

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

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

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

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

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

I) Details

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

Remodelling Gwynedd Education Inclusion Service

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.3 Who is responsible for this assessment?

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

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

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

2) Action

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

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

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

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

2.3 What was the result of the engagement?

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

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

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

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

Estyn Report – June 2023

External review report November 2023

Exclusion data - current

Attendance Data - current

Number of pupils deregistering - current

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

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

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

3) Identifying the Impact

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

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

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

Socio Economic Disadvantage	Positive	<p>The inclusion service supports a high number of children and their families who do not engage well with school / lower than average school attendance. A high percentage of service users are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM). Improved outcomes and opportunities in life come from engagement with education. There will be a reduction in the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), offering pathways for further education or training, or the world of work.</p> <p>The support will extend to one satellite Centre as needed. This will reduce the need to travel to one Centre and be available as needed.</p>
------------------------------------	----------	---

3.2 The Council has a duty under the 2010 Equality Act to contribute positively to a fairer society by promoting equality and good relations in its activities regarding the following characteristics – age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, race, gender reassignment, disability and pregnancy and maternity. The Council must give due attention to the way any change affects these duties.

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

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

* to be deleted as appropriate

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Nothing has been identified

4) Analysing the results

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

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

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

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

Nothing has been identified

4.3 What should be done?

Choose one of the following:

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

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

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

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

Not applicable - nothing has been identified

5) Monitoring

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

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