters for headteachers and governors, including the redundancy process, complaints etc.
- Provide a current list of policies and templates where appropriate on the Headteachers and clerks of governors Hub.

Priorities for the next period:

- Develop a package of Statutory Documents templates that schools should have.
- Continue to develop resources to support Governing Bodies to deal with specific processes i.e. redundancy, complaints, staffing panels.
- Continue to evaluate and review the additional training program offered to Governors ensuring that they meet the main requirements of Governors and current developments in the field of school governance.

CONTRACTS AND SALARIES UNIT

Purpose

Ensure that schools receive a support service of the highest standard in the salaries and contracts field promptly and correctly.

Good features:

- Staff in our schools continue to receive their salaries correctly and on time every month.
- Adhere to a level of service that is fair and consistent for every school, by following the work schedule throughout the academic year.
- Succeeded to use less paper by sending every statement/contract electronically.

Priorities for the next period:

- Continue to keep the Supply Staff list current in a spreadsheet for the time when the App for hiring Supply Teachers will be live. Release a Supply Application Form electronically and create a package on the website.
- Following creating a final Statement of Employment for teachers, aim to start sending statements out by Easter 2024 for new staff.
- Continue to encourage headteachers to ensure that all teaching staff and Learning Support Assistants are registered with the Education Workforce Council and have completed the DBS process prior to commencing their posts in a school. The electronic system of checking DBS that has been in place facilitates the process.
- Create and update electronic timetables and forms for schools.
- Complete the task of transferring all school staff's paper files to electronic files.
- Have a higher percentage of contracts out before they start working.

CATERING AND CLEANING SERVICE

Purpose

Provide nutritious and healthy food for the learners of Gwynedd Schools and to keep educational establishments clean and safe to assist learners to reach their potential.

The service's good features

- The Service now provides free school meals to everyone who chooses to take advantage of the offer from Reception class up to Year 6 in Gwynedd primary schools.
- Working with primary schools in order to receive feedback on children's satisfaction with school meals.
- Work with the BCUHB dietician to make sure that the school meals offer is open to everyone, even those with allergies or a special diet.
- The lunchtime menu of primary and special schools complies with the 'Healthy Eating in Schools (Nutritional Standards and Requirements) (Wales) Regulations 2013'.
- The lunchtime menu of Secondary schools is being worked up towards compliance with the 'Healthy Eating in Schools (Nutritional Standards and Requirements) (Wales) Regulations 2013'.
- Tasting/nutrition sessions are held in schools to encourage more pupils to eat school dinners.
- Give parents, who provide a lunch box for their children, an offer of giving their children school dinners on some days of the week.
- Keeping schools clean and safe.

Priorities for the next period

- Complete the fitting of heavy equipment and finish extensions to the kitchens and/or dining halls of some primary schools.
- Continue to encourage parents to choose school dinners for their children.
- Assist schools to reduce the school dinners debt levels of parents (primary morning childcare club and Secondary school dinners).
- Upgrade the allergies and special diet policy.
- Assist Secondary Schools with the process of collecting school lunch debts.

TRANSPORT

Purpose

To arrange transport for Gwynedd pupils to educational establishments, thereby providing them with access to education in order to fulfil their potential.

The service's good features:

- Transport is arranged for all qualifying pupils.
- Transport is arranged for post-16 students.
- The ability to buy post-16 travel e-pass for free by reducing obstacles for the young people of Gwynedd towards further education.
- The Gwynedd Transport Policy complies with the 'Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008'.

Challenges:

- A significant increase in the cost of providing transport to all deserving learners leading to a significant overspend or an insufficient budget by the Education Department to meet the increase.
- The process of re-tendering school bus transport leading to a significant increase in the cost of provision each time but the core budget for the Department of Education's transport does not increase.
- A shortage of transport providers in some areas of the county leading to a failure to provide transport in certain circumstances or high costs to provide transport from a provider from another area who has to travel a considerable distance to meet the requirement.

Priorities for the next period:

- Continue to ensure the service's efficiency by reviewing criteria and current systems consistently.
- Implement pilot schemes in some areas and with some schools in order to try to reduce the cost of providing transport.
- Conduct a strategic review of the education transport field.

EDUCATION BUSINESS CENTRE

Purpose

To support the effective management of Gwynedd Schools.

The Centre supports primary schools by providing services in accordance with the Service Level Agreement that exists between the schools and the Centre.

Support is given in a range of fields in relation to school management.

Good features:

- Offer administrative support and guidance on business matters that meet the needs of school administrative management.
- Reduce Headteachers' workload by providing another additional administrative service in the schools as required.
- Provide a service to answer phones as required, specifically to small and medium schools who do not have an Administrative Assistant as well as providing during moments of emergency for big schools. During 2023, over 6,000 phone calls were answered on behalf of primary schools that were a part of the plan.
- Offer an ordering goods service for schools by using the Education Business Centre's credit card.
- Organise, give support and training to schools that wish to have their own credit cards.
- The Education Business Centre's Intranet has been established to communicate, share information and good practices with schools through the Hub.

Priorities for the next period:

- Continue to present credit cards to schools who have an administrator in the schools to support the arrangement.
- Continue to work closely with the Procurement Team to give schools the best value on Procurement contracts.
- Continue to identify and improve services that will contribute towards reducing Headteachers' workload.
- Continue to develop and update the Education Business Centre's Intranet. Further develop the Education Business Centre team in different fields to ensure that a high-quality service is offered.
- Trial a new system of paying school invoices with the aim of speeding up the process, to ensure that suppliers are paid sooner. During 2022-23, the Education Business Centre processed over 11,000 invoices on behalf of primary schools.

Customer Satisfaction

Many customer satisfaction questionnaires were sent out during 2022-23 to primary school Headteachers asking for their opinion on the Education Business Centre service. The responses were really encouraging with 100% of them noting that they were very happy with the service.

CHILDREN IN CARE

Purpose

Ensure the best education provision for Gwynedd's Children in care.

Good features

- Personal Education Plans of children in care have been transferred to an online PEP system. This system is linked with an Individual Development Plans system by ensuring consistency in the information and avoid duplicating work.
- Children in care catchment grants and 2022/23 individual bursary have been shared for Gwynedd schools to support plans and provisions for children in care. Many schools have funded training and provisions connected with trauma-informed schools.
- Schools have received training on the effective use of the Personal Education Plans system for children in care and the work continues to ensure that educational targets, as well as well-being ones are included.
- Effective collaboration continues to happen between the council's services to ensure the best support for the County's children in care.

Priorities for the next period:

- Continue to collaborate with the data department to develop the ability to analyse the attendance of Gwynedd's looked-after children. Act on the findings by working with Education Welfare Officers.
- Support schools to ensure a provision of training and guidance to ensure the best support for Gwynedd's children in care.
- Continue to develop the use of the online system to record Education Plans for children in care who have been located outside Wales.
- Collaborate with schools to ensure effective planning and expenditure of grants that are linked with children in care.

YOUTH SERVICE

Purpose:

I want you to listen to me, and include me; so, I can be a young, healthy, happy and safe person to improve my well-being to help me reach my full potential.

Services that we provide:

Community Youth Work - that focuses on open, social and fun provision, in communities across the county in the evening and during school holidays by doing activities in the summer through grants such as Summer of Fun etc. Collaboration is mainly with local community partners namely community councils, village halls, local businesses, community groups (art, sports and environmental) with a team of over 30 part-time staff members located in the communities.

Good Features:

- 9,309 participants over the 12 months.
- Provision in over 60 locations across Gwynedd.
- Provide Summer of Fun sessions in 18 locations across Gwynedd with over 550 young people attending.
- Partner with Byw'n Iach and the Police in the School Holidays Project.
- Have funded over 20 third sector organisations through the Youth Support Grant to provide activities through the medium of Welsh and to ensure an inclusive provision to each young person in Gwynedd.

Youth Support Work for those who are 11-16 years old - that focuses on provision in every secondary school (x14 & x2 ALN) through the county and bridge youth support work to communities outside school hours. The Youth Support Team fosters positive relationships with young people, help young people to foster a positive relationship with themselves, with others and with the community. They run a programme of activities and projects based on an informal curriculum of learning, which stems from the 5 Ways to Well-being for building young people's personal resilience and promoting emotional well-being, jointly with other support partners. They mainly work alongside schools, School Nurses, the Youth Justice Service, the Police, Agored Cymru, Social Services, CAMHS, the Education and Inclusion Department, the Fire Service, Housing Associations, local Voluntary and Community groups.

Good Features:

- 8882 participants over the 12 months.
- Over 1,300 accreditations have been completed by young people.
- 220 young people have received a bronze/ silver award through the Duke of Edinburgh Award.
- 96% of young people stated that their well-being has improved.
- 97% have enjoyed the provision.

Youth Support Work for those who are 16-25 years old - that focuses on provision targeted to young people that are not in education, training or work. The team provides one to one support and group work for young people to overcome barriers that prevent them from re-engaging with education, and/or moving forward to work. The support includes work on health and well-being (Healthy Relationships and Programmes on Developing Resilience), accommodation issues, developing digital and financial literacy together with careers and employability advice, in accordance with the purposes of the Young Engagement and Progression Framework and in partnership with other youth support services. The collaboration here is mainly with Careers Wales, Colleges of Further Education, Health Board (mainly CAMHS), Job Centres, Social Services Post-Care Team, Adults Social Services, Housing Associations and homelessness agencies, Voluntary and Community Organisations (mainly environmental, arts), and transition arrangements with the schools and the education department.

Good Features:

- Caseloads have increased by 80% compared with last year.
- 92% of young people have completed their personal plan.
- Have engaged with 65% of young people from Tier 1 and 2 (Number of Gwynedd's most vulnerable young people).
- 86% of young people stated that their well-being has improved during the support period.

Health and Well-being Youth Worker

Support Young People to develop sessions and activities for other young people based on the Five Ways to Well-being model. Support Youth Workers (Statutory and Voluntary) to develop sessions, activities and health and well-being support for young people. Collaborate with the "Children and Young People Emotional Well-being" Regional Group to develop an Emotional Well-being Framework for the region's Youth Support stakeholders to promote emotional health and well-being (this non-clinical framework is an attempt to build resilience in children and young people).

Youth Homelessness Coordinator

The purpose of this post is to contribute towards efforts to eliminate homelessness among young people. They have been responsible for leading a partnership method to map, co-ordinate, monitor and improve systems and pathways for young people aged 11-25 who are 'at risk of facing homelessness or who are homeless'. They have developed suitable paths for young people that have built on youth work methodology and a method that focuses on the young person. They work closely with the 16-25 Youth Support Team Leader to ensure that this work meets the Youth Homelessness Prevention Grant requirements and reflects the current method of providing a Youth Engagement and Progression Framework in Gwynedd by collaborating with the rest of the Youth Service Team and Housing Service as well as key partners/organisations to deliver successful outcomes for young people within the target group.

Priorities for the next period

- Act on the service's new communication strategy.
- Develop new systems to record and measure current performance.

- Work towards Youth Work Quality Mark.
- Work together to develop Cyngor Gwynedd's young people forum.
- Identify new financial opportunities to develop the service.
- Strengthen our provision in the schools and collaborate with other service units within the education department.
- Re-establish the Engagement Framework group.
- Develop a voluntary framework with Mantell Gwynedd.

**ADDITIONAL LEARNING
NEEDS
AND
INCLUSION SERVICE
GWYNEDD AND ISLE OF
ANGLESEY**

ALN QUALITY SERVICE

Purpose:

- Support the development of quality ALN and Inclusion provisions within educational settings from 0-25 years old.
- Identify early and respond appropriately when there are concerns of ALN quality across the regional and out-of-county education sector for Gwynedd's children and young people.
- Support schools and other education provisions to meet the requirements of the ALN and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act.

Good features:

- The number of disputes reaching the Tribunal are low.
- The percentage of schools needing Quality input above normal is low.
- A full team of quality and professional support officers by the Administrative Team.
- Quality structures that feed into the School Support Board.
- Collaboration within the improving school's arrangements in terms of ALN Quality contribution to the Regional Quality Board.
- Collaborate with the special schools to develop jointly the banding so the Education Department has an overview of the needs of the most profound and vulnerable pupils in the county.
- A range of panels to ensure that every ALN tier is discussed within the ALN&I Team regularly.
- Collaborate with the further education colleges to trial procedures to transition and ensure a purposeful post-16 path for the county's pupils.

Challenges:

- Staff absences.
- The new Legislation that is now in operation and the differences in interpretation between the Welsh Government and the Tribunal on specific aspects.
- Lack of agreement and clarity on specific fields within the Act and the Code.
- Increase in the number of pupils that manifest profundity from pre-school age.

Priorities for the next period:

- Look at the purpose and procedures of moderation panels by changing toward funding mainstream schools through a formula.
- Train the teams and schools as the Wales Tribunal President gives guidance on the new act's statute and its actions.
- Further develop the collaboration with the post-16 sector to ensure successful transfer and compliance with the new act.
- Continue to prioritise solving disputes so that the number of county appeals to the Tribunal continue to be in the lowest quarter of Wales' LEA.

ALN&I ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE

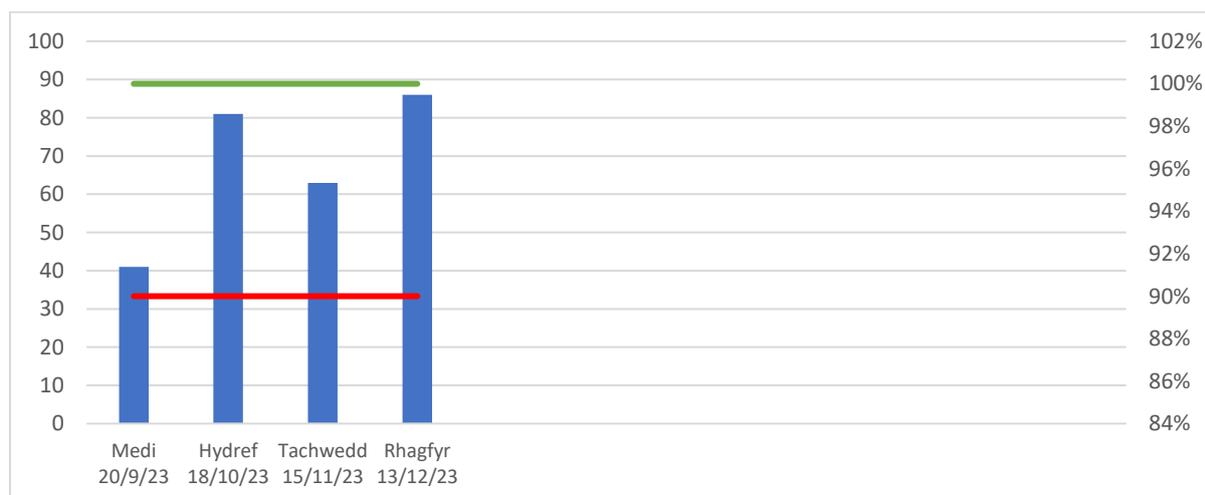
Purpose:

Support the teams within the ALN&I service, support Gwynedd and Isle of Anglesey schools, deal with enquiries from the public.

- Implement the administrative arrangement for children's cases that are identified to have ALN&I statutorily on behalf of Cyngor Gwynedd and Anglesey County Council.
- Be part of an administrative team which ensures that the ALN&I Services receive high quality administrative support.

Moderation Panels Data 2023

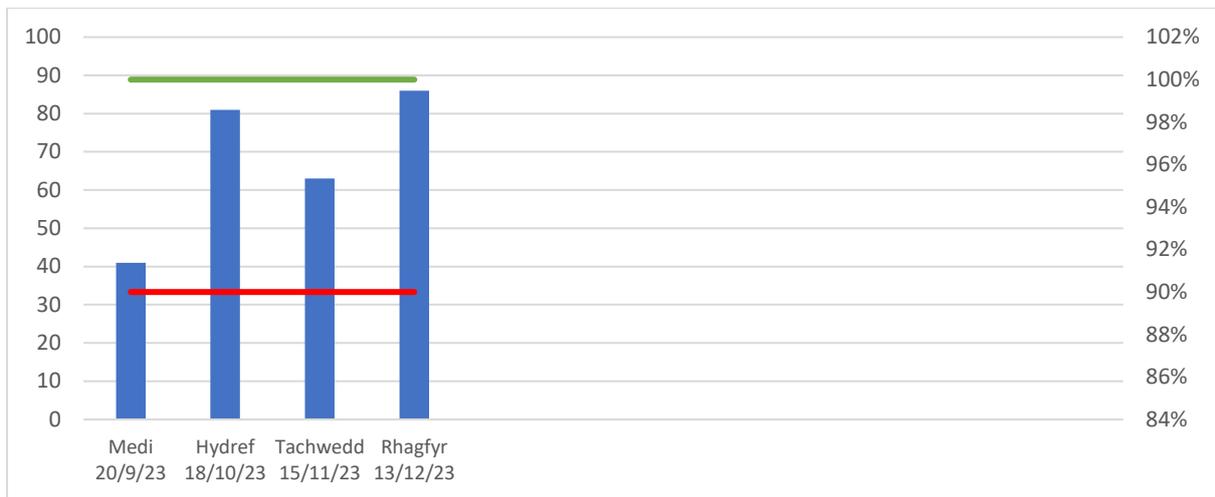
Number of Moderation Panels and Forum				
Month	Number of Panels	Number of on time Administration	Percentage	Target
September 13/9/23	45	45	100.00%	90%
October 11/10/23	73	73	100.00%	90%
November 8/11/23	66	66	100.00%	90%
December 6/12/23	84	84	100.00%	90%



Between September 2023 and December 2023, the service has received 268 applications by a school for additional support for AIDP children. Each one has been administrated appropriately and within a deadline because parents and schools have access to the information online.

Area Forums Data

Month	Number of Forums	Number of on time Administration	Percentage	Target
September 20/9/23	41	41	100.00%	90%
October 18/10/23	81	81	100.00%	90%
November 15/11/23	63	63	100.00%	90%
December 13/12/23	86	86	100.00%	90%



Between September 2023 and December 2023, the service has received 278 applications by a school for input by a specific team within the service. Each one has been administrated appropriately and within a deadline because parents and schools have access to the information online and the specific teams have the time to create a support package based on the decision.

Next year's priorities

- Continue to work on the agendas of panels and forums for the next educational year.
- Continue to develop and update the ALN&I Administrative Team's implementing processes to accompany the Additional Learning Needs Code (Wales). Ensure that every source has been crossed in terms of administration correctly and effectively by taking away any empty steps.
- Continue to develop Communication and Administrative procedures in the context of the Electronic IDP updates. This means inputting the use of the IDP system to ensure a correct update to the system that accompanies our day-to-day procedures.
- Continue with the arrangements to extend the Welsh Government discretion to local authorities to move the rest of the children from the SEN system to the ALN system over a period until 2025, hoping that they will complete a large percentage of these by 31/8/24.

EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE

Purpose:

- Promoting positive change for children and young people through the use of Psychology.
- Ensure the best possible educational outcomes for individuals aged between 0 and 25 years old.
- Provide a high-quality Service that is in-keeping with the standards of the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).
- Work in an effective strategic manner to promote whole-school development in the way in which ALN and Inclusion is targeted.

How do we as a team achieve our purpose:

We hold consultations with relevant staff, young persons and parents frequently. Since Spring 2021, following a substantial reduction in the size of the team, we implemented a model of consulting with groups of schools to respond to this reduction in staffing. The model was a success in the majority of catchment areas. During the 2023 year, we are changing the model that we are offering; instead of holding a group in each catchment area, we will hold 3 (Arfon, Meirion-Dwyfor and Anglesey) to vary the group membership to further share expertise.

- Annual Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA) Training and supervision every half term.
- Training for school staff on a range of subjects, i.e. Growth Mindset, Mindfulness, Anxiety, Whole School Approaches and more specifically for Specific ALN, Attachment and Developmental Trauma, Specific Learning Difficulties and Emotionally Based School Absences (EBSA).
- Therapeutic group/individual interventions.
- Hold research projects.
- Work on individual pupils' level (including assessments and observations).

Good features:

- Feedback on the group consultation was positive in many catchment areas; the experience had been positive from the team's perspective too. This success has encouraged us to think how ALN Coordinators would benefit from co-workers' expertise from different catchment areas and therefore, we will open the groups more widely than this year's catchment areas and act on each area (Arfon, Meirion-Dwyfor and Anglesey).
- ELSA Training and supervision. We now have 140 ELSAs trained across the two counties, with 79 having received an accreditation this year and 56 working towards the accreditation in 2024. Some ELSAs have left their posts since training, but we are extremely glad of the number who continue to work in the schools offering emotional support of a high quality to the pupils.
- SLD Friendly Schools Training has been offered to every school with 61 Gwynedd schools having attended the training. 23 of those have attended subsequent workshops because they wanted to pilot this scheme in their schools during this academic year. Another training day is being offered during the Summer term of 2024 to those who did not attend the last time.

- Appointing assistant educational psychologists (AEP) allows the team to fulfil a wide range of psychology work in the schools. They have created a range of useful packages and resources for schools, including an early years ELSA training package and Secondary Well-being Package for our website. Additionally, they support the staff to collect data and hold investigations/evaluations in different fields. One assistant educational psychologist went to Cardiff to train and will come to us on placement during her third year. We hope that we can attract her back to the service after she qualifies!
- The service has designed a training and guidelines package for schools in the Emotionally Based School Absences (EBSA) field and some schools have benefited from having this training. Our aspiration as a service is to see more numbers receiving the training during this year. We have held some research with schools to understand the extent of the need so that we can collaborate with other teams within the ALN&I service to support schools to follow suitable action steps to support individuals experiencing this difficulty.

Challenges

- Low staff levels - staff have left their posts following the challenging period of the pandemic.
- Recruiting qualified Educational Psychologists who can speak Welsh.

Priorities for the next period:

- Continue to evolve a new method of offering service to schools when the number of psychologists has reduced and the need for service remains high.
- Develop ELSA work within Gwynedd and Anglesey schools by supporting the 4 cohorts that have now been trained. Take the opportunity to adapt and improve the training package and evaluate the impact of the programme up to now.
- Work as part of an SLD Friendly Schools working group (with the SLD specialist team and staff from Gwynedd and Anglesey schools) to support schools who are piloting the scheme and working towards an accreditation by Summer 2024.
- Working jointly with other ALN&I teams to develop an effective path to support children who are absent from school because of emotional difficulties (EBSA).

EARLY YEARS ALN SERVICE

Purpose:

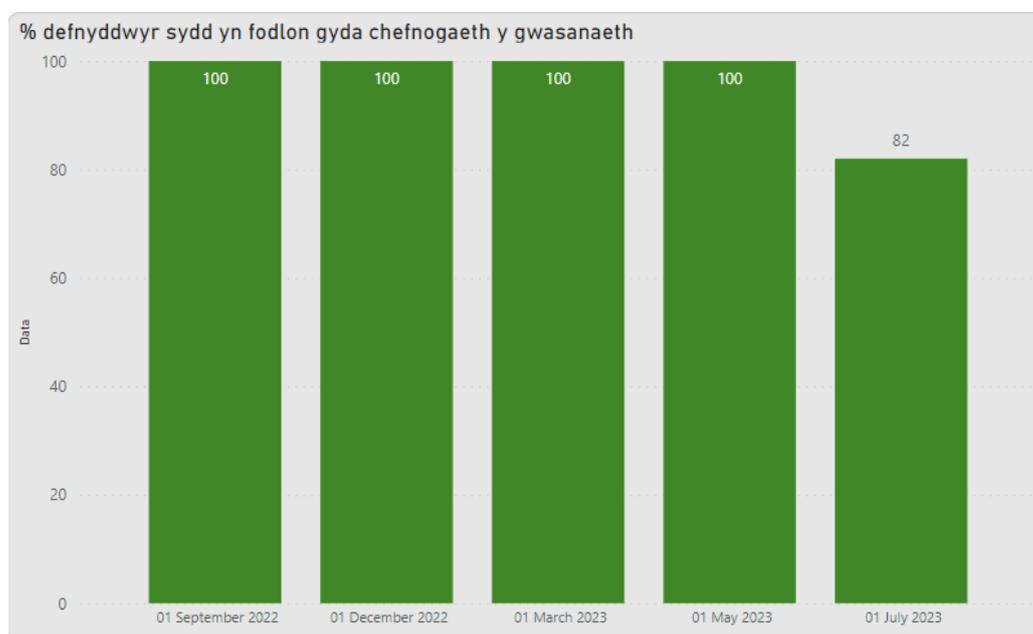
Ensure that the ALN statutory duties in relation to children under school age are fully implemented to recognise needs promptly and ensure appropriate interventions are implemented to prevent ALN from developing or getting worse.

How we achieve our purpose:

Following the Early Years consultation process and the Additional Learning Needs Act coming to force September 2021, the team's staffing structure was restructured. An equivalent to 1.4 teachers were added to specifically undertake the designated coordinator role. As a result, the Early Years ALN Team have 2.4 teachers with responsibility to carry out the designated coordinator role, and an equivalent to 2.2 assistants to support them, in geographically effective locations to respond to the number in each area. These roles sit under the leadership of the Early Years ALN Lead Officer and fulfil the statutory requirements of the ALN Act.

Positive features:

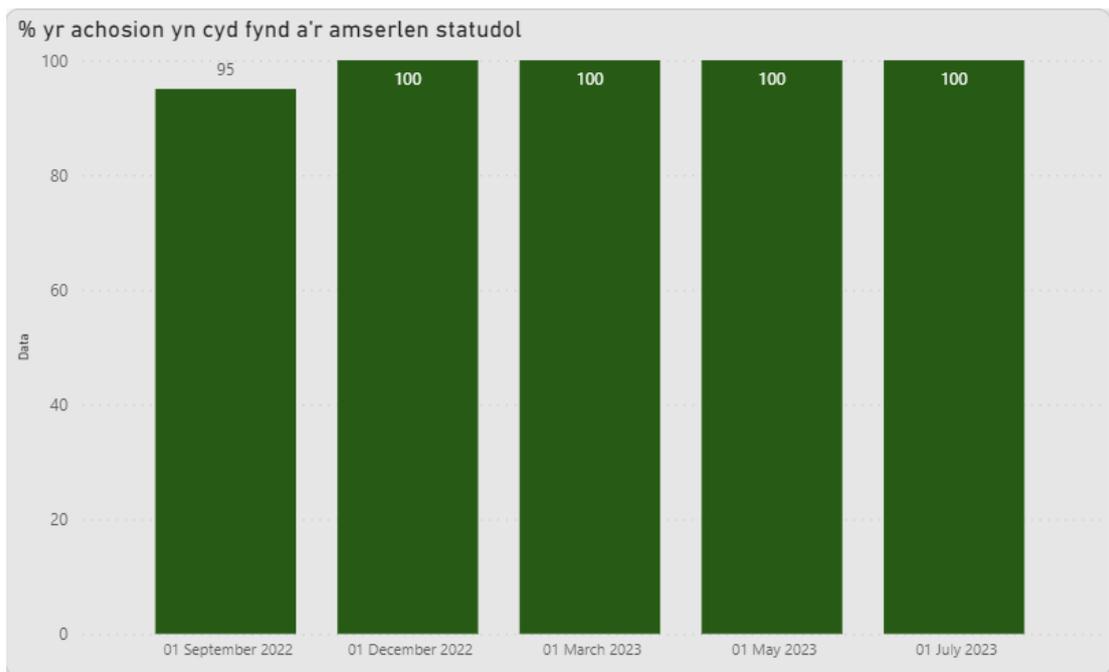
The Early Years ALN Lead Officer and the Early Years Senior Teacher work closely together to ensure that there is effective collaboration between the Early Years Team and the Early Years ALN Team. As a result, many of the children who are identified are operating at the targeted level. This shows that early years locations use the gradual response method of the provision map effectively, which has ensured that most referrals to start the ALN enquiries are suitable where an IDP is put in place to support the child. The data below shows that parents, early years settings and schools are very satisfied with the support of the Early Years ALN Team.



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

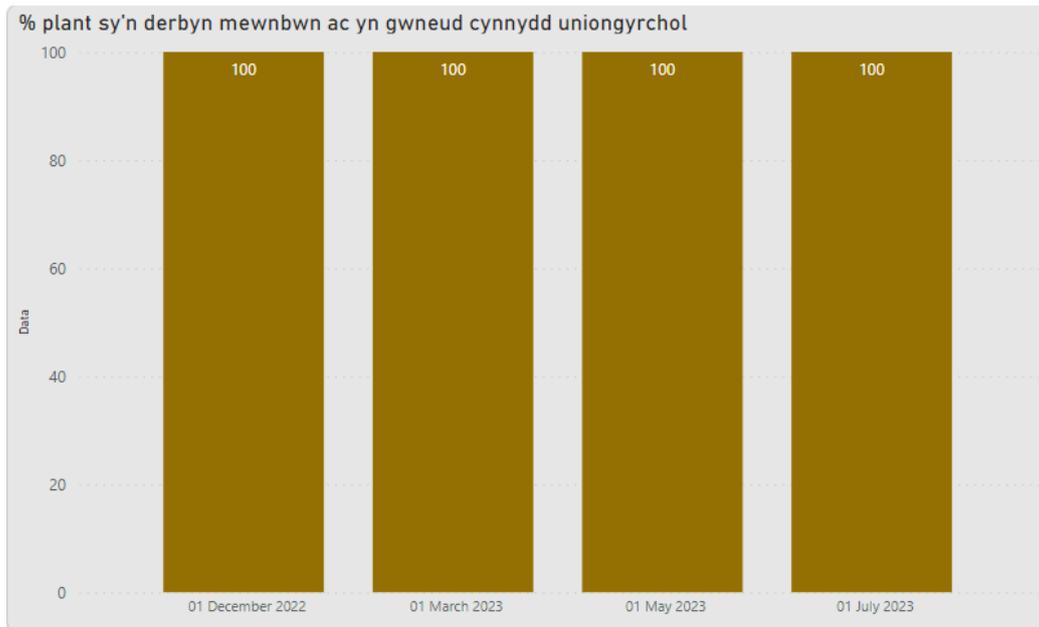
Between September 2022 and August 2023, the Authority has received 84 ALN enquiries. 27 IDPs were transferred from the 2021/2022 educational year, making a total of 90 IDPs where the Authority was responsible for maintenance. There was no significant difference in terms of the number of IDPs that the Authority maintained over the past two years for the Early Years cohort. ALN processes are continuously reviewed to ensure that they are effective and efficient and that

ensures that all enquiries adhere to the statutory timetable of 12 weeks. The graph below shows that the Team, with the support of the Administrative Team adheres to the statutory timetable with all cases (it must be noted that the September 2022 record did not consider the factor if the timetables had been delayed). With all cases where the timetables had to be delayed, it was on the basis that health was unable to comply with its statutory timetable of 6 weeks (section 65 of the ALN Act) to provide information to support the process of making a decision whether or not the child had ALN. As well as adhering to the statutory timetable, the data shows that the average time taken by the team to complete an enquiry has decreased over the year. This confirms that the continuous review arrangements are successful and ensure that the processes are effective and efficient - that ensures early identification and provision for the learners.



% of cases that correspond with the statutory timetable

Arrangements were developed to scrutinise the quality of IDPs which have confirmed that almost all IDPs are good with a minority having excellent features which have had a positive impact on the children's outcomes. The data below collected when reviewing the IDPs confirms that all children have made good or better progress against their targets.



% of children who receive input and make direct progress

Priorities for the next period:

- 1: Continue to evolve effective and efficient procedures for ALN processes in the Early Years.
 - Develop methods of evaluating the quality of the additional learning provision including outreach sessions by the team.
 - Develop progress monitoring methods within the IDP.
 - Ensure staffing structure sustainability that undertakes statutory requirements (designated Coordinator's role).
 - As a result of Extending the Flying Start scheme, consider and plan for the likelihood that the children with ALN would be identified earlier. As a result, it is likely that the need to provide resources to support ALP will increase.
 - Develop procedures for discussing concerns or good practice in terms of the quality of additional learning provision in locations that are not education providers (Early Years quality group addressing this for locations that are education providers).

- 2: Continue to provide support to Early Years settings including childminders.
 - Support settings to monitor progress against targets in the IDP.
 - Incorporate the quality evaluation arrangements 'processes at targeting level' with the procedures of the Early Years Team.
 - Continue to collaborate closely with childcare development officers to ensure that childminders and nurseries have a robust understanding of the provision map procedures and that this is reflected in the choice details (National Questionnaire).

- 3: Develop engagements with the parents/carers to up-skill and ensure consistency in the provision.

- 4: Implement a 'Trauma and mental health informed' approach within the team.

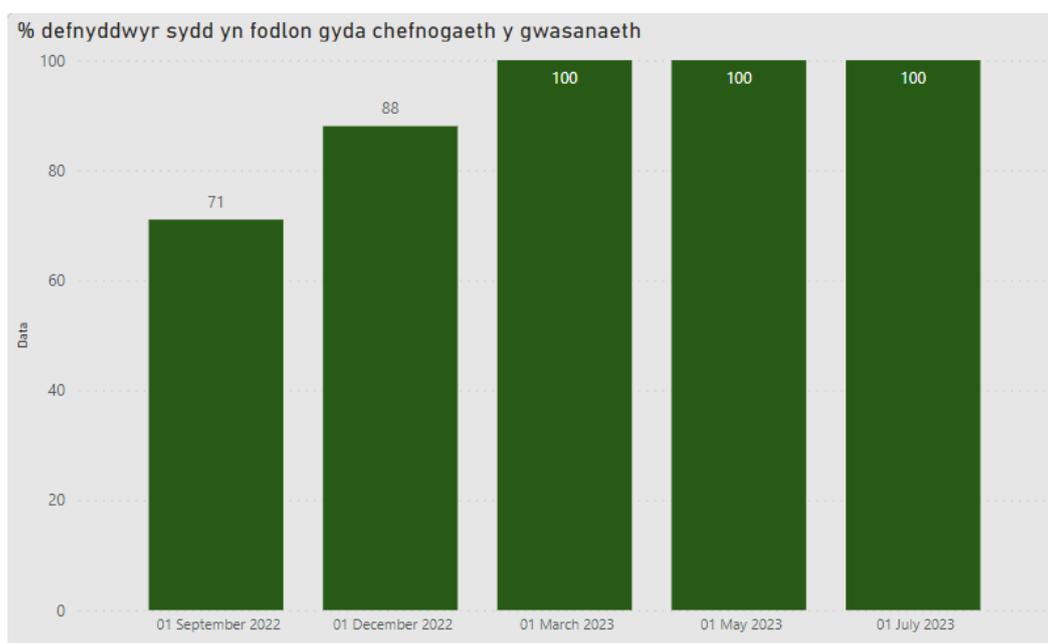
Early Years Assessment and Observation Service (ABC)

Purpose

Prepare young children for the world of education and to be complete and independent learners and support school and setting staff to provide for them.

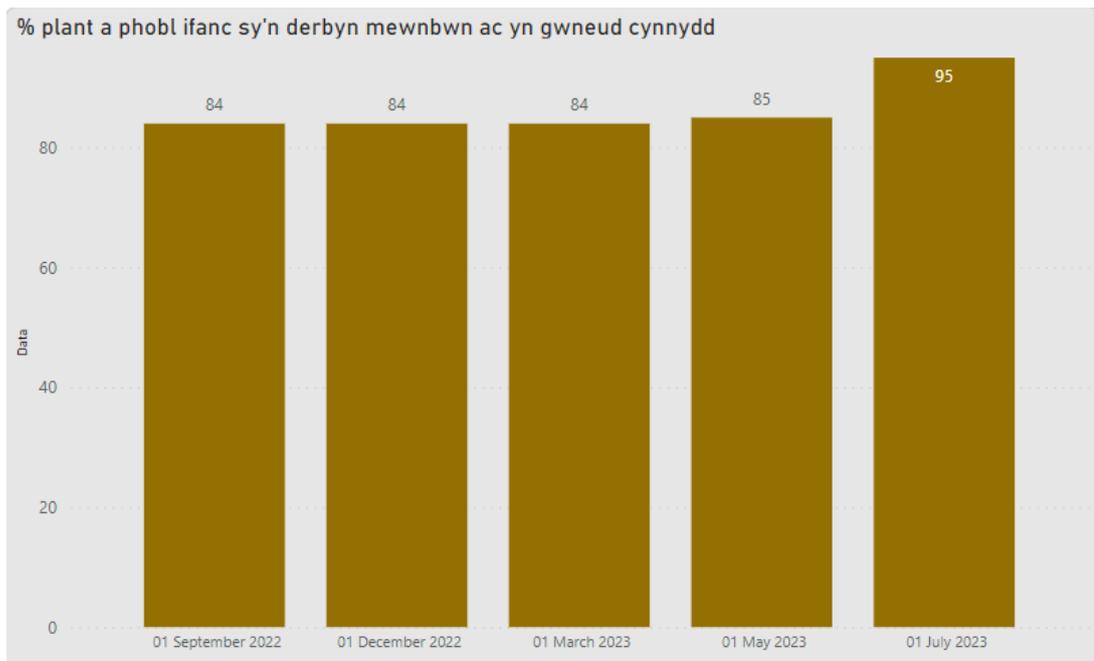
Positive features:

- Satisfaction questionnaires show that Schools and Parents appreciate the expertise of the team. Effective collaboration takes place between ABC and schools when preparing IDP and attend IDP Meetings for children that receive input from ABC.
- The team has been able to recruit and retain staff to offer the full provision, and that has increased in line with demand in Meirionnydd and Dwyfor.



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

- Progress is seen in the schools that follow the recommendations and the strategies following the team's input. This is clearer this year as all records of visits and recommendations are recorded on the Meetings tab on the child's IDP. This means that the recommendations and strategies are available for everyone to see.
- The ABC / Early Years criteria have been updated and are proving to be an effective method of joint assessment with all stakeholders involved with the children. Collaboration will continue with the Early Years Team to regularly review and amend the document.
- The number who have made progress during the year is increasing. These include children who are:
 1. Only in an ABC centre
 2. In an ABC centre and sharing with a school
 3. In a school only.



% of children and young people who receive input and make progress

The early intervention by the service ensures that the additional learning provision is implemented immediately, leading to progress in their targets.

Challenges:

- Efforts have been made to organise training with a Language and Speech Therapist regarding Communication Boards and Wellcomm. This has not been a success so far due to a lack of Health staffing.
- The service staff illness has been high which means that the Senior Teacher must make every effort to keep the centres open. This often means that the Senior Teacher or another member of the team fills in. When this is not possible, a difficult decision must be made to close the centre.
- Some schools are more proactive than others in acting on ABC staff recommendations. Schools do not implement the recommendations given to them, and therefore it is difficult to know if there is progress.
- Profound needs and very challenging behaviour from high numbers of children in the Centres which make it very difficult with the 1:4 staffing levels. These individuals need constant supervision to protect the health and safety of all children and staff members. Therefore it is very difficult to work on any individual targets of the pupils and their impact on the progress they make.
- Outdoor area of Dolgellau ABC Centre is unsuitable.
- Securing new staff training can be challenging while meeting the learners' requirements.
- Uncertain settings e.g. Dwyfor ABC Centre will be moving location for the fourth time in the last four years. We are looking forward to relocating to the new Ysgol Treferythyr in September 2024.

Priorities for the next period:

- Continue to support schools in reaching out and planning ahead for the children.
 - Provide and create a Training Package at an area level according to demand.
 - Create a Training pack jointly with Language and Speech Therapists to up-skill school staff.

- Collaborate with the Early Years Team to update a targeted provision package.
- Ensure robust procedures to observe and support within the centres. That planning in the centres is a central plan for each child in accordance with what is set out in the IDP and responds to the legislative requirements.
- Ensure that the service collaborates closely with the Educational Psychology Service to ensure that we are aware of the emotional needs of learners. All learners need a solid emotional foundation to be able to cope and receive skills and education in an educational institution.
- Re-examine the provision within the centres due to the profound needs of the children who attend, together with the required session structure.
- Develop the outdoor area of the Dolgellau ABC Centre through a Welsh Government ALN capital grant.

COMMUNICATION AND INTERACTION

Purpose:

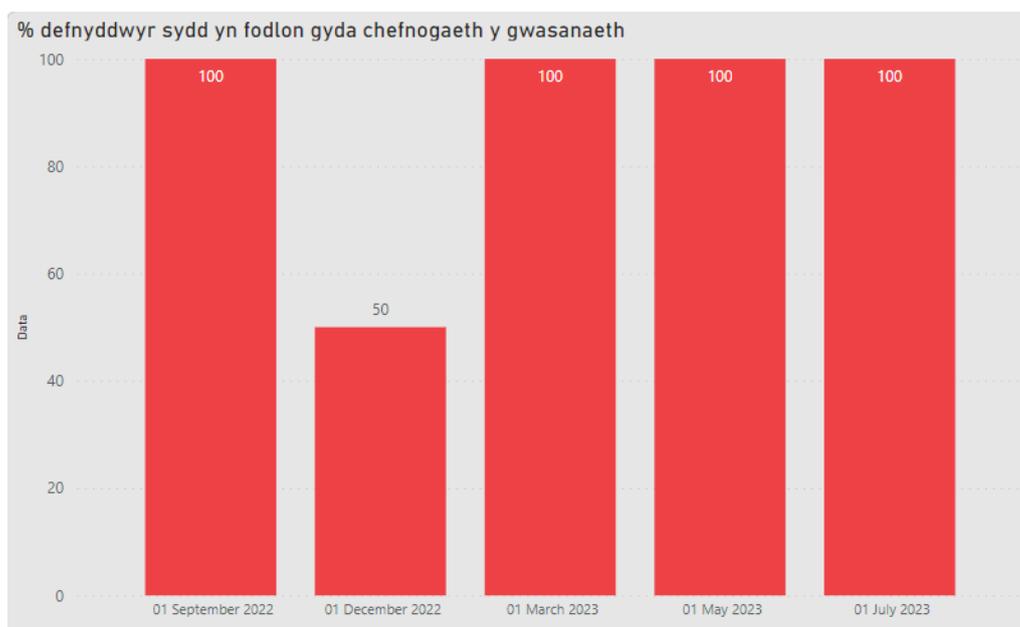
To improve the communication and interaction skills of pupils who are on the Autistic Spectrum or who have communication difficulties so that they can flourish educationally and socially.

How we as a team achieve our purpose:

- Offer direct input to pupils through placement in a centre or input from a specialist assistant.
- Assess and monitor the progress of pupils who are placed in mainstream schools in Gwynedd and Anglesey.
- Offer support to pupils who find it difficult to attend school.
- Offer guidance, support, and training to staff in mainstream schools in order to equip them with the skills to be able to respond to the needs of pupils on the Autistic Spectrum or with communication and interaction difficulties.

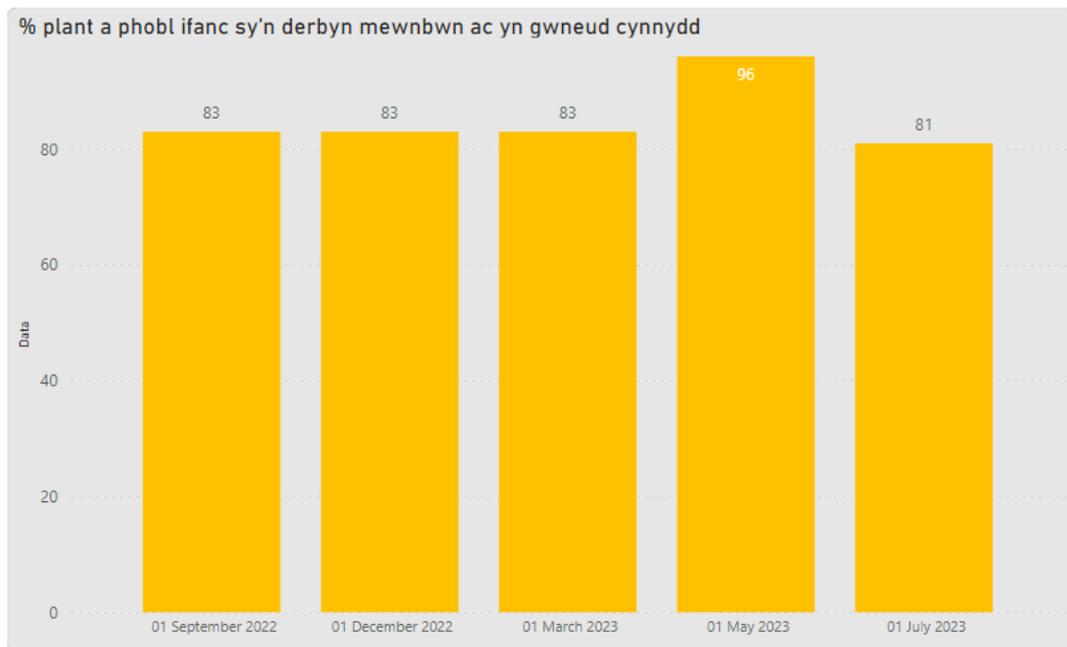
Positive features:-

- Satisfaction questionnaires show that positive feedback is being received consistently by teachers in schools and by parents.



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

- Statistics show that pupils who receive direct input from us make good progress.



% of children and young people who receive input and make progress

- Clear and open communication between the team, schools, and parents.
- All members of the team with experience and qualifications that enable them to offer a quality service to pupils, schools, and parents.

Challenges:

- The number of referrals we receive is high - this can have an impact on the team's staffing capacity and the quality of the service offered.
- Difficult to keep the balance between supporting schools and schools becoming overly dependent on the support.
- Due to difficulty recruiting and retaining staff in the Language and Speech Therapist Service and the Educational Psychologists team there is an increasing pressure on the team to fill the gap.
- Behaviours and the nature of pupils' needs intensify - schools need constant and regular input from us as a team, this is not always possible in terms of the number of referrals and the team's capacity in terms of staffing.
- Difficult to recruit and retain the team's Level 3 Assistants, the feedback we have received is that the pay is low - this is a problem across schools.

Future priorities:

- Collaborate with teams and services (within the Health Board and the Council) to ensure that there is no duplication of input especially with pupils who are out of education.
- Update the information on the ALN&I website - resources and information to support schools and parents.
- Work with the Neurodevelopmental Team to try to reduce their waiting times for assessments - several pupils waiting for an assessment but perhaps not falling within the criteria to receive an assessment.

Risks:

- Staff illness in the team has a significant impact on our ability to respond to pupils' cases and offer support to schools.

SENSORY/PHYSICAL AND MEDICAL/SPECIFIC ALN SERVICE

Purpose:

- Ensure the best possible educational outcomes for individuals aged between 0 and 25 years old.
- Provide a service that is of a high standard and ensure access to the curriculum for the pupils who receive support.
- Work in an effective strategic manner to promote whole-school development in the way in which ALN and Inclusion is targeted.

How we as a team achieve our purpose:

Sensory:

- We have been able to offer a specialist curriculum to 30% more sensory pupils this term.
- 89% of the pupils who receive direct input from the Medical Sensory/Physical Service have made progress in their development of specialist skills/specialist curriculum this term. There is no clear progress to be seen by around 11% of the pupils due to reasons such as:
 - The pupil's numerous absences.
 - Hearing/sight loss deteriorating.
 - The medical condition effects the pupil's ability to interact and participate in the sessions at times.

Physical and Medical:

- Host consultations with relevant staff, young person and parents frequently.
- Training for school staff on different conditions/how to support the pupil.
- Collaborate with Health to carry out training/support individual pupils.

SLD:

- Work on individual pupils' level, offering input to a small number of individuals for a specific period.
- Hold consultations with relevant staff, and the pupil.
- Training for school staff for 'I Can' (Literacy and Numeracy).
- Numbers receiving input from the SLD Team have risen from 70% to 71% of the initial number (202) - school staff continue to use 'I Can' Literacy and Numeracy effectively to assess pupils' skills formatively. A small number of schools have asked to open cases to the SLD Team, and some pupils have made sufficient progress to end the input of the specific ALN Service. The schools that are a part of the SLD Friendly Schools Pilot Plan with the Educational Psychological Team and the SLD Team continue to work to develop SLD Friendly Schools strategies and ideas across the whole school. They have also been collaborating to create an information pack to share with the rest of the schools in the two Counties.

Good features:

- Feedback in the monthly satisfaction questionnaires is very positive - schools, parents and external agencies praise the service and are grateful for the support.
- 'I Can' training has been offered to all schools in both countries, and many school staff use it in order to develop the pupils' specific basic Literacy and Numeracy skills.
- SLD Friendly Schools Training has been offered to every school with 61 Gwynedd schools having attended the training. 23 of those have attended subsequent workshops because they wanted to pilot this scheme in their schools during this academic year. Another training

day is being offered during the summer term of 2024 to those who did not attend the last time.

- The Visually Impaired service collaborates with RNIB to create multi-sensory packs for the pupils of the special schools, following the success of creating the Welsh braille reading series last year (which has already been distributed to every county in Wales).

Challenges:

- Lack of staffing levels within the schools to support the pupils in order to develop specialist skills.
- Recruitment challenges due to the training that is necessary to carry out the posts.

Priorities for the next period:

- Offer Sight and Hearing training to school staff through the OLT training.
- Continue to collaborate with external agencies such as RNIB Health in order to offer the best possible support to the pupils.
- Work as part of an SLD Friendly Schools working group (jointly with the Psychology Team and staff from Gwynedd and Anglesey schools) to support schools who are piloting the scheme and working towards an accreditation by Summer 2024.
- Appoint trained staff within the teams for the near future.

SCHOOLS COUNSELLING SERVICE

Purpose:

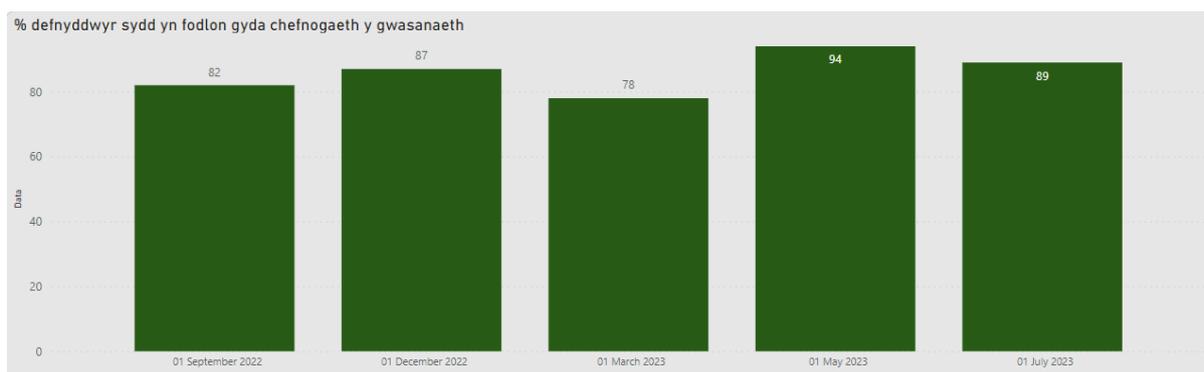
Provide timely and suitable counselling input to learners.

How we as a team achieve our purpose:

- Respond to referrals from schools, parents, other agencies, and the learners themselves where a need for counselling has been identified.
- Offer direct counselling for pupils in every Secondary school in Gwynedd and Anglesey.

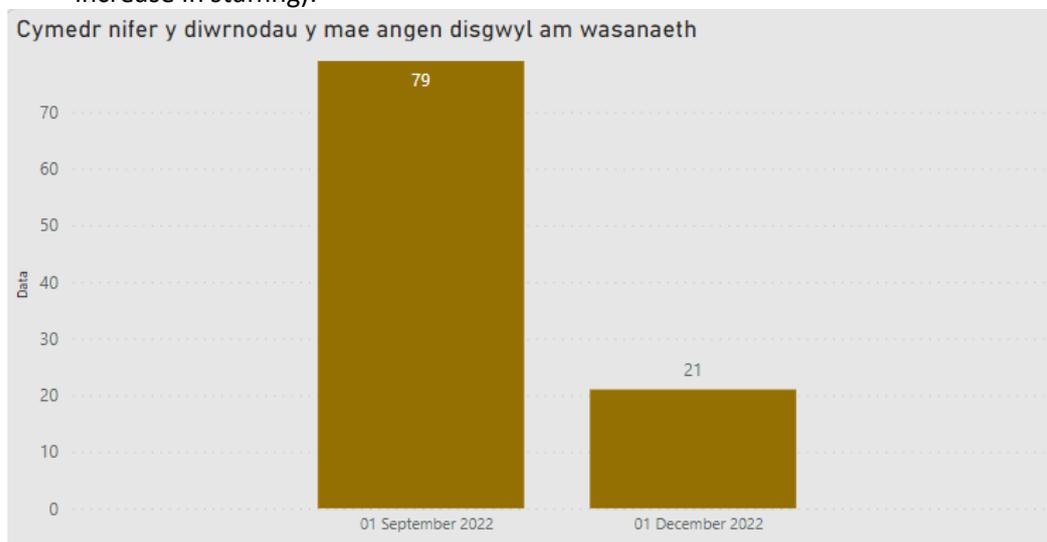
Positive features:

- Satisfaction questionnaires show a high percentage indicating positive feedback:



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

- Waiting time for service reduced significantly due to appointments to the team (i.e., the increase in staffing):



Mean number of days to wait for a service

- Intervention indicators (CORE measure) showing that the service has a positive effect on children and young people's mental health.
- Team meetings and group and clinical supervision every month are key support for staff.
- Timely training has enabled us to offer the service virtually and continue with the service over the lockdowns.
- Recruit additional Counsellors including an art therapist.
- Run a scheme for Trainee Counsellors.

Challenges:

- Recruit qualified bilingual Counsellors.
- Additional temporary funding through grants is frustrating when it comes to advertising attractive jobs.
- Suitable rooms for counselling work in schools creating a challenge in terms of the quality of the provision.
- Increasing demand for the service continues following the COVID period.

Future priorities:

- Develop a more effective data recording system for tracking progress.
- Work towards securing suitable space / rooms for the counselling work.
- Continue to develop in terms of leadership and skills within the team through training.
- Trial and develop arrangements to further reduce waiting lists.

Risks:-

- Staff illness and vacancies in the team have a significant impact on our ability to respond to referrals.
- Learners unable to get preventative input from the team and develop a mental health need whilst waiting for input.

EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE

Purpose:

Supporting children, young people and families to raise attainment by promoting high levels of attendance and getting the best out of an education system.

How we as a team achieve our purpose:

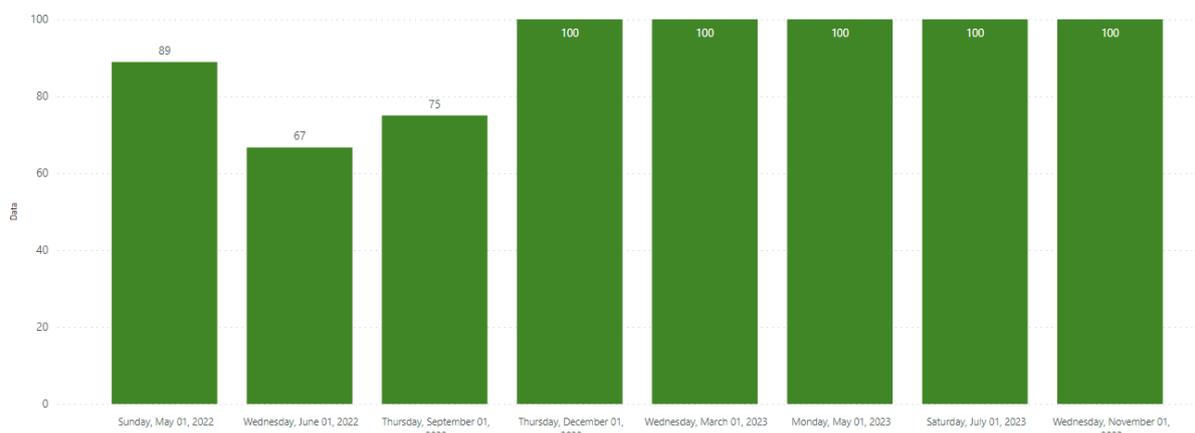
Work in partnership with schools, pupils, parents, and communities to ensure a right to education and regular attendance. Effectively collaborate with a network of agencies who provide education, health and social services for children and young adults.

School Welfare Officers in every school catchment who support pupils to attend education is successful.

A specific optional home Education Team that engages with the families to ensure that there is suitable educational provision for the learners and support as needed i.e. referrals and dedicated resources and information.

Positive features:

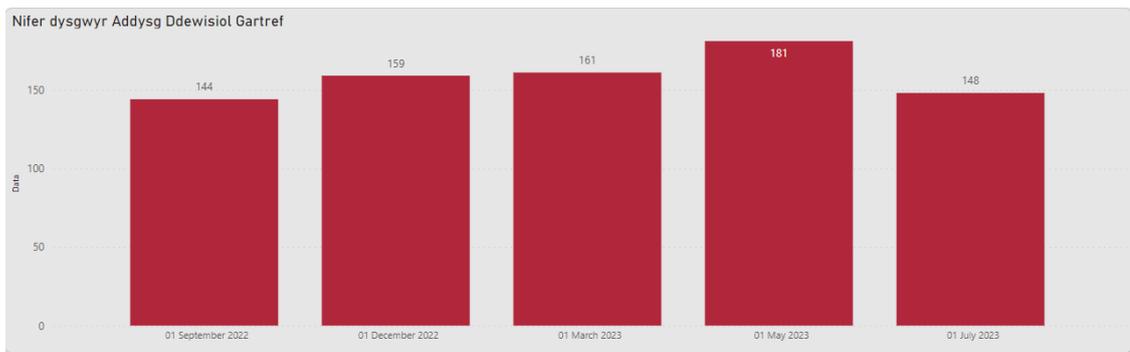
- Use data to support strategic and operational responses.
- Mature and pragmatic working partnership between the schools and the Welfare Service.
- Regular methods of timely engagement to reduce the number of FPN.
- Welfare Officers supporting families especially those most in need.
- Support at Home at specific times i.e. mornings.
- Robust arrangements in place to monitor individuals who have de-registered.
- Monitor school movements to ensure that no one falls through the net.



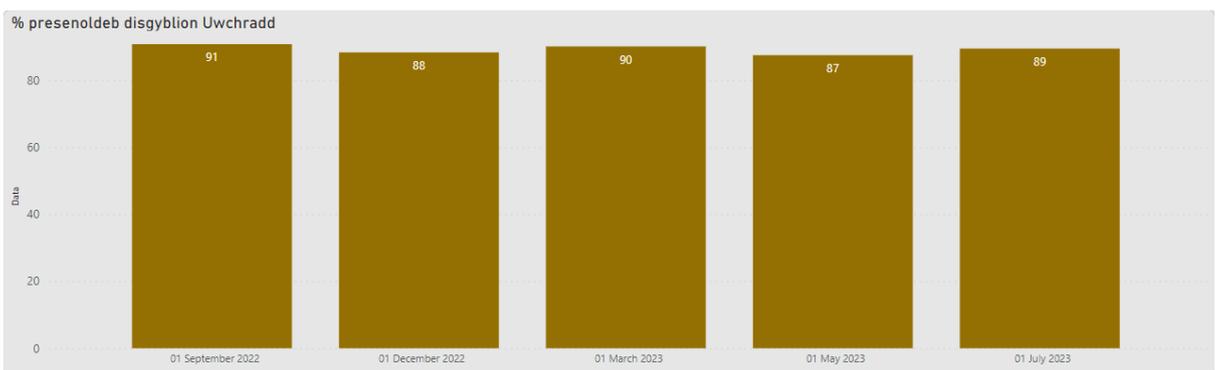
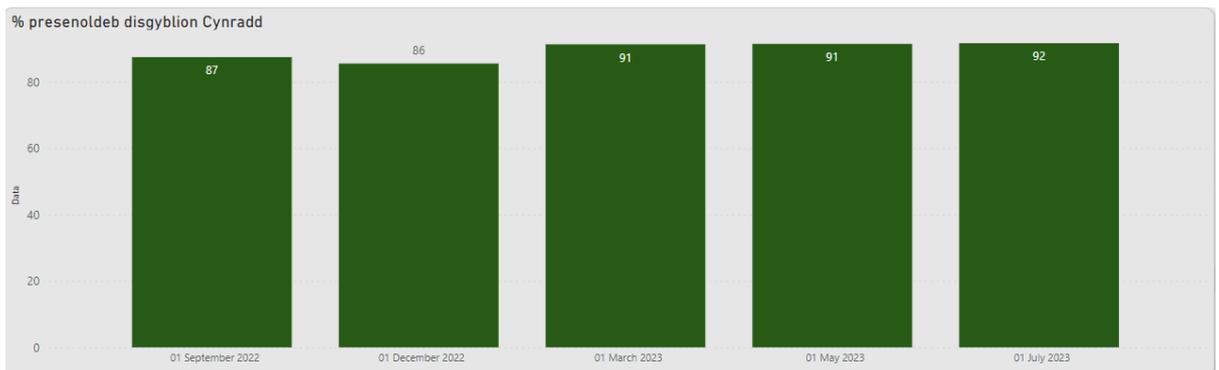
% of users who are satisfied with the service's support

Challenges

- Increase in families who de-register children.



- Absences remain higher than before the pandemic.



- More demand for intensive and specialist support especially in absences in relation to emotional well-being and mental health issues.
- The demand for more support for individuals who cannot attend school because of emotional well-being.
- High number of school moves.

Priorities for the next period:

- Gwynedd Schools' attendance to be in line or above the Wales average.
- The performance of each pupil in relation to poor attendance has improved.
- Use of additional funding from the Welsh Government making a real difference.
- Using data to support strategic and operational responses.
- Reduce the levels of persistent absences.

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (EAL)

Purpose:

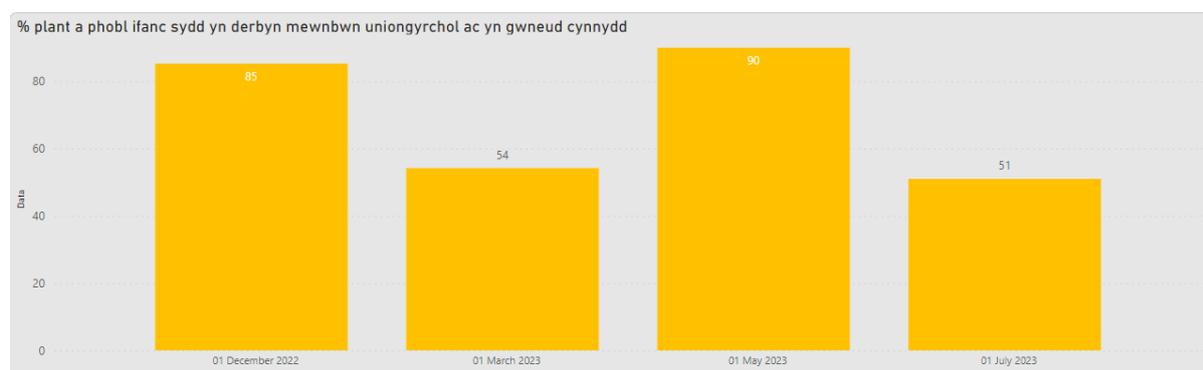
Support and assist schools to successfully meet the needs of EAL learners to enable them to flourish educationally and socially and reach their full potential.

How we as a team achieve our purpose:

- Hold a termly forum for access to the service.
- Assess newcomers across Gwynedd.
- Support pupils within schools to learn English as an Additional Language.
- Support schools to provide effectively for the learners by holding professional meetings programming training and by modelling lessons in the classroom.

Positive features:

- Positive feedback from Schools in response to monthly satisfaction questionnaires.
- A basic training package and courses available to schools.
- A significant investment in a library of resources.
- Responds in a timely way to requests from schools for support.
- Represent the service nationally on EAL forums.



- *Pupils making good progress by the EAL assessment framework (The Bell Foundation)*

Challenges:

- An increase in demand due to the increase in the number of immigrants from outside the European Union.
- Outside the north of the County, small numbers of pupils in need of support are widely distributed.

Priorities for the next period:

- Continue to support and provide training for schools.
- Support schools to provide and differentiate work for EAL pupils.
- Investigate and trial a new tracking system for tracking the progress of EAL pupils.

INCLUSION

Purpose:

Support and work together with Gwynedd schools to seek a positive change in the behaviour of young people who experience behavioural, emotional, and social and development difficulties. Our aims to improve behaviour and reduce the risk of exclusion from school.

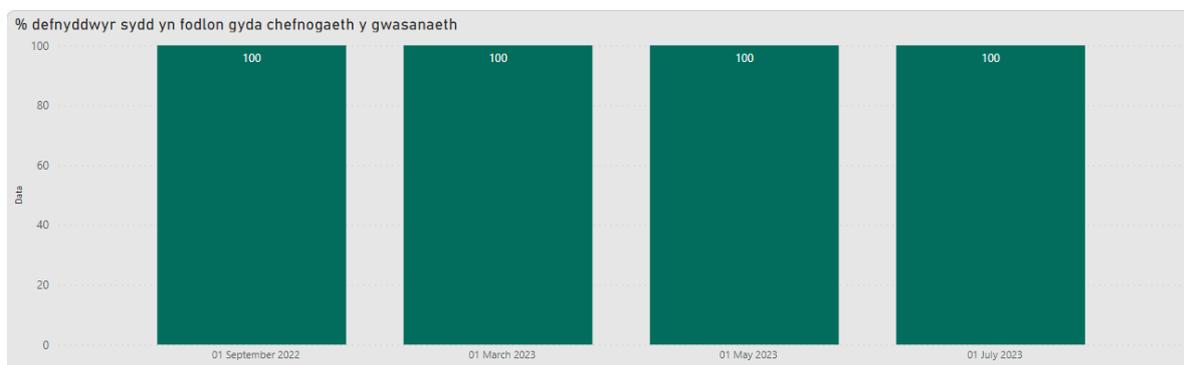
How we as a team achieve our purpose:

- Ensure school ownership of learners with social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties (SEBD)
- Train schools to be confident to work with learners who have SEBD difficulties.
- Support schools to tailor specialist interventions within the school's resources
- Provide specialist provision for learners with the most intense behavioural and emotional difficulties within alternative centres.

Positive features:

- A continuous work programme is in place, which reviews the service and provision with the aim of increasing attendance and reducing the number of exclusions in the county.
- A clear vision that strengthens provision.
- Constantly monitor exclusions, attendance, de-registrations, and school movements data
- Specific support packages.
- An increase in the capacity of the team led to the result of keeping the majority of SEBD learners within their schools.
- Integrated and multi-agency working, sharing information and joint planning provision.
- Intense specialist support for a small number of pupils who have needs beyond what the school is expected to respond to.

“ Provision for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs has strengthened over recent years. There is now more capacity to support these pupils and management arrangements are clearer” (Estyn Report September 2023)

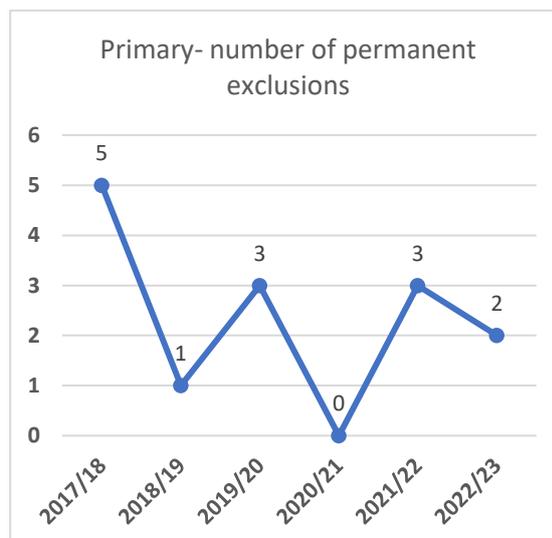
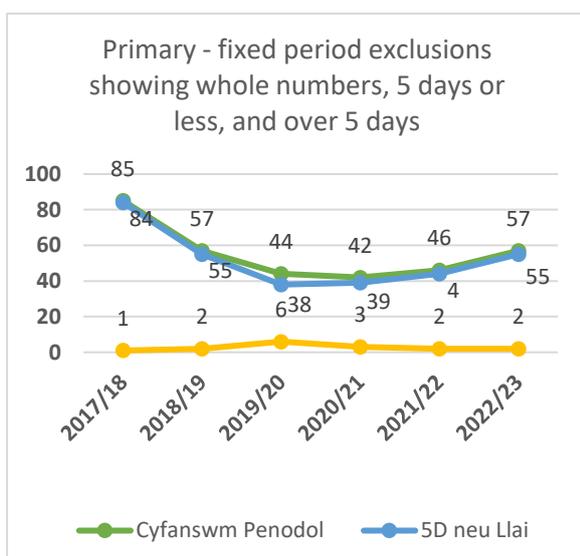
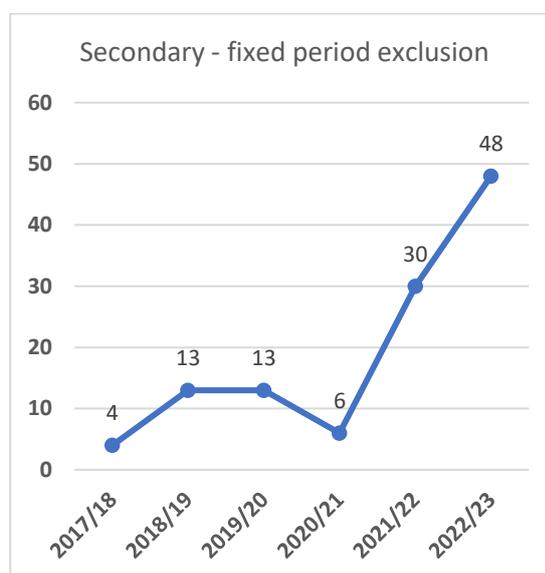
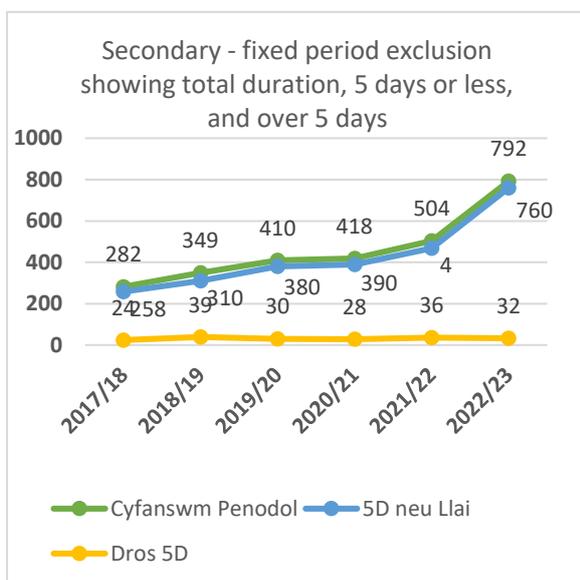


% of users who are satisfied with the service's support

The inclusion team implements a range of strategies that have been planned to nurture schools' ability to tackle the behavioural and well-being needs of pupils so that they can provide specialist interventions for those pupils who have the most complex needs, which include promoting the sharing of good practice among schools.

Challenges:

Despite the reduction in exclusions during the pandemic, we recognise that there was a concerning trend of increased permanent and fixed-term exclusions over the past two academic years. The main reasons noted for the exclusions are threatening and violent behaviours against other pupils, threatening behaviour against an adult, persistent disruptive behaviour, and an increase in the number of drug use cases at school.



- There are several risks associated with a higher level of disengagement and exclusions including safeguarding, pupil welfare, results and financial expenditure. Through the business plan and reporting on measures, data is shared and ensures that the Council's Senior Team, Education Management Team and the ALN&I Management Board have an

overview of the situation and that regular implementation steps are monitored in order to mitigate the risks.

Priorities for the next period:

- Continue to collaborate with Secondary Headteachers on reconciling exclusions and revisiting the system of managed moves.
- Develop new methods of addressing needs in relation to learners' behaviour and well-being with the aim of having an impact on exclusion rates and improving attendance.
- Exclusions' levels reducing significantly.
- Using data to support strategic and operational responses.