



Complete Agenda

Democracy Service
Swyddfa'r Cyngor
CAERNARFON
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH

Meeting

EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date and Time

10.30 am, THURSDAY, 25TH JANUARY, 2024

**(NOTE: A BRIEFING SESSION WILL BE HELD FOR MEMBERS AT 10.15AM AND
A LUNCH BREAK IS PLANNED FOR 12.00PM – 1.00PM)**

Location

**Multi-location Meeting
Siambr Hywel Dda, Swyddfeydd y Cyngor, Caernarfon
and virtually on Zoom**

*** NOTE**

This meeting will be webcast

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

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(DISTRIBUTED 17/01/24)

EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP (18)

Plaid Cymru (12)

Councillors

Jina Gwyrfai
Dawn Lynne Jones
Gareth Tudor Jones
Gwynfor Owen
Huw Rowlands
Rhys Tudur

Iwan Huws
Dewi Jones
Olaf Cai Larsen
Llio Elenid Owen
Paul John Rowlinson
Sasha Williams

Independent (6)

Councillors

Elwyn Jones
Beth Lawton
John Pughe Roberts

Gwilym Jones
Dewi Owen
Richard Glyn Roberts

Ex-officio Members

Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council

CO-OPTED MEMBERS:

With a vote on education matters only

[vacant seat]	Church in Wales
Colette Owen	The Catholic Church
[vacant seat]	Meirionnydd Parent/Governors Representative
Karen Vaughan Jones	Dwyfor Parent/Governors' Representative
Manon Williams	Arfon Parent/Governors' Representative

Without a Vote

Elise Poulter	NEU
Gwilym Jones	NASUWT

A G E N D A

1. APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

To receive any declarations of personal interest.

3. URGENT MATTERS

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

4. MINUTES

6 - 20

The Chair shall propose that the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 9th November, 2023 be signed as a true record.

5. GWYNEDD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

21 - 32

Cabinet Members – Councillors Nia Jeffreys and Dyfrig Siencyn

To submit a report on the above.

6. EQUALITY OBJECTIVES CONSULTATION DOCUMENT 2024-28

33 - 114

Cabinet Member – Councillor Menna Trenholme

To submit a report on the above.

A lunch break is planned for 12.00pm – 1.00pm

7. EDUCATION ANNUAL REPORTS

(A) EDUCATION ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23

115 - 182

Cabinet Member – Councillor Beca Brown

To submit the Education Annual Report for 2022-23.

(B) GWE ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23

183 - 214

To submit the GwE Annual Report for 2022-23.

8. POST-16 EDUCATION PROJECT IN ARFON

215 - 218

Cabinet Member – Councillor Beca Brown

To submit a report on the above.

EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 9/11/23

Present:

Councillors: Elwyn Jones (Chair)
Paul Rowlinson (Vice-chair)

Councillors:- Jina Gwyrfai, Iwan Huws, Dawn Lynne Jones, Dewi Jones, Gareth Tudor Jones, Gwilym Jones, Cai Larsen, Beth Lawton, Dewi Owen, Llio Elenid Owen, John Pughe Roberts, Huw Llwyd Rowlands and Rhys Tudur.

Co-opted Members: Colette Owen (The Catholic Church), Manon Williams (Parent / Governor Representative Arfon), Elise Poulter (NEU) and Gwilym Jones (NASUWT).

Officers in attendance: Bethan Adams (Scrutiny Advisor) and Eirian Roberts (Democracy Services Officer).

Present for item 5:- Councillor Beca Brown (Cabinet Member for Education).

Education Department:- Debbie Anne Jones (Assistant Head: Corporate Services), Ffion Edwards Ellis (Assistant Head: Special Educational Needs and Inclusion), Gwern ap Rhisiart (Assistant Head: Primary), Gwyn Tudur (Assistant Head: Secondary), Llion Williams (Assistant Head: Well-being and Equality) and Rhys Glyn (Head of Gwynedd Immersion Education System).

GwE:- Elfyn Vaughan Jones (Senior Regional Leader - Secondary Schools and Pupil Referral Units) and Euros Davies (Senior Regional Leader - Primary and Special Schools).

Present for item 6:- Councillor Nia Jeffreys (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Operational Economy Matters), Amanda Davies (Byw'n Iach Managing Director), and Sioned Williams (Head of Economy and Community).

Present for item 7: Councillor Nia Jeffreys (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Operational Economy Matters), Llyr Jones (Assistant Head of Economy and Community) and Bryn Pritchard-Jones (Maritime Service Manager).

Gwilym Jones, NASUWT, was welcomed as the new representative of the teachers' unions on the committee.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Gwynfor Owen, Richard Glyn Roberts and Sasha Williams and also from Elise Poulter (NEU).

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Councillors Beth Lawton, Llio Elenid Owen and Gareth Tudor Jones declared a personal interest in item 6 as they were Directors of Byw'n Iach.

The members were not of the opinion that it was a prejudicial interest, but although they did not leave the meeting during the discussion, they did not participate in the discussion and did not vote. In accordance with Section 7.6 of the Constitution, no member may be involved in scrutinising decisions in which they had been directly involved.

Councillor Dewi Jones declared a personal interest in item 6 as he was a member of Byw'n Iach.

The member was not of the opinion that it was a prejudicial interest, and he did not leave the meeting during the discussion.

3. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

4. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this Committee, held on 14 September 2023 as a true record.

5. ESTYN REPORT ON EDUCATION SERVICES IN CYNGOR GWYNEDD

The Cabinet Member for Education and officers from the Education Department and GwE were welcomed to the meeting.

The Cabinet Member's report on the Estyn report on education services in Cyngor Gwynedd was submitted requesting the committee to provide observations on the content of the report and to consider any scrutiny arrangements on the progress against the recommendations in the report in a timely manner.

The Cabinet Member set out the context and thanked the Education Department and GwE for their thorough work supporting schools over the years, especially during the challenging post-Covid period. She also paid a tribute to the work of teachers and staff in schools, and to the children and young people for all their efforts despite the pandemic and its intense side-effects.

Members were then given an opportunity to ask questions and submit observations.

It was noted that the report was very strong and authority officers and GwE officers were thanked for all their support.

It was asked how the Authority intended to act on the Estyn recommendations in terms of improving monitoring, evaluating and promoting pupil attendance and strengthening provision to respond to the needs of pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and ensuring monitoring arrangements and improving the quality of that provision. The following was noted in response:-

- That the decline in pupil attendance was a trend seen nationally.
- The accompanying grant for this field was used to appoint 3 officers in the Welfare Team to look at continuous absences, more frequent absences or significant attendance difficulties in school, freeing up the usual welfare officers attached to schools to target absences such as taking holidays during school term or missing the same day over a period of time along with looking at the codes schools use in terms of the registers.
- That detailed reports were provided in terms of monthly attendance, and that there was also weekly data that looked at the trends, targeting specific schools and working with families in a bid to increase attendance.
- That attendance was a duty for everyone, and not just the welfare officers, and an attendance campaign was planned over the year to raise awareness about the importance of attending school regularly and how not attending had an impact on school and pupil outcomes.

- In terms of inclusion, Mrs Caroline Rees, who produced a report on the service in 2019-20, would conduct another inspection in December, specifically on inclusion, and make recommendations on how to strengthen provision.
- That steps had already been put in place to strengthen monitoring processes around the secondary hubs, etc.

It was noted that the report recognised that the multimedia resources used in the immersion centres to reinforce language and vocabulary patterns were valuable and questioned whether there was a proactive all-Wales effort to promote and disseminate them. In response, it was noted that this was certainly something to consider.

It was noted that a comment had been made in the Audit Wales Report that the scrutiny committees did not scrutinise items/projects in the Council's Plan, but it was thought to have changed this year, and it was hoped that the committee would respond to that recommendation in going forward.

It was noted that it was not understood how some schools needed more intervention or support, having already received support from GwE, and it was asked whether there was something that could be done through GwE to ensure that we never get to this situation. In response, it was stated:

- That all schools receive intensive support from the School Support Service, but very often there were circumstances where the challenges were outside the control of the Authority and GwE.
- That those situations very often arose from human resources problems, and specifically the performance of individuals. In those circumstances, GwE provided support to the headteachers where appropriate.
- That a situation can never be reached where no school needs support nor can it be guaranteed that no school will go into intensive support.
- That GwE supports the schools and identifies any weaknesses and puts in the time and support in a timely manner to fill the gap.

The Estyn report noted that the intervention for schools that cause concern was effective, but not always timely, and it was asked whether there were future steps that could be taken in that regard. In response, it was stated:-

- That responding to school challenges was multidimensional and that the challenge itself could come from different directions, be it human resources, fiscal, property or anything else that contributes to a school's success.
- The report was believed to address the steps that had been taken over the past few terms to sharpen the system of supporting schools by identifying the schools much better than in the past, having an open discussion with them regarding the areas needing attention and putting solid support in place to do everything to avoid a school reaching a point of receiving a less favourable opinion from Estyn.
- It was not thought possible for the Authority or GwE, even working together in the most effective manner, to give a guarantee that no school, in one way or the other, would not reach a position where that final opinion was unfavourable, but at times Estyn's views on a school could also help that school to progress.

Reference was made to recent training held at Arfon Leisure Centre on Autism Speculative Disorder and it was asked whether it was intended for that training to be offered to all school staff. The following was noted in response:-

- That the Department had quite a large team specifically targeting this area to offer whole school training where staff could work towards a certain standard in terms of

Autism Spectrum Disorder, and that there were also webinars available to the schools.

- If there was a child known to the team, training was offered to the staff of the school in question.

It was enquired whether there had been any development in appointing more educational psychologists. In response, it was noted:-

- That there were significant staffing difficulties in the service, and that the Cabinet Member and the Chief Executive had sent a letter of concern to the Welsh Government about the training method, which remained unchanged.
- That the core training was provided in Cardiff and it was difficult to promote local people to go on the training.
- That the Council employed assistant psychologists to work with the team in the hope that those employees would apply for a place on the course in due course.
- Over the last two years, following lockdown, they had experimented with different approaches, bringing schools together to discuss with a psychologist, and although reaction to this model of working had been mixed, the model had evolved again to try and incorporate more school visits.

It was welcomed that the report praised the Council for ensuring the continuation of the hubs after European funding had ceased, and emphasised the importance of protecting these funds during the challenging times we face. However, some concern was raised that the report indicated that the provision varied and that there was not adequate contact between the hubs and department officers. It was asked whether work would be undertaken to identify what needs improvement, and what would happen to improve contact with the department. The following was noted in response:-

- The Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Quality Officers element was strengthened and much more contact was arranged between the officers and the hubs, with one officer working with the hub in Meirion Dwyfor and another officer working with the hub in Arfon.
- That the Department was looking at extending the membership of the Hub Management Board to include input from other headteachers.
- As a result of receiving recommendations for further improvement from Caroline Rees, the external expert, that it was hoped that there would be an action plan in place by January in terms of strengthening provision.
- That the Service was also looking at improving the space used for the hubs, along with young people's ownership of them.

They pointed to the significant change in pupil behaviour since lockdown and questioned whether the diversity in terms of what was being maintained and resources, etc. was indicative of that. The following was noted in response:-

- That the challenge on the inclusion side was significant in terms of exclusions and the challenges that schools faced in this regard, and that Caroline Rees, the external expert, would look at the provision in the schools as well in terms of the use of inclusion funding the secondary sector receives and the provision map we have as a county.
- That the Council would receive a sum of money from the Shared Prosperity Fund for commissioning providers in the schools to extend the curriculum available to those with behavioural difficulties, as traditional methods did not work for many of these learners.

- Following the grant period, it was possible to see what had worked, and perhaps a long-term action plan needed to be formed in this field.

The Estyn report was noted as being very complimentary of the provision of Welsh-medium education in Gwynedd, e.g., praising the fact that we have 6 specialist immersion centres and that there were a high number undertaking their GCSE subjects through the medium of Welsh, but these were factors that had existed for some time. It was felt that the report was superficial, e.g., it did not consider if there had been a drop in the number undertaking GCSE subjects in accord with the Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP), although that was the case. It was thought that Estyn looked at Gwynedd in comparison with other counties in Wales, and saw Gwynedd as a huge success, but there was a risk of us becoming self-satisfied. It was noted that it would be good if Estyn had higher expectations of Gwynedd and looked at Welsh language provision in the county more insightfully. In response, it was noted:-

- That the member could be assured that the Education Department was not resting on its laurels.
- That the Department was looking at the WESP's priorities to increase and empower Welsh language provision, to empower the transition arrangements in a linguistic context and to seek to empower bilingual provision and education in the primary and secondary sectors and to increase the number of learners studying subjects through the medium of Welsh.
- That the Department was also committed to reviewing and updating the Education Language Policy.
- It was accepted that the report was complimentary, and that although the inspectors did not visit all the schools, all schools were inspected by Estyn, and therefore a detailed, intensive, and thorough review was undertaken in all schools within a 6-year cycle.
- The inspectors attended two immersion centres. It was not a paper exercise; it was an exercise where the inspectors observed lessons and spent a day between the two centres.
- That there was more work to be done and that the Service wished to empower and improve further so that it could be a practice that is rolled-out nationally.

It was noted that the Council had fewer immersion teachers than in the past, as each centre now had 1 teacher rather than 2, and it was questioned whether the Education Department maintained a register of teachers with experience and expertise in the immersion field, as such a register would be a step forward towards cultivating a team of people with the necessary experience and expertise for carrying out the work. The following was noted in response:-

- That there were currently 6 immersion teachers within the immersion education system, and that, like all other teachers, they possessed a qualification and a teaching certificate.
- That there was no qualification per se for immersion and these were teachers who has learned their craft by working alongside other experienced teachers.
- The immersion teachers were members of a national immersion network and attended meetings and conferences to share good practice, and also sought to attend training to empower and update their skills.
- That the immersion teachers also spent a great deal of time looking at studies and research in the immersion field, which were extremely rare.
- That, as an organisation, we had undertaken our own research and had delivered 6 teacher training webinars across the county, which had been recognised as good practice.

- There was also an effort to try and train school staff as immersion was now an area that applied to virtually all schools, sharing with them the immersion principles that had been identified by Estyn.

It was asked whether the Education Department had a register of qualified and experienced immersion teachers in reserve. In response, it was noted:-

- That the immersion system, like all primary schools, was dependent on the pool of supply teachers, and that the Department did not have the funding to obtain dedicated supply teachers for the immersion units.
- However, there was a group of teachers, at least 1 per centre, who had been identified as practitioners who were well versed in the methods and principles of immersion and had visited the units and could be contacted directly.
- If those individuals were not available, they would then have to go and ask the less experienced teachers in the immersion field, and that would be an opportunity for those teachers to gain experience and expertise so that they, in turn, begin to get used to the immersion methods and principles.

Disappointment was expressed that the open questionnaire prior to the inspection had closed early and members were unable to make comments on the closing date. It was asked how many headteachers and governors had been involved in the discussions with Estyn during the preliminary visit and also how many members of this committee had met Estyn. The following was noted in response:-

- The comment that the open questionnaire had closed early would be passed to the Estyn's Link Inspector.
- Estyn inspectors asked to see a certain number of headteachers representing the range in terms of different sectors and school sizes, and it was believed that GwE had also been involved in the preliminary visit.
- That Councillor Beth Lawton, as former chair of this committee, had met Estyn inspectors.

It was asked on what basis Estyn claimed that the joint planning between the Cabinet and the scrutiny committees to co-ordinate decision-supporting work programmes was improving. It was also questioned on what basis it was claimed that the scrutiny committee's consideration of the work of the projects within the Council's Plan was currently limited. It was noted that the comment was not disputed and it backed up what many members of the scrutiny committee were constantly asking, namely what difference does scrutiny make? In response, it was noted:-

- In terms of improving co-ordination between the Cabinet and scrutiny, there had been a shift to confirm a fuller Cabinet agenda in relation to forthcoming items, and that the Chair and Vice-Chair of the scrutiny committee hold regular meetings with the relevant head and cabinet member to identify issues that need scrutiny.
- That members prioritise items for the coming year in the scrutiny workshops and that many of the items on the 2023-24 forward programme were from the Council's Plan.
- That the impact of scrutiny was something to look at as part of the scrutiny review that was currently taking place.

It was noted that a sentence cited in the Estyn report '*Schools provide many GCSE subjects through the medium of Welsh and a large number of pupils sit an examination in GCSE Welsh first language*' was a completely vague and unsubstantiated comment that was unjustified. In response, it was noted that Estyn had a writing guide where the terms used across their reviews correspond to certain percentages, and that '*many*' and '*very many*' equate to 80%+ or 90%.

It was asked what the intention was in moving forward with the Post-16 Education Project in Arfon. In response, it was noted:-

- That it could be interpreted there had been some slowness, or delay, with the project, and perhaps an element of it, at least, reflected the complexity of the field, along with the fact that we have had a pandemic in the middle of this period and several national and local elections as well.
- A report on post-16 education was submitted to the Cabinet in March this year seeking permission to undertake further work with key stakeholders of post-16 education in Arfon.
- Workshops were held with the headteachers over the summer, reporting back to them in early September on the conclusions of those workshops.
- It was hoped to provide a further update to the Cabinet before Christmas, and the item was programmed for the January meeting of this committee.

The committee was asked to consider when it would be timely to scrutinise progress against the recommendations of the Estyn report. It was agreed to receive a further report in 9 months' time which would allow a sufficient period to implement the recommendations and to prepare a comprehensive progress report.

RESOLVED to accept the report and to note the observations and receive a progress report on the response to the recommendations in 9 months' time.

6. BYW'N IACH

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Operational Economy Matters, the Managing Director of Byw'n Iach and the Head of Economy and Community were welcomed to the meeting.

The report of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Operational Economy Matters was submitted inviting the committee to scrutinise the arrangements of Cyngor Gwynedd and Cwmni Byw'n Iach to provide leisure services in Gwynedd following the issue being placed on Cyngor Gwynedd's Corporate Risk Register due to the risk of Cwmni Byw'n Iach being unable to continue to provide services in Gwynedd leisure centres as a result of the side-effects of Covid-19 and the increase in the cost of living on their income

The Cabinet Member and Head of Economy and Community set out the context and thanked the officers for the report and to the Byw'n Iach Team and Council representatives on the Byw'n Iach Board for their work. The Managing Director of Byw'n Iach then detailed the company's performance during the year.

Members were then given an opportunity to ask questions and submit observations.

Officers were asked to elaborate on the collaboration between Cwmni Byw'n Iach and Alliance Leisure to prioritise the plans to create additional income streams. In response, it was noted:-

- That Alliance Leisure was a specialist company that supported local authorities and commercial companies in the leisure field, and that the Council had also worked with them in the past.
- That the main focus of discussions with the company over the past year has been focused on Bangor, largely due to the challenge facing the more traditional income streams to Byw'n Iach facilities in Bangor in light of competition from the private sector, and also the fact that Bangor was a very significant population centre.

- The facilities in Bangor were not among the strongest, and there was a lack of dry side provision for sport. Also, the situation in Bangor was complicated due to the presence of the University and their respective facilities.
- Bangor residents wished to see a broader offer, but currently holiday services could not be provided for children and young people in Bangor due to the lack of dry facilities, etc.
- That there was a commercial opportunity in Bangor due to the size of the population, and that the discussions with Alliance Leisure were looking at two potential projects, one relating to a play facility as an extension to the existing building and the other looking at adapting the fitness offer in Bangor not to compete head-to-head with some of the private competitors, but rather to look more at the well-being sector, looking to collaborate more within the exercise referral programme, working with health partners and targeting older people and people interested in low intensity exercise.
- Grant applications had been submitted to the Welsh Government for funding to make these schemes a reality and there were Lottery Fund applications also pending.

It was asked how Cwmni Byw'n Iach saw the risks in the future, i.e., in terms of the number of users reaching a plateau and the income not increasing further, the need to invest in fitness equipment so as not to lose users, RAAC or long-term investment in the buildings. In response, it was noted:-

- That the plateau was bound to come as it was not possible for the income to continue to increase forever based on the resources or population in Gwynedd.
- Looking at the county as a whole, some of Byw'n Iach facilities only had catchment areas of around 5,000 people, and looking at Gwynedd's population in an urban context, we would probably only have 2-3 centres.
- However, it was believed that by receiving investment and obtaining additional resources, there were opportunities for growth, although these were not limitless.
- That the company was looking at some of the centres further to the South of the county and the opportunities there were of using income from visitors to the area in the summer as a subsidy for the facility throughout the year.
- That after RAAC had been found in the roof of Arfon Leisure Centre Swimming Pool, the pool was closed for a period while the investigation was underway. Subsequently, the Council's Property Department received a report, shared with Cwmni Byw'n Iach, highlighting that there was no immediate risk to users, and based on that, the pool was reopened. Further monitoring would take place over the next few years. It was also confirmed that RAAC had not been found at any of the company's other sites in the county.

Officers were asked to elaborate on how the centres in Meirionnydd and Dwyfor were performing. The following was noted in response:-

- That the number of visitors and the amount of income was much lower at some of the dry centres, such as Y Pafiliwn, Barmouth and Glan Wnion, Dolgellau, compared to, for example, the Arfon site, but that the costs were also significantly lower, with a significantly smaller number of staff in those centres.
- That the challenge was trying to offer a balanced service across all of those communities based on such varying population levels, and it could be difficult for customers to understand why they weren't offered as much, for example, as someone in Caernarfon.

It was asked what plans Byw'n Iach had in terms of supporting people on a lower income, and children specifically. In response, it was noted:-

- That this was very much alive in the consciousness of the Byw'n Iach Management Team and came up regularly in discussions with the Council.
- That there was a link between deprivation and being active. The pandemic had exacerbated that link and ensuring that all Gwynedd residents were active and receiving the resulting health benefits was a priority for Byw'n Iach.
- That children's swimming ability levels at the end of Key Stage 2 are clearly linked to deprivation, and that the percentage of children able to swim had fallen from 80%-90% before the pandemic to around 50% now, and lower for some groups of children in the county.
- That our ability to change the situation at this time was quite limited as the Free Swimming Grant was halved some 5 years ago.
- As part of the provision, Sport Wales required that children and the over 60s had to be offered a free swim session every week at each pool, but it was quite expensive to do so as we had 7 swimming pools. We tried to make the case that it would be better for Byw'n Iach to have the right to use the money in a more targeted way, e.g., swimming lessons and targeting specific families or schools, as many schools struggle to meet transport costs to bring children to swimming lessons. There had been no positive response to date in terms of our ability to do so.
- They had sought to extend the funding available to offer a free swim to the holders of the Cerdyn Max, a national card for foster families and families with children with a disability. A scheme had also been developed in conjunction with the Council's Children's Service to provide free swimming to all young people with a Young Carer card, along with one friend/family member, and in recent years free family swimming tickets had been shared with the county's food banks.
- There had been very good support through the Children's Service in terms of Government play schemes in recent years, with the majority of holiday programmes having been available free of charge. We also secured a grant from the Police Commissioner with support from the Youth Service for the launch of an outdoors play scheme over the past year, which involved opening all courts and synthetic pitches during all school holidays free of charge to children and young people for informal game play.
- That the Partnerships Unit Team does innovative referral work with people like the Children's Service and the Team Around the Family and the young carers charities and accepts referrals for families or individual children and young people and they work at a very intensive level with those who, for whatever reason, do not currently participate in sport.
- That a great deal of work was being undertaken around young people's mental health, such as one-to-one sessions with the young person to find out what would motivate them to become active.

It was asked to what extent was exercise prescribing being undertaken in Gwynedd and whether there was potential for more marketing for this to get more doctors to make referrals. In response, it was noted:-

- That the grant for the NERS (National Exercise Referral Scheme) had remained frozen for a decade and 99% of the money was now spent on salaries. As such, the team was dwindling in real terms every year.
- That the staff employed on the scheme were on one-year contracts only, and although some of them had been in post for a decade, they faced the same situation of uncertainty every year as confirmation of grant money for the coming year was not received until the last minute.

- That these were staff with very high skill levels and qualification and losing them would mean having to train someone all over again.
- Byw'n lach does not market the programme as there are waiting lists that cannot be coped with, and the number of residents receiving the support could be doubled or even tripled if the team were larger.
- That the situation was extremely frustrating as the evidence of the benefits of the programme were very clear.

It was suggested that the fact that the income was based on a fixed grant, rather than on the number of patients referred, was a weakness of the scheme and a matter to be followed up at a political level. In response, the Cabinet Member noted that she and the Chair of Byw'n lach had corresponded with the then Health Minister on this very issue and would welcome it if the committee sent correspondence again along the same lines.

It was asked where Byw'n lach was in terms of having enough Welsh-speaking staff to provide a bilingual service, and specifically in terms of swimming lessons for children. In response, it was noted:-

- That Byw'n lach would have had more choice of candidates in the past, but over the last 2 years we had to go out to advertise repeatedly to attract any candidates for certain positions.
- Language skills were obviously important in recruitment, but we had faced a situation in recent years where 1,000 children in Arfon were waiting for swimming lessons and Byw'n lach were unable to recruit enough swimming teachers who were confident in their Welsh.
- No one had been recruited with no language skills at all, but there were situations where it was a choice between not recruiting and leaving an extra 40-50 children on the waiting list for swimming lessons for the next 2-3 years, or recruiting people with lower-level language skills, and working with them to develop their language skills and confidence to use Welsh in the workplace.
- That the swimming teachers' work contracts give Cyngor Gwynedd staff access to the same learning and development support available so that the individuals can receive support from the Council's language officers and take advantage of the development programmes available. Also, a swimming officer worked with those individuals in terms of their swimming vocabulary, and posters had been placed in the staff rooms reminding people of that vocabulary. However, building the confidence of the swimming teachers to use Welsh at work was going to take time and wouldn't happen overnight.

RESOLVED

- 1. To accept the report and to note the observations.**
- 2. To send a letter to the Minister of Health and Social Services highlighting the work being done by Cwmni Byw'n lach in relation to the National Exercise Referral Scheme and the need for more funding to fund its Gwynedd operation.**

7. GWYNEDD BEACH MANAGEMENT

The Assistant Head of Economy and Community and the Maritime Service Manager were welcomed to the meeting.

The report of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy Operational Matters invited the committee to scrutinise the arrangements for beach management in Gwynedd.

The Cabinet Member set the context and the Assistant Head of Economy and Community elaborated on the content of the report. Members were then given the opportunity to ask questions and offer observations.

With reference to Table 1 in paragraph 5.2 of the report, it was questioned whether the increase in employee costs was due to an increase in overtime pay. In response, it was noted:-

- That the expenditure patterns highlighted the immense pressure on the coast over the last 2-3 years which had resulted in extending the period for beach wardens along with paying overtime.
- That the current permanent structure consisted of only one Senior Beach Officer and one other Beach Officer, and as part of the increase in income, it was proposed to establish two more posts to address the gap, namely a Beach Officer for Meirionnydd and a Beach Officer for Morfa Bychan.
- Much of the preparation took place over the winter period and it was recognised that the structure needed to be strengthened in that regard.

It was asked whether there was a possibility of a getting a bylaw to give the beach officers powers to fine people who misbehave with cars, etc., on the beach. In response, it was noted:-

- That the Service worked closely with the Police, and in particular at Morfa Bychan, which was the only beach in Gwynedd where driving and parking was allowed on the beach.
- That there were strict rules in place with signs on the beach with the Police and Council logo on them. Staff walking the beach used body cameras and staff also had cameras in the vehicles, so evidence could be passed on to Police.
- That it would be beneficial if the beach officers, particularly the chief officers, had powers to introduce punitive fines for beach offenders, and it was believed that this required guidance from the Legal Department.

It was asked whether beach management was safe from cuts, etc., given that it was a non-statutory service to local government. In response, it was noted:-

- Although the service was non-statutory, the field touched on several statutory responsibilities, and although there was uncertainty in terms of the legal framework, it was not believed that neither the Department nor the Service would recommend that there be no responsibility at all, be that as almost a moral responsibility, more than a legal responsibility.
- There had been previous service interruptions due to the need to secure savings, but unfortunately, it had been observed that not providing a service could lead to problems.
- That it was a matter for all the members to identify how the Council would respond to the financial challenges, but that the Department was aware of the importance of providing the provision on our beaches.
- There may be options to make savings without cutting frontline services, and increasing income was one of those options.

It was asked whether it was inevitable that we would move from employing beach wardens to employing lifeguards in the future. In response, it was noted:-

- That the Service's risk assessments did not currently recognise lifeguards as a necessary provision.
- However, the Service would be open to considering any opportunities to extend the provision to include lifeguards, but as it was a professional service, rather than voluntary service, that could be costly.

- Organisations such as the RNLI provided lifeguards to other authorities in Wales, but they charged a fee.
- Before considering this type of service, a discussion was needed as to the method of funding. If the concept of a Tourist Tax would be implemented, it could possibly be considered whether this type of provision would be a priority for any income from such a tax.
- The answers and solutions were not available at this time, but this was one of the areas that the Service wished to consider over the next couple of years.

It was asked whether it would be possible for the Council to be progressive and refuse to pay the Crown Estate lease as a way of saving money and creating further discussion about the devolution of the Crown Estate in Wales. The following was noted in response:-

- That the Council currently had a series of individual agreements along the coast, with part of the coast outside of those agreements.
- That the Crown Estate had proposed to modify the existing arrangements some years ago, in order to have a single composite agreement along the Gwynedd coast.
- As part of the initial discussions, the Service highlighted that the completion of such an agreement placed responsibility on the Council, and that costs were also associated with that responsibility.
- That the Service had identified the area as one that it would be very keen to discuss further, and if the scrutineers had any ideas or recommendations in terms of direction, the officers would be very grateful to receive those comments.

In response to a further question, it was noted that the amount paid by the Council annually to the Crown Estate was a few thousand, but that the exact figure could be confirmed following the meeting.

The officers were asked to confirm that risks were constantly assessed, and responded to circumstances and events, etc., rather than just following a timetable, and that there was action to reduce those risks. The following was noted in response:-

- That the Service had risk assessments for every single beach, main resorts as well as rural beaches.
- That each site had its specific risks, and that there were experienced officers within the Service, who had received thorough training in risk assessment. In addition, a number of Service officers lived locally and also volunteered with the RNLI and Coastguard, and were therefore very much aware of coastal risks.
- That the risk assessments were dynamic and living documents, which were renewed at least once a year, and more often than that should there be an incident or change in the nature of a beach, or additional developments that had increased or decreased the risk.
- That the Service sends out questionnaires, etc., and takes note of the feedback. Weekly and monthly inspections were also carried out, and if staff had realised that new risks had arisen, those documents would be modified at the earliest opportunity.
- That every beach differed from each other, and that the assessments reflected the characteristics of the individual beaches, having regard to the characteristics of the beach layout and the risks in terms of conflict.
- That there were boat launching arrangements, etc., on some beaches and that there was a pretty consistent risk assessment for each in terms of individuals getting into difficulty while swimming. As such, there was a fairly practical assessment of the risks for every single beach, identifying mitigation measures.

- That there were also risk assessments in terms of the signage schemes for the beaches, with specific signage now for every single beach highlighting the main risks for that location.
- That measures had been identified at some beaches where information and advice from beach wardens could also be a way of reducing the risks, e.g. an effort has been made to prevent people from entering the water at certain beaches due to the dangers of the location.

It was asked how many people were penalised annually for using jet-skis without a licence. The following was noted in response:-

- The number of jet-skis and powerboats in Gwynedd was believed to be very high compared to other authorities and Gwynedd was leading the way with the online registration system, which had led to a significant reduction in the number of complaints and incidents and accidents.
- That there were several private launch sites in use, e.g. the large caravan sites in Meirionnydd, but the Service worked with the owners of those sites to try and ensure that their customers launching from their sites had registered, and the vast majority did so.
- The Service did not have powers to issue fines, but new legislation, the Merchant Shipping (Watercraft) Order 2023 came into force on 1 April this year. There was a case of jet-skis causing an accident by acting irresponsibly in the vicinity of Aberdyfi Harbour and officers were working with police to try and secure a prosecution.
- That the Coastguard Agency would take the lead on any prosecution sought on the coast.
- That the whole purpose of the registration system was to identify those driving jet-skis or powerboats irresponsibly so that they could be contacted to inform them that they had breached the rules.
- That a bylaw prohibited speeds of more than 4 knots per hour within 100 metres of the water's edge. If anyone breached the rule, they could be prosecuted, but to date, no internal fines had been issued to powerboat owners.

It was suggested that registration and launching fees for a powerboat / jet-ski should increase quite significantly above inflation next year to generate income for the Council. The following was noted in response:-

- That the comment was accepted, and possibly, that consideration would have to be given to raising the fees next year. Fees had already increased significantly over the past 2-3 years and had risen above the level of inflation last year.
- That the Service would consider and recommend fees for 2024/25 in the new year.
- That the increase in fees over the last 2-3 years had created difficult situations at times for front-line staff on the beaches, and if there were to be further fee increases next year, it would be necessary to consider how to get the message out in good time so that people were aware of the increase before coming to the beaches.

It was asked how many powers Cyngor Gwynedd had in terms of ensuring water quality. In response, it was noted:-

- That the main destinations were monitored by Natural Resources Wales and that the results would be officially released on 23 November.
- If officers saw any pollution, or had concerns about a particular site, they would contact Natural Resources Wales directly so they could take samples, etc.
- Following this, the Council would await any direction from Natural Resources Wales in terms of closing an area off or putting up signs informing the public to stay away.

- That many sites, including Cricieth and Aberdyfi in Gwynedd were included in Natural Resources Wales' 'Forecasting and Discounting' programme which means that the Council is notified in advance if they believe that the quality of bathing water would be affected, e.g. by heavy rainwater washing material from the streets and down rivers, and so on.
- Such cases were rarely seen, but if there was concern that any pollution or sewerage had flowed into the sea, the Council would put up signs at those sites to try and discourage people from entering the water.

Concern was raised that raising the fees of watercraft would lead to more people launching them from unofficial sites. A particular problem was cited in the Aberdyfi area, where people were launching from the Borth area and driving over to Aberdyfi outside the Harbourmaster's working hours. The following was noted in response:-

- The officers' working hours had been extended and there were barriers on the beaches, such as at Abersoch and Morfa Bychan, after staff left at 8.00pm.
- Although staff were on duty between 10am and 5pm in most places, they would be asked to stay on if there were many boats and users still on the coast.
- It was not possible to stop people launching outside working hours and it wasn't possible to close public slipways either as there were people going out fishing for the day, etc.
- If the fees were deemed too high, there was concern that this could encourage users to go to unofficial sites outside the Council's control, putting pressure on sites and infrastructure not designed to deal with that type of use and reducing the number of registered watercraft.
- That there were quite good arrangements now, but, in effect, it was a voluntary system in the county, as there were no national statutory arrangements.

It was asked how often the safety equipment was inspected. In response, it was noted:-

- That the equipment was inspected every two weeks between April and September, and monthly during the autumn and winter months, and that the officers at the main resorts inspected them daily during the main season.
- That several faulty or vandalised emergency phones were currently out of order, and those phones had been purposely covered. BT were unable to supply replacements, and it was necessary to consider whether some sites really needed them.
- The beach officers carried personal rescue equipment, e.g. safety ropes and rescue buoys, which could be used as emergency mitigation measures, but it was stressed that staff did not have the qualification to enter the water to rescue anyone.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that the Maritime Service had a protocol for responding to severe weather, and that they also assist other departments, particularly in flood situations, etc., by providing vehicles, jet-skis and boats, along with staff qualified to drive them. It was also confirmed that sea gates were closed at some sites if bad weather was forecasted.

Reference was made to collaboration difficulties with Natural Resources Wales in Dinas Dinlle, and enquiries were made about the nature of the relationship between the Maritime Service and the owners of the land that abutted the beaches. In response, it was noted:

- That the Service had a good relationship with the private landowners and site managers parallel to our beaches, and that the relationship with Natural Resources Wales was generally quite good.
- The National Trust managed sections of the coast and the Service also worked closely with community councils.

- That the other organisations did not have designated officers for the coast and that any problems arising were dealt with by Maritime Service officers, even on private land.
- There were specific issues at Dinas Dinlle with campervans parking overnight on sites on Natural Resources Wales land, however Natural Resources Wales officers would rarely take enforcement action.
- That the Service had an agreement with the owners of several caravan parks to take mitigation measures regarding jet-skis, etc.

In response to a question about how the Service will respond to the challenges in the years ahead, particularly considering the fiscal problems facing us, it was stated:

- That it was difficult to predict what would happen in the future, and that the Service operated within a specific budget.
- That the season appeared to be extending and there had been a significant increase in the numbers using our beaches since Covid.
- That the existing bylaws needed to be updated to address emerging new technology, e.g., the increased use of drones on beaches.
- That the Service needed to give intensive attention to planning in relation to the coastal risks posed by climate change and had initiated work with Natural Resources Wales on sites such as Dinas Dinlle, Porthmadog, Pwllheli and Fairbourne.
- Coastal activities were dependent on the slipways and structures that offer flood protection. Many of these structures were outdated and consideration needed to be given to how the Council would also respond to the need to invest in our infrastructure.

The Service was thanked for providing a very thorough and full report.

RESOLVED to accept the report and to note the observations.

8. AUTISM PLAN TASK AND FINISH GROUP

A report was presented by the Scrutiny Adviser inviting the committee to elect two members to represent the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee on the Autism Plan Task and Finish Group.

The names of Councillors Dawn Jones and Gwynfor Owen were proposed. It was highlighted that both had a connection to the autism field. A member noted that he had had a conversation with the Monitoring Officer about the situation. He elaborated that during the conversation that a request for a dispensation could be submitted to the Standards Committee.

As the next meeting of the Standards Committee was on 19 February 2024, and the Task Group was scheduled to report back to the Care Scrutiny Committee on 1 February, it was noted that the Standards Committee would have to be asked to hold an extraordinary meeting to discuss the requests for dispensations.

It was also noted that two reserve members of the Task Group should be elected in case one, or both, requests for dispensation be refused by the Standards Committee.

RESOLVED

- 1. That Councillors Dawn Jones and Gwynfor Owen (who have a connection with the autism field), submit applications for dispensations to allow them to**

- represent the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee on the Autism Plan Task and Finish Group.**
- 2. To ask the Standards Committee to hold an extraordinary meeting to consider requests for dispensations from Councillors Dawn Jones and Gwynfor Owen.**
 - 3. To elect Councillors Cai Larsen and Beth Lawton as reserve members to represent the Committee on the Task and Finish Group.**

The meeting commenced at 10.30am and concluded at 1.35pm.

Chair

Report for Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting:	25 January 2024
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Nia Jeffreys and Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn
Contact Officer:	Sioned E Williams, Head of Economy and Community Department Dylan Griffiths, Economic Development Manager
Department / Service:	Economy and Community

1. TITLE OF ITEM:

Gwynedd Economic Development Project

Creating the best possible circumstances in Gwynedd for businesses and community enterprises to thrive, and support the people of Gwynedd into work

2. WHY DOES IT NEED TO BE SCRUTINISED?

- 2.1 On average wages in Gwynedd are among the lowest in the UK and the gap in average household income continues to be significant. The Gwynedd Ni consultation has shown clearly that communities across Gwynedd see the need for support to strengthen the economy's foundations and increase the provision of quality jobs locally.
- 2.2 Under the 'A Prosperous Gwynedd' priority field in the [Council Plan](#) has produced a plan that aims to create the best possible circumstances for businesses and community enterprises to thrive, and support the people of Gwynedd into work. This is an opportunity for the Committee to scrutinise the contents of this plan and the progress of the Economy and Community Department in implementing it to trigger growth in Gwynedd's economy.

3. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

A CONCISE ANALYSIS OF GWYNEDD'S ECONOMY

- 3.1 A brief profile of the primary statistics relating to the economy of Gwynedd is included in Appendix 1. You will note from this information:
 - The impact of Brexit and the pandemic is clearly visible on the productivity of the economy and on unemployment rates and economic inactivity.
 - In terms of the labour market, in general, the rates of inactivity and unemployment follow the pattern of Wales and the UK
 - Historically, Gwynedd's unemployment rate is below those of Wales and the UK.

- The wealth gap between Gwynedd and Wales and the UK continues and is persistent, and the productivity gap is slowly widening.
 - Although less productive, Gwynedd's economy is more resilient and less vulnerable to the impact of a slump in the global economy.
- 3.2 In order to create a sound basis for our efforts to strengthen the economy across Gwynedd communities and a method of prioritising activities, it was intended to produce a plan for the development of the economy in the period 2023-28. An independent company was commissioned to facilitate the work and on the 1st of April 2022 a joint workshop with our main partners in the field to initiate a discussion of the needs and priorities for the period ahead.
- 3.3 At the same time, in March / April 2022 the UK Government announced that Local Authorities were required to lead on submitting applications to the Levelling-Up Fund (LUF) and administering the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) between 2022 and 2025. As a result, the time of officers from the Economy & Community Department, and the Economic Development Service in particular, has had to be diverted away from preparing the Gwynedd economy plan and re-directed to manage and administer these funding programmes in Gwynedd and across North Wales in the case of the SPF. The Department also leads the ARFOR programme across West Wales covering Anglesey, Gwynedd, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire during the same period. This has meant that work on preparing the Gwynedd economy plan has not been completed.
- 3.4 The period of these funds will end in March 2025, leaving uncertainty regarding future resources for supporting the local economy. There will be greater emphasis on working regionally with the development of the Corporate Joint Committee (CJC), the Growth Bid, the Anglesey Freeport, and an Investment Zone in Wrexham and Flintshire. Preparation work will begin early in 2024/25 on arrangements and priorities for developing the economy in future, and it is important that lessons from the experience of current arrangements are learned and that the priorities for Gwynedd are clear for the future.

CYNGOR GWYNEDD PRIORITY PROJECTS

- 3.5 The [Cyngor Gwynedd Plan 2023-28](#) states:

'The foundation for enabling the people of Gwynedd to prosper is ensuring that there are suitable jobs available in the county that enable them to support themselves and their families. Our ambition is to secure:

- *High-quality jobs*
- *Support for businesses to thrive*
- *Sustainable tourism for the benefit of communities*
- *Strong and resilient communities*
- *Prosperous and vibrant town centres'*

3.6 The Economy and Community Department is leading on three priority projects that have been identified by the Council to achieve these objectives:

- Regenerating Communities and Town Centres
- Promoting our Culture and a Sustainable Visitor Economy
- Creating the best possible circumstances in Gwynedd for community enterprises and businesses to thrive and support the people of Gwynedd into work.

3.7 The progress of these projects was reported to the Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet on 7 November 2023, and there will be an opportunity here to scrutinise in greater detail the Department's progress in implementing the plan to support Gwynedd enterprises to thrive and support the people of Gwynedd into work. The Regeneration Framework, the Town Centres Improvement Programmes, the Visitor Economy Plan and the Gwynedd LleChi Plan have all been the subject of scrutiny reports to this Committee previously, and there will be an opportunity to scrutinise these further in 2024.

A Prosperous Gwynedd Priority Project:

Creating the best possible circumstances in Gwynedd for community enterprises and businesses to thrive and support the people of Gwynedd into work.

3.8 Here is Cyngor Gwynedd's commitment in the Cyngor Gwynedd Plan 2023-28

"We will support businesses and community enterprises in Gwynedd to thrive in many ways such as product development and accessing new markets, helping enterprises to save money by reducing waste and using technology effectively, supporting businesses in Gwynedd to trade together and prioritise helping enterprises that commit to paying a 'real living wage' to their employees. We will encourage businesses to make the most of the Welsh language, develop more business units for letting, and strive to ensure that the North Wales Growth Deal projects benefit the people of Gwynedd. In addition, we will help the people of Gwynedd to fulfil their potential and support those who are excluded from the labour market to return to employment and will work with employers to assist them to secure sufficient workers.'

3.9 The following table provides an update on the project:

Overview	What we want to achieve during the FIRST year 2023-24 (milestones):	December 2023 update
<p>We will support businesses and community enterprises in Gwynedd to thrive in many ways such as product development and accessing new markets, helping enterprises to save money by reducing waste and using technology more effectively, supporting businesses in Gwynedd to trade together and prioritise helping enterprises that commit to paying a 'real living wage' to their employees. We will encourage businesses to make the most of the Welsh language, develop</p>	<p>We will have targeted funding from the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund to strengthen the foundations of Gwynedd's economy.</p>	<p>£1.5 million was secured from the Shared Prosperity Fund to provide financial and practical support to businesses in the county through Cyngor Gwynedd</p> <p>Including the above, a total of £4.8m of the Gwynedd Shared Prosperity Fund allocation was committed to schemes under the Supporting Local Business priority; including a combination of money directly to local enterprises and funding for schemes that will provide support to our businesses.</p>
	<p>We will have worked together with partners across North Wales to ensure benefits to Gwynedd from the North Wales Growth Deal.</p>	<p>The Council continues to play a prominent and proactive role in supporting the realisation of the North Wales Growth Deal plans, paying particular attention to the plans that offer the greatest benefit to Gwynedd, in the Digital Programme, Energy Programme and the Tourism Agri-food Programme</p>
	<p>We will have confirmed arrangements for implementing the ARFOR Programme with west Wales partners and the Welsh Government.</p>	<p>The governance arrangements of the ARFOR Programme have been confirmed and the financial offer from the Welsh Government has been signed. Three projects within the programme are now operational:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enterprising Communities - 20 applications approved in Gwynedd worth £917k. • Llwyddo'n Lleol - there are 4 interventions within Llwyddo'n Lleol: Testing; Venture; Career and Settling In. The programme targets young people

<p>more work units for letting, and strive to ensure that the North Wales Growth Deal projects benefit the people of Gwynedd. In addition, we will help the people of Gwynedd to fulfil their potential and support those who are excluded from the labour market to return to employment and will work with employers to assist them to secure sufficient workers.</p>		<p>11-35 to raise awareness of the job opportunities available in the ARFOR Region; Enterprise and opportunities to return to their indigenous community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARFOR Challenge Fund - the ARFOR Challenge Fund is for looking for innovative solutions to Local/County and Regional challenges and ensuring opportunities to learn about the connection between the Economy and the Language. 146 expressions of interest have been received across the region, with 59 of these from Gwynedd. 54 organisations from Gwynedd have attended the Challenge Workshops and 8 organisations from Gwynedd have applied to the ARFOR Challenge Fund and the applications are valued at £668,192.
	<p>We will have reviewed and established new arrangements for engaging with businesses and sharing information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An independent review of the business support team's engagement with local enterprises has been undertaken with recommendations for the future. • Additional methods of contacting the service through the website and WhatsApp have been introduced. • A wider engagement plan is being drawn up.
	<p>We will have launched a Business Support Fund</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New business support funds have opened at the beginning of August following securing the funding (mainly through the SPF). £2.1 million of funding has been secured to be distributed to businesses. • The demand for assistance from the funds has been extremely high. 165 applications requesting £11.36 million of support have been received. • £520k of support has already been allocated to 35 businesses, and the decisions process for the remaining budget is coming to its conclusion.

	<p>We will have organised events to celebrate the accomplishments of Gwynedd businesses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A regular series of visits to prominent businesses in Gwynedd were programmed for Cabinet Members and five have already been held in 2023/24. • The Gwynedd Business Day Busnes@gwynedd.llyw.cymru was held on 22 May with 35 businesses attending and others joining virtually. • A discussion panel and a display of local businesses' products were held at the Eisteddfod.
	<p>We will have secured planning permission to develop 10 new work units.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council's Cabinet has confirmed funding for the scheme. • Detailed designs have been completed and planning permission secured. • Detailed designs and tendering documentation have been prepared, and the appointment procedure is about to start. • Welsh Government have been motivated to become a partner in the scheme
	<p>We will have entered an agreement with the Welsh Government to provide a Support into Work programme.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Communities for Work Scheme – funded through Europe – ended as expected in July 2023. • An extended agreement to realise the Communities for Work Plus programme has been accepted by the Welsh Government which will secure £681K in 2023/24. • An additional £172k has been secured from the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, to extend our provision to support local residents who are looking to increase their earnings (up to October 2025).

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A further £700,000 to support the residents of Gwynedd to achieve to the best of their ability in the world of work has been secured from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (until the end of 2024).• To date in 2023/24, <u>101</u> people in Gwynedd have secured employment after being supported.• Six jobs fairs were held to bring together local employers and individuals seeking work. The fairs were attended by 364 individuals, and there was an average of 17 employers at each fair.
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3.10 You will note from the table above that the Department has made good progress against the commitments for 2023-24 and there are clear arrangements in place to achieve the main milestones for 2024-25. However, some clear risks have been highlighted over the year which we wish to draw the Committee's attention to:

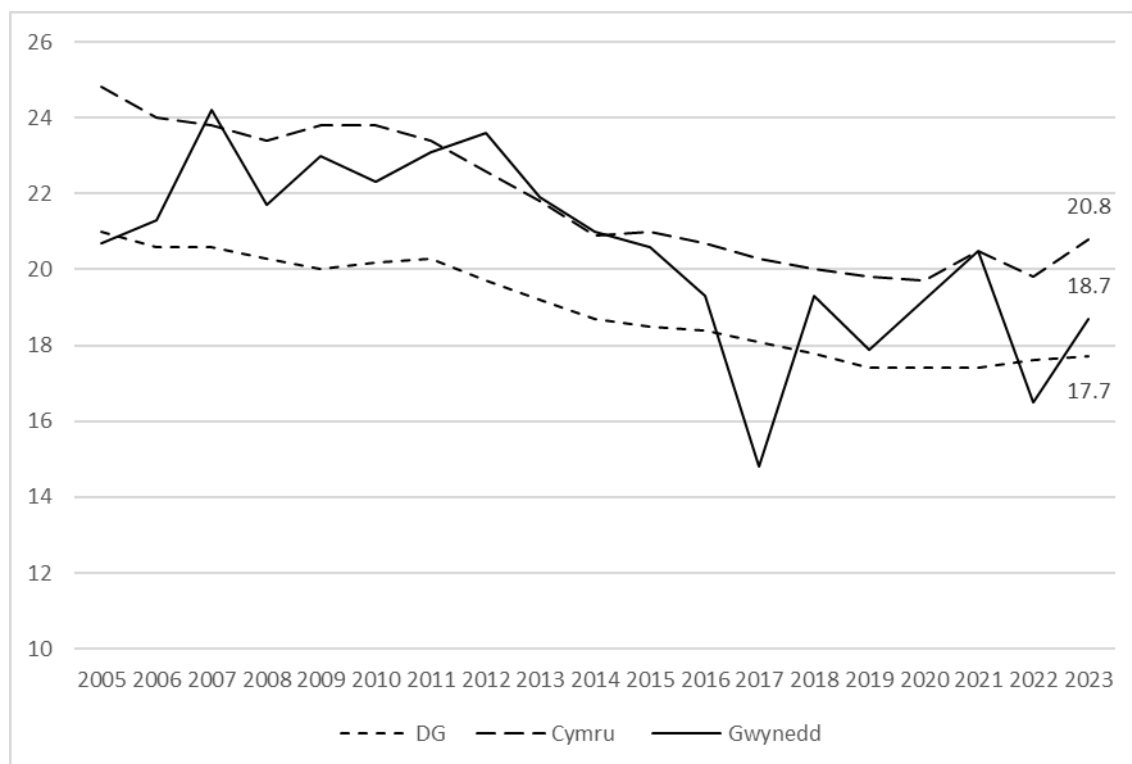
- The response of Gwynedd businesses and enterprises to the SPF and ARFOR funds significantly exceeded the funding available. With applications in excess of £11M and only £2M available, it is therefore inevitable that most businesses are going to be let down. Good bids will have to be rejected as there is not enough money available to respond to the demand.
- The funds have highlighted the variations in the ability of businesses within certain sectors and areas to respond to funding opportunities.
- Along with the high demand, the absurdly short timeframe for implementing the funding programmes is preventing efforts to support areas and sectors that are unable to respond immediately.
- The short timeframe for the implementation of the financial programmes means that the Department has to recruit a large number of temporary posts. With all the programmes ending simultaneously in March 2025, 12 posts will be under threat within the Department. The number will be much larger across organisations in the county.
- There is significant uncertainty about the size and administration of any funds after March 2025 which hinders our ability to plan ahead.
- The squeeze on public budgets more widely increases the pressure. The Welsh Government is already cutting back on the funding they provide to Local Authorities within areas such as support for the unemployed.
- Significant investments in the county, including the Growth Deal projects, are subject to increased risk as they are developed as a result of any change in long-term policies and commitments by the Welsh and UK Governments

4. CONCLUSIONS

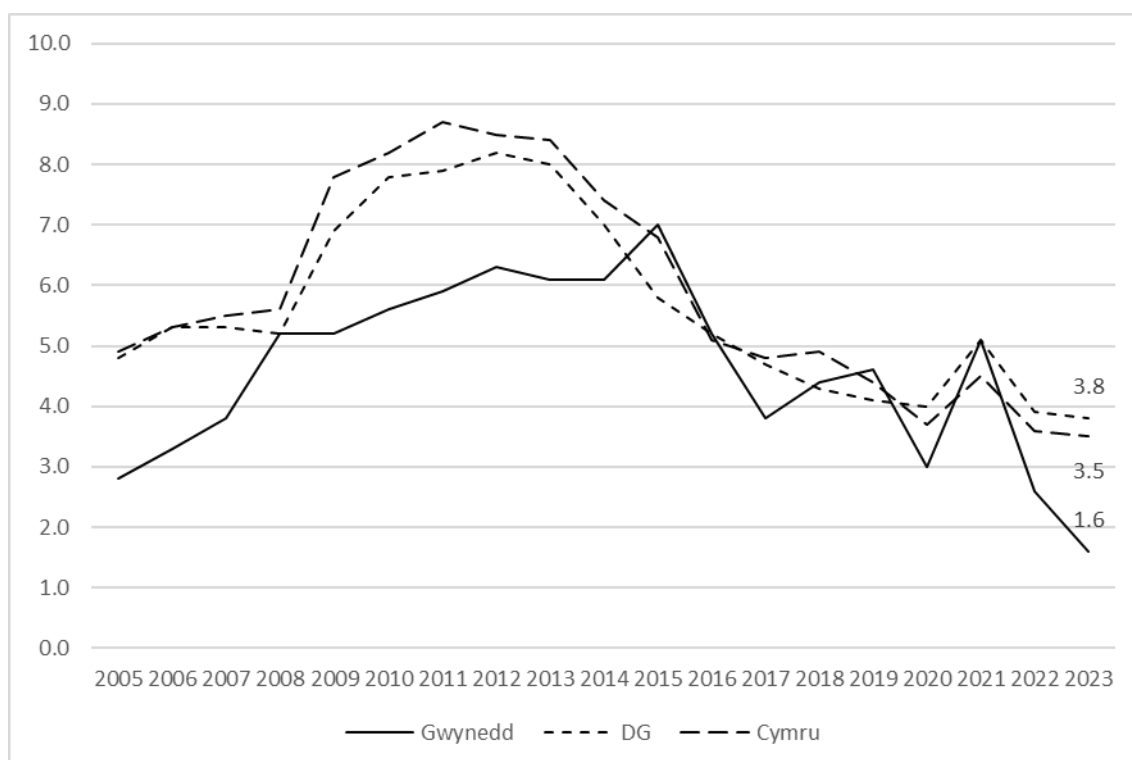
4.1 Ensuring that individual programmes and schemes are evaluated is particularly important to learn about the impact of project on the local economy. Arrangements are in place to carry out this work and reports will be available for the Scrutiny Committee to consider in 2024/25.

4.2 Planning and preparation for the period after March 2025 needs to start as soon as possible.

A BRIEF PROFILE OF THE GWYNEDD ECONOMY

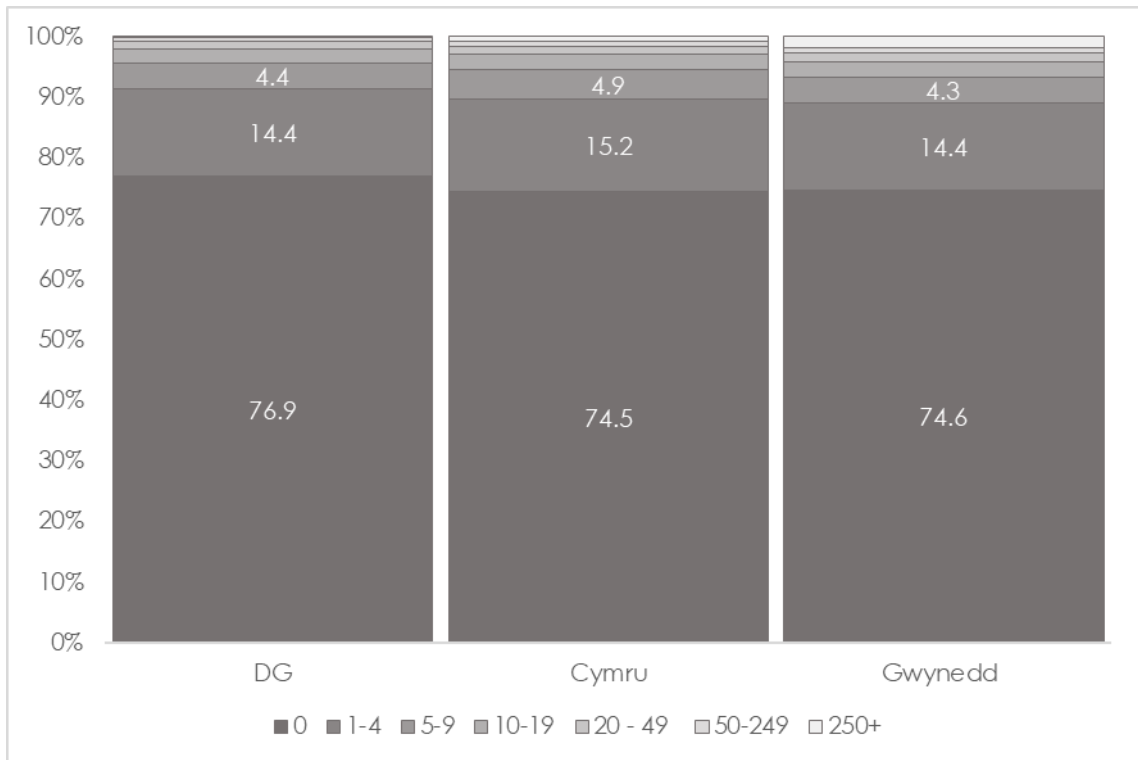
1. The labour market in Gwynedd*Economic inactivity rates (16 to 64 excluding students)*

'Annual Population Survey / Local Labour Force Survey: Summary of economic activity' (ONS, Crown copyright, from StatsCymru 15/01/2024)

Annual unemployment rate (adults 16-64)

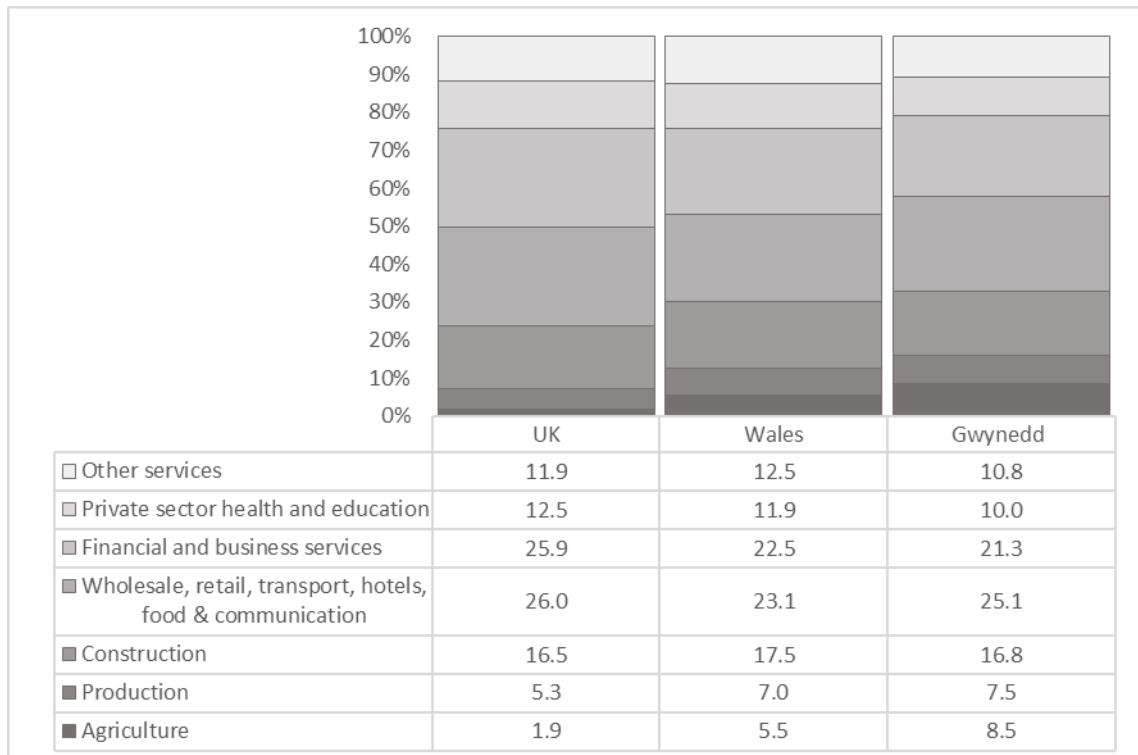
2. Structure of the business community

Number of employees per business (rate) - 2023



'Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR)' (ONS, Crown copyright, from 15/01/2024)

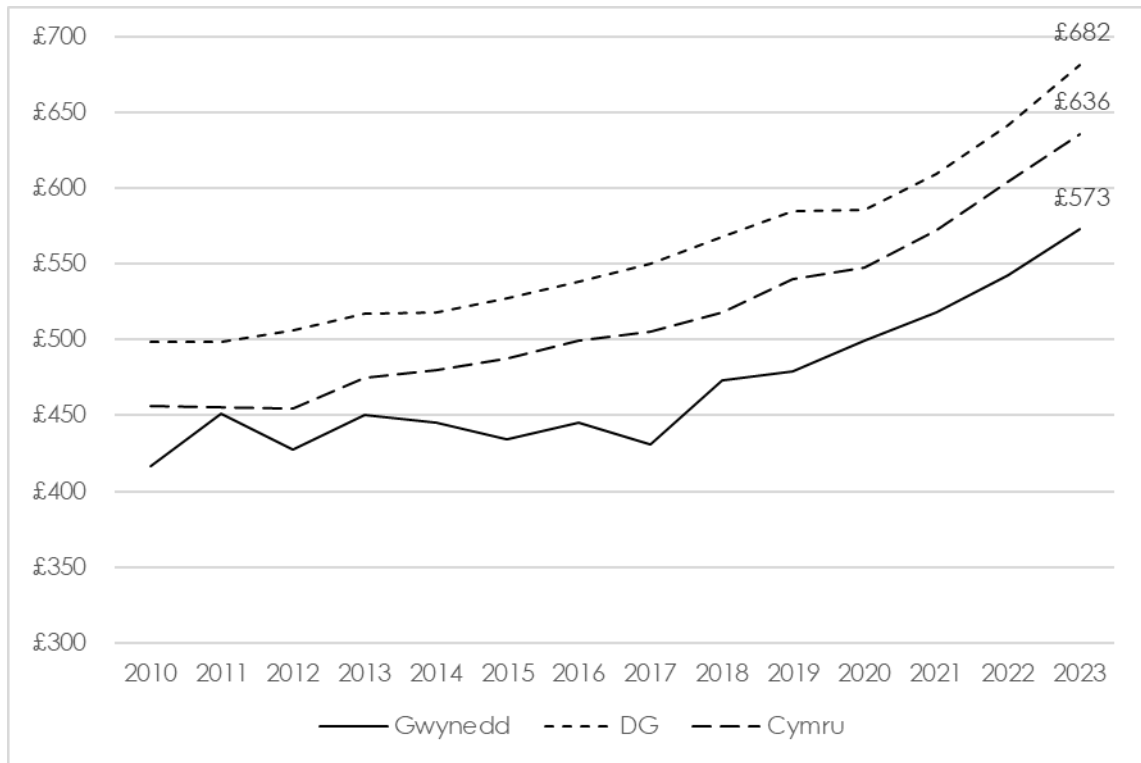
Number of enterprises in major sectors (SIC 2007) - 2023



'Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR)' (ONS, Crown copyright, from StatsCymru 15/01/2024)

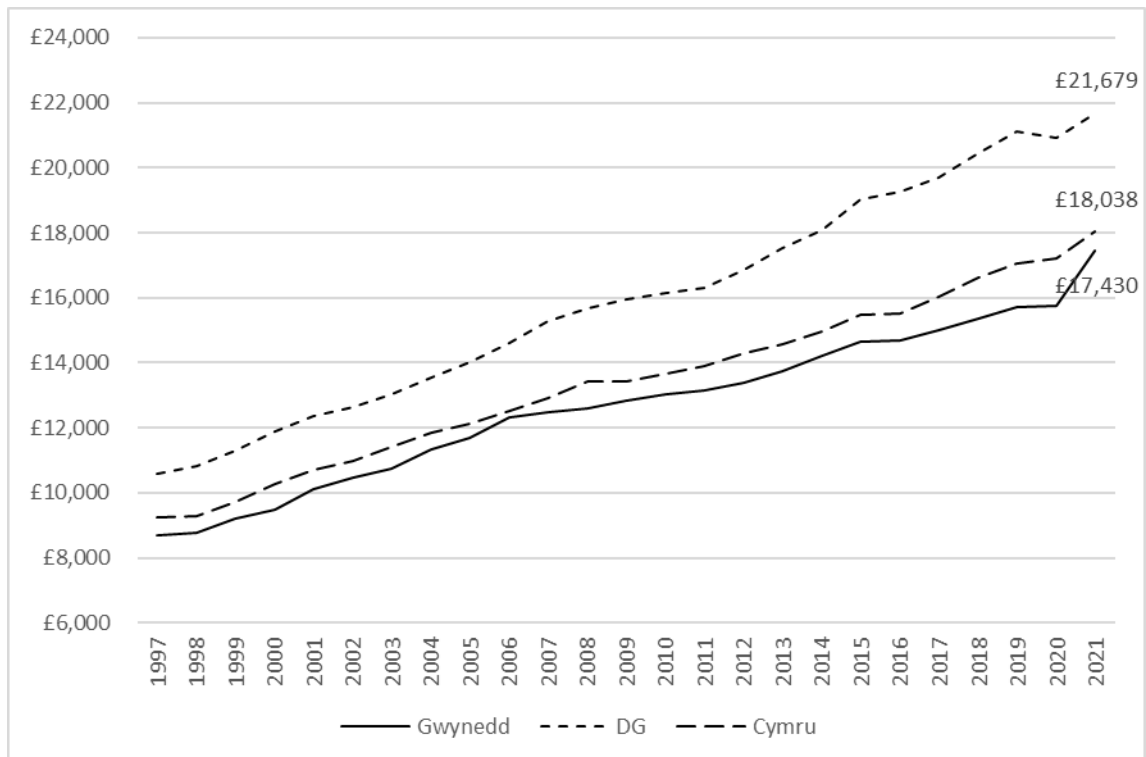
3. Performance of Gwynedd economy

Average weekly wage (full-time worker)



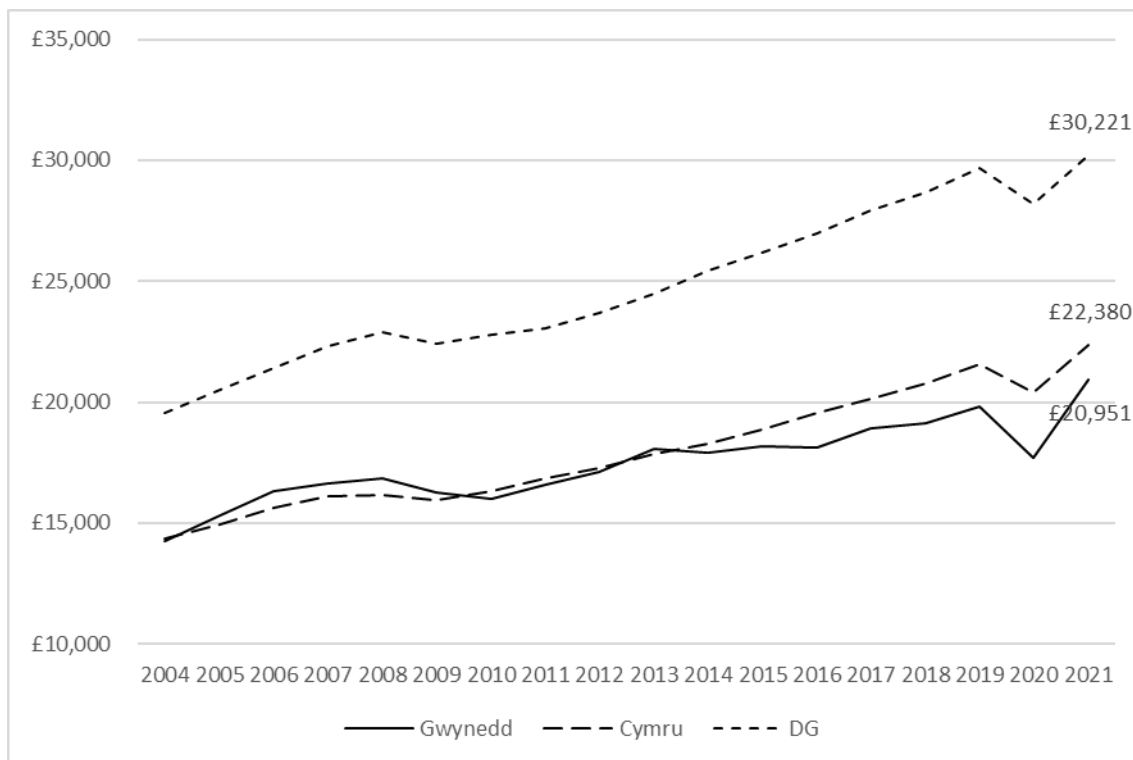
'Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings - resident analysis' (ONS, Crown copyright, from 15/01/2024)

Gross Disposable Household Income (per capita)



'Regional gross disposable household income (GDHI) at current basic prices' ONS, Crown copyright, from Nomis 15/01/2024]

Gross Value Added (GVA) per capita



'Regional Accounts' (ONS, Crown copyright, from Infobase Cymru 15/01/2024)

Agenda Item 6

MEETING	Economy and Education Scrutiny Committee
DATE	25 January 2024
TITLE	Equality Objectives Consultation Document
AUTHOR	Delyth G Williams, Equality Advisor
CABINET MEMBER	Cllr Menna Trenholme

1. It is a specific duty on public organisations in Wales, as part of the Equality Act 2010, to review our Equality Objectives every four years, as part of creating a Strategic Equality Plan. Cyngor Gwynedd needs to do this by March 2024.
2. It is also part of the specific duty to include people with protected characteristics when deciding on them.
3. We started an exercise to collect opinions on the objectives by engaging widely with a variety of people between April and August 2023. Opinions were sought on our current Objectives and to find out what else they wanted to prioritise. The methods used include a questionnaire in various formats and languages, which received almost 600 responses. The equality officers also met with a range of groups of people with protected characteristics, including young carers, disabled people, LGBTQ+ people, etc. A report on the consultation can be found as an attachment.
4. Data from a wide range of sources was also collected in a data document called *Equality in North Wales 2023* to help us see what needed to be considered. This document can be found here: [Equality in North Wales 2023: Data and Evidence Report](#).
5. A Consultation Document went to the Cabinet in November, and it was agreed that a period of consultation should be started as a further part of the opinion gathering exercise. We have again used a questionnaire and visits to groups, as well as encouraging individuals and groups to respond by email.
6. We invite your input into the draft equality objectives.
7. When this consultation period comes to an end, we will analyse all the information we have received and use it to improve our Equality Objectives and the final Objectives will go to the Cabinet as part of our Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28 in March 2024.

Draft Cyngor Gwynedd 2024-28 Equality Objectives

Introduction

The 2010 Equality Act, as implemented in Wales, places a duty on Cyngor Gwynedd to review our equality objectives every 4 years and include them in a Strategic Equality Plan. The Plan's intention is to show how the Council acts on the 3 equality aims during the four years in question, which are:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act.
- promote equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The eight equality characteristics are Age, Gender Reassignment, Sex, Race, Disability, Sexual Orientation, Pregnancy and Maternity, Religion or Belief - including non-belief. Marriage and Civil Partnership is also protected, but not in the same way.

Furthermore, we have a duty to ensure that people's voices are heard, and their views are used, when deciding on these objectives. Cyngor Gwynedd is proud to comply with these duties and the Cabinet has decided that Ensuring Fairness for All is one of the Council's priorities.

The Council has already held an extended period of consultation. Various methods were used including a questionnaire in various formats and languages, with almost 600 responses received, and meetings were held with various relevant groups, using appropriate methods. The report on the consultation is attached.

As well as the views of people with life experiences of various equality characteristics, the Objectives need to be based on quantitative data. Four years ago, the North Wales Public Sector Equality Network, a regional organisation that Cyngor

Gwynedd equality officers belong to, commissioned a data document in order to complete the Objectives. This was done with a grant received by the North Wales Public Service Boards. That Document was based on the *Is Wales Fairer? 2017* document by the Commission for Equality and Human Rights. The Network has received a grant again this year and an update on the document has been created, namely [Equality in North Wales 2023: Data and Evidence Report](#). This document collects the latest information from various sources and is very useful for creating the amended Objectives.

Another thing that we have used when forming the Equality Objectives is the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan and the Welsh Government LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, Queer, Questioning +) Action Plan. The Council is expected to conform with these plans and it makes sense to have equality matters all together in one Plan. We are also expecting a plan for the Disability protected characteristic, but it is not yet completed. Hence our use of the "Locked Out: liberating disabled people's lives and rights in Wales following COVID-19" report to also provide us with guidance, although that is mostly targeted towards the Welsh Government.

Another duty that came into force in 2021 was the Socio-Economic Duty. The duty does not solely relate to financial poverty here, but also matters such as digital poverty, living far away from services, lack of transport etc. Data shows that people who have certain equality characteristics are more likely to be in financial poverty than others, and that social matters such as the lack of transport is guaranteed to have a greater impact on them. Therefore, we believe that socio-economic matters are a part of the Objectives listed below.

We must also note that the Council has many other schemes, e.g., poverty, housing, Women in Leadership etc. and so we have taken care to avoid duplicating these schemes here.

What do we need you to do?

Using all the information above we have created draft Equality Objectives for 2024-28 and we will consult on them over the next period. These draft objectives can be seen below, and we would be grateful to hear your views on them. We are grateful to everyone who took part in the engagement before we formed the draft Objectives and we would be very grateful for your further input now we have created a draft. It is also just as important that you take part if you haven't contributed yet.

The best way to respond is by filling out the questionnaire. If this isn't possible, you can give your comments via e-mail (equality@gwynedd.llyw.cymru) or write to us (Equality Officers, Corporate Support Department, Council Offices, Shirehall Street, Caernarfon, LL55 1SH). You can also ask us to come and meet your organisation via the e-mail above or phone us on 01286 679708. You can also use these contact details if you need this document or questionnaire in a different format (e.g. easy read, large print) or in another language.

You can see the initial draft Equality Impact Assessment on the draft Equality Objectives for 2024-28 in order to provide your views on that as well.

Following the consultation, we will consider what has been shared with us, and adapt the Objectives as a result of this, before presenting them to the Council's Cabinet in March 2024 as part of the Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28.

The Draft Equality Objectives for 2020-24

Objective 1 - Improve the diversity of our workforce and reduce pay gaps

Why have we chosen this objective?

Both points, one being to improve the diversity of our workforce and the other to reduce pay gaps, were separate Objectives in the 2020-24 Equality Plan.

Because it is required to include an objective on pay gaps, people were not asked to give their opinions on whether this objective should be included in the questionnaire. However, it was clear from conversations with people during the meetings held during the engagement that the objective was supported.

There was obvious support to include the objective on diversity in our workforce with 62.1% supporting its inclusion this time. The main observations in favour related to improving inclusiveness and diversity to attract the best applicants. On the other hand, some were against this, mainly because of view that there was too much emphasis on the Welsh language which prevented people from working for the council, and that finding the best person for the job was more important than seeking diversity.

There was a chance in the questionnaire to propose additional issues that should be included in the Objectives next time. Issues relating to employment were raised in answer to that question also. Additionally, it was an issue raised by the groups the equality officers met with during the consultation.

Our internal data is currently insufficient to show pay gaps except for the gap between genders, and improving that data is a part of the work that needs to be undertaken. When talking about Wales as a whole, data has not been found on every characteristic, but it is shown that pay gaps exist based on gender and disability. Data also shows that some groups of people are less likely to be employed e.g., disabled people and people from ethnic minority groups.

The Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan and the LGBTQ+ Action Plan also note the need to take action regarding employment.

This Objective operates positively on Socio-Economic disadvantage by ensuring that groups that are paid less, or find it hard to obtain work, are encouraged to apply for and maintain jobs.

This local aim feeds into "Objective 2: We will take steps to ensure that we are an equal opportunities employer and that we reduce pay gaps", North Wales public organisations' objectives.

Which characteristics will be impacted?

This objective will have a positive impact on every protected characteristic, especially gender, race, and disability.

What will we do?

Action Points	Outcome	Timetable
Establish a staff forum with a focus on equality matters, as a method that staff can use to contribute to the field within the Council.	Staff contribute to developments.	2024
Review how we communicate with staff to ensure information is accessible and understandable for everyone; feedback was received from an external body that our documents were too complex and official.	Information, including employment policies, which are easy to understand and accessible.	2024/26
Set the aim and work towards being an innovative employer in this field, including addressing the following fields:	Member of the Disability Confident scheme, aiming for	Continuous – over the period of the plan

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the requirements within a job – provide opportunities for everyone in society. • How and where we advertise jobs. • Our image as an employer in our communities – be proactive in trying to attract people from all parts of society to work for Cyngor Gwynedd. <p>There is a strong link between our plans at this stage and another of the Council's corporate priorities, namely our project on Workforce Planning.</p>	<p>the highest level (Level 3) in the framework.</p> <p>To be recognised as an innovative employer in this broad field, for every equality characteristic.</p>	
<p>Continue to take steps to develop the awareness of managers and staff of this field fully, including equality, inclusion, neurodiversity, sexual harassment, respect and dignity in the workplace.</p>	<p>Managers and staff aware of equality and inclusion matters, knowing where to access advice on different aspects and using that information within their teams as required.</p>	<p>Continuous – over the period of the plan</p>
<p>Look at the way we explain and communicate the linguistic needs when advertising jobs in order to improve the understanding of potential candidates and the public about the need for skills in the Welsh language, and about the Council's statutory responsibilities to provide bilingual services.</p>	<p>Fewer complaints about the recruitment policy and discrimination, and a better understanding among the public of the linguistic requirements for jobs.</p>	<p>2024/27</p>

Conduct a pay gap audit annually, considering what steps to take to try and close the gap. Reach a situation where we can also conduct a pay gap audit on the grounds of disability and race.	Audit completed and feeds into the discussion on action steps.	Annual
Conduct an equal pay audit every three years	The audit has been completed	2025/26
Continue to try to improve the data about characteristics that are shared with us by our staff, as a basis for taking decisions in this important area.	The number of staff who share information with us is increasing, therefore strengthening the information we have about our workforce.	Continual

What is the difference we expect to make by the end of the period?

We will have established steps where staff can take part and offer ideas on how Cyngor Gwynedd as an employer can improve for people with equality characteristics. We will also take proactive steps to develop our image as an employer for people with equality characteristics, aiming to be innovative in the field. We will also ensure that our managers and staff have access to information to support them when dealing with employment matters that are associated with the field.

Objective 2 - To improve our data about people with equality characteristics

Why have we chosen this objective?

61.3% people felt that engagement was an important field according to the consultation. The reason for that was for the council to gain a better understanding of what needed to be improved and to recognise the needs of the community. It

was also said that the council would ensure continuous improvement within the Council. Those who disagreed said that they did not feel that the objective should be a priority of the council since it was not needed and could be expensive. Engagement was also a theme that appeared in the question about what other matters should be included in the objectives this time.

When collecting data, it was obvious that there was a lack of local information about a number of protected characteristics. It is likely that this is partly because of the low numbers. It is also obvious that many consultations take place and that we need to improve our way of operating.

The Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan and the LGBTQ+ Action Plan note the need to act in this field as well and the government has established special services for doing so. The plans ask of us as public organisations to ensure that we collect data, especially in the Education, Social Care, Employment and Housing fields. See also the separate objectives for Employment (Objective 1), and Education (Objective 4).

Which protected characteristics will be impacted?

Every characteristic will be affected positively.

What will we do?

Action Points	Outcome	Timetable
Update our engagement in order to avoid duplication, by creating procedures and sharing results. Also strengthen diversity within the Residents Panel.	Engagement group to look at procedures Operate Improve the diversity of the Residents Panel	2024-25 Continuous 2024-25

Create an accessible system to see equality data in order to make it easier to use when changing policies and making plans.	Have an electronic process in place. Keep the information current	2024-26
Look to improve and update the data we have on Gwynedd in the Equality document in North Wales, filling in any gaps if possible.	Update data as appropriate	Continuous
Ensuring that we collect data that is as complete as possible about the equality characteristics of care service users, by identifying any gaps in what we already collect and taking action	A suitable recording system installed to promote the completion of equality data when the individual is happy to share it	September 2024
	Collect and fill in the equality data of cases that are already on our recording system where possible	Continuous

What is the difference that we intend to make by the end of the period?

We intend to improve the data that we have in order to use it when creating or changing policy or ways of working, and to give the people of Gwynedd a better service. We will also ensure that we have appropriate input from people with quality characteristics, being careful not to overwhelm them by constant questioning.

Objective 3

Ensure that the Council is an anti-discriminatory organisation by improving our internal systems to provide better services for everyone.

Why have we chosen this objective?

67.3% felt that training needed to be kept in the plan following the consultation. The reason for that was because people felt that training was important for staff skills and improved services. Some disagreed and said that it was unnecessary and expensive. According to the consultation, 57.6% people felt that assessing impact was important. The reason for that was that people felt that it would ensure the Council's continuous improvement and ensure fairness for people with protected characteristics. Those who disagreed said that it would be expensive and that other priorities were of greater importance. We agree with the majority that they are matters in need of attention, but because they have received consideration during the current Plan period, we have decided to include them as action points within the objective this time. Additional comments gave support for different types of training in the answers to the question "Do you believe we should consider including any other issues in our new objectives?" in the questionnaire as well.

There was a strong demand for us to look at accessibility issues, especially for disabled people, in the answers to this question as well, and a point of action is included here. This was also an issue raised by some of the groups that the equality officers visited as part of the engagement.

The other matters addressed in this Objective derive from information in the Anti-Racist Wales Equality Plan. But we have decided to extend this to include other characteristics as well.

Which characteristics will be affected?

Every characteristic will be affected positively.

What will we do?

Action Points	Outcome	Timetable
Continue with the training framework to give staff the resources and the confidence to be able to respond to a variety of needs with respect and dignity. Ensure that the training framework is extended to include a variety of equality characteristics / broad subjects.	Training on Disability, Respect and Dignity, and Anti-racism. Move to look at other equality characteristic matters and decide on the necessary subjects and take action.	2024-2025 Continuous
Raise staff awareness of the new Equality Impact Assessment procedure and provide support, information and training to ensure quality.	Training in place. Raising awareness	May 2024 Continuous
Survey the accessibility of the Council's services, create an action plan and act on it	Survey and action plan Act	2024-26 Plan period
Improve our website's accessibility by creating an action plan to resolve shortcomings, including working towards removing the use of PDF documents.	Action plan in place Act	2024-25 Continuous
The Museums and Arts Service will support and work with all parts of the communities in Gwynedd.		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By providing inclusive programmes for our various communities, be it exhibitions, activities, events, promotion opportunities, projects or grants. 	<p>Ensure that our work programmes and grants are designed with equality aims regularly / annually and not occasionally.</p> <p>Report by counting the number of increasing opportunities and narrative information on feedback forms.</p> <p>There is a need to create a system to record the improvements.</p>	<p>Continuous</p> <p>Continuous</p> <p>March 2024</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the narrative in our museums is appropriate (anti-racist etc.) and that people's stories and specific characteristics are heard. 	<p>Ensure that the designing of exhibitions include this narrative by increasing the number of exhibitions that are being updated; training received; studies and research needed; cooperate with councillors where need and introduce improvements.</p>	<p>This work is continuous and integrated into the work programme.</p> <p>Some elements have specific target dates such as the</p>

	<p>Response by engagement, customer satisfaction, response to complaints, staff training by identifying and reducing barriers. Needs a system to collect feedback.</p> <p>Actions needed will come from the feedback, and a timetable set</p>	<p>Shared Prosperity Fund scheme to re-interpret the Lloyd George Museum story December 2024 .</p> <p>Scope and aim to re-interpret Storiel's history gallery by 2028. Angen grant i wireddu</p> <p>Feedback collection arrangements in place by March 2024.</p> <p>This work is continuous and</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with communities of people with equality characteristics to get rid of barriers to use our museums and galleries. 	<p>Further assessments to be arranged.</p>	<p>the aim is to integrate into the work programme</p> <p>Specific engagement with the Lloyd George Museum re-interpretation plan by December 2024.</p> <p>There will be a need for further engagement with the reinterpretation of Storiel's history galleries between 2024-2028</p>
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What is the difference we are making?

Our intention here is to ensure that the Council's arrangements are appropriate for every equality characteristic and that our staff understand and accept their responsibility in the field. We will ensure a better understanding of the rights and needs of people with various characteristics by creating a variety of training titles. Also, that consideration of equality characteristics has the platform that it deserves when creating and changing policies and ways of working through our Equality Impact Assessment procedure. We will ensure that people receive the information that they need by making our website easier to use. Our Museums and Arts Service will build on what is already in place for communities to be able to contribute their voices to our museums' narratives, have more opportunities, fewer barriers and be able to contribute even more to their culture through enjoyment, learning, and health and well-being improvements.

Objective 4

Improve equality within the field of education.

Why have we chosen this objective?

This objective is a new one this time. There is a duty on every school, as organisations named in the Equality Act 2010, to update their Strategic Equality Plan every four years in the same way as the Council. We believe that it is beneficial to have a relationship between the Council's Equality Scheme and those of the individual schools. The Authority has therefore proposed 4 Objectives for the schools for them to interpret them in a way that is suitable locally. Schools are encouraged to add to these 4 Objectives also, depending on local factors. The 4 Objectives for the schools appear here as action points for the Authority.

The data, although it is now a little bit dated, shows that bullying issues persist, and that some cohorts underachieve within the education system. More recent data shows that children and young people have problems with well-being and mental health conditions due to Covid-19.

The action points also derive from information in the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan. But we have decided to look at the field as a whole as opposed to one characteristic specifically.

Which aims will be impacted?

The following characteristics will be positively affected - age, race, gender, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion, disability.

What will we do?

Action Points	Outcome	Timetable
Collect, analyse and act on data related to cases of bullying.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gwynedd schools reporting electronically on cases relating to bullying every term (3 times a year). • The education department to analyse the data seasonally by using the findings to draw up a plan / training provision. 	Establish in January 2024 and to be implemented every term.

<p>Reduce costs and barriers to education and implement a range of Mental Health and Well-being interventions in order support learners, whatever their background and protected characteristics.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and share questionnaires with schools. • Schools to receive a report regarding local findings. • The education department to support schools to adapt school arrangements and procedures by creating a resource to support families in the community. 	<p>November 2023</p> <p>January 2024</p> <p>2024 onwards</p>
<p>Identify, Monitor and Act to improve attendance and achievement of various groups of students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance to be promoted and monitored across the schools of Gwynedd weekly. • A target of 95% to be implemented across the schools of Gwynedd. • Attendance data (including various groups) to be analysed in order to identify and implement aspects for development. 	<p>November 2023 and continuous</p> <p>Continuous</p> <p>Continuous</p>

<p>Ensure effective procedures of identifying and acting on pupil's voices within the daily running of the School, regardless of their protected characteristics and needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gwynedd Youth Forum has been established in order to hear students' voices across Gwynedd schools, regardless of their protected characteristics and needs to be considered on the political and corporate level of the authority. 	<p>2024 onwards</p>
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What is the difference that we are doing?

Our intention is to ensure education equality and an opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents, and carers who receive services from our schools, regardless of their protected characteristics and their needs. By improving equality within education, we will develop a culture of inclusion and diversity where every pupil connected to Gwynedd schools feel proud of their identity and can participate fully in school life. Pupil attainment will be monitored, and we will use the data to support pupils, raise standards and ensure inclusive education. We will tackle discrimination by facilitating and supporting schools to positively promote equality, challenge bullying and stereotypes and create an environment that encourages respect towards all. In Gwynedd, we believe that diversity is a strength, and should be respected and celebrated by everyone within and outside of the schools.

Effect on the Welsh Language

We are required, under Part 4 of The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 when creating a consultation document, to consider and seek opinions on the effects of the Objectives on people's opportunities to use the Welsh language, and to ensure that we don't treat the Welsh language less favourably than the English, and to also look at how we can adapt the policy to improve this. The work set out in Objective 1 to look at the requirements in positions and to create a staff forum includes linguistic elements and means a better understanding within the Council and the wider community about linguistic requirements when recruiting and the Council's statutory responsibilities under the Standards. Also the work to improve our website in Objective 3. For more information see the Impact Assessment.

Analysis of the Engagement on Cyngor Gwynedd Equality Objectives April – August 2024

Introduction

Cyngor Gwynedd has a duty to examine our Equality Objectives every four years and change them as required, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

When determining which objectives to use, the Council is required to consider data about equality characteristics, the Welsh Government's new Action Plans and the Council's other plans. However, one of the most important things was the engagement work to find out what Gwynedd residents wanted, as the people who use our services. The Council has undertaken an extended period of engagement during the spring and summer. This engagement has ensured that people's voices are heard and their opinions are used when determining the draft Objectives to hold a further consultation on them.

Various methods were used including a questionnaire in a variety of formats and languages. It received 597 responses. We also met with various groups of people with protected characteristics and attended some events, and more information about this and the information gathered is in Appendix 1 of this document.

The consultation was live between 14/04/2023 and 18/08/2023. 597 responses were received to the questionnaire with 87.9% (N=525) of questionnaires completed online and 12.1% (N=72) completed via the citizens' panel.

In order to avoid a blank page, and to provide information to those participating, we started by asking 5 specific questions about the current Objectives to find out if they thought it was important for us to continue working in these fields. They were then asked to say what else would be important to include in the new Plan. Additionally, there was a question on the Welsh language and questions about equality characteristics in the questionnaire.

Part 1: Questionnaire results

Who responded to the questionnaire?

597 responses were received to the questionnaire. 87.9% (N=525) of the questionnaires were completed online and 12.1% (N=72) were completed via the citizens' panel. Information about the respondents can be seen below:

Area

As seen from the table below, there is representation from every well-being area.

	Number	Percentage
Pen Llŷn Area	40	6.7

Porthmadog / Penrhyndeudraeth Area	34	5.7
Bro Ardudwy	41	6.9
Bro Dysynni	38	6.4
Bro Ffestiniog	24	4.0
Bro Lleu / Nantlle	28	4.7
Bro Ogwen	35	5.9
Bro Peris	38	6.4
Bala / Penllyn Catchment Area	9	1.5
Bangor Catchment Area	53	8.9
Caernarfon Catchment Area	29	4.9
Dolgellau Catchment Area	36	6.0
Pwllheli Catchment Area	28	4.7
Outside Gwynedd	9	1.5
Not answered	124	20.8
Post code incomplete	31	5.2
Total	597	100.0

Protected characteristic: Sex

	Number	Percentage
Woman / Female	263	44.1
Man / Male	254	42.5
I prefer not to say	38	6.4
No response	38	6.4
I identify in a different way	4	0.7
Total	597	100.0

Protected characteristic: Age

	Number	Percentage
15 years old or younger	2	0.3
16 - 24 years old	10	1.7
25 - 34 years old	39	6.5
35 - 44 years old	60	10.1
45 - 54 years old	86	14.4
55 - 64 years old	121	20.3
65 - 74 years old	132	22.1
75 - 84 years old	73	12.2
85+ years old	7	1.2
I prefer not to say	37	6.2
No response	30	5.0
Total	597	100.0

How would you describe your Welsh language skills?

	Number	Percentage
Speaking, reading and writing fluently	202	33.8
Speaking, reading and writing, but not very	69	11.6

confident		
Speaking, reading and writing – currently learning	83	13.9
Speaking, but unable to read or write	25	4.2
Unable to speak or understand Welsh	91	15.2
I prefer not to say	59	9.9
Other	95	15.9
Total	597	100.0

Protected characteristic: Race (Nationality or national identity)

	Number	Percentage
Welsh	258	43.2
British	140	23.5
English	93	15.6
I prefer not to say	36	6.0
Other	32	5.4
Scottish	6	1.0
No response	32	5.4
Northern Irish	0	0.0
Total	597	100.0

Protected characteristic: Race (What is your race?)

	Number	Percentage
White	493	82.6
I prefer not to say	44	7.4
No response	31	5.2
Other	10	1.7
Asian	8	1.3
Mixed / several ethnic groups	8	1.3
Black / African / Caribbean	3	0.5
Total	597	100.0

Protected characteristic: Religion

	Number	Percentage
Christian	255	42.7
No religion	219	36.7
I prefer not to say	49	8.2
No response	30	5.0
Other	27	4.5
Muslim	6	1.0
Buddhist	5	0.8
Hindu	2	0.3
Jewish	2	0.3
Sikh	2	0.3
Total	597	100.0

Protected characteristic: Sexual Orientation

	Number	Percentage
Heterosexual / Straight	457	76.5
I prefer not to say	60	10.1
No response	35	5.9
Other	17	2.8
Bisexual	13	2.2
Gay woman / lesbian	11	1.8
Gay man	4	0.7
Total	597	100.0

Protected characteristic: Gender reassignment (Has your gender identity changed from that which you were assigned at birth? (for example, you are transgender or trans etc.))

	Number	Percentage
No	495	82.9
I prefer not to say	47	7.9
No response	47	7.9
Yes	8	1.3
Total	597	100.0

Protected Characteristic: Disability

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

- a. That individual has a physical or mental impairment, and
- b. That the said impairment has a substantial and long-term detrimental effect on the ability of the individual to carry out normal day to day activities

Protected Characteristic: Disability (Using this definition, do you consider yourself a disabled person?)

	Number	Percentage
No	387	64.8
Yes	117	19.6
I prefer not to say	59	9.9
No response	34	5.7
Total	59	100.0

Objective 1 – Training for staff and Councillors

The objective promises “To strengthen and deepen the capacity and commitment of Cyngor Gwynedd Staff and Elected Members in the field of Equality, by ensuring that they receive the right training.”

- **Action point 1** – Create an equality training programme that is suitable for all staff members, and for Councillors, for them to better understand their duty towards equality.
- **Action point 2** – Update the information on the intranet for Councillors, including training guidelines and information relevant to the equality field.
- **Action point 3** – Provide more information about equality in other training, such as *Croeso i'r Cyngor* (for new staff) and *Ffordd Gwynedd* (how the Council works) training.

By the end of the period (end of March 2024) we are confident that we will have created a training programme, although more will need to be done. Action points 2 and 3 have already been completed.

a) Do you think that we should continue to have an objective to provide better training for staff and Councillors?

	Number	Percentage
Yes	402	67.3
Unsure	105	17.6
No	71	11.9
No response	19	3.2
Total	597	100.0

A higher percentage of respondents aged between 25 and 34 have noted 'unsure' and a smaller percentage of them have noted 'yes' compared to other age groups. There are no major differences of opinion when examining the other protected characteristics.

b) Explain why you say this

The free text responses were analysed theme by theme by the equality team.

Of those who noted 'yes', the themes raised were as follows:

Theme	Number	Percentage
Training is important and is essential to the success of the organisation	74	24.6
Training improves staff skills when dealing with the community's needs	63	21.0
Other	47	15.7
Training provides assistance to staff to understand the need for diversity and inclusion	25	8.4

Training can improve the service people receive from the Council	24	7.9
Training is important for any organisation in any field	18	6.0
Linguistic matters	11	3.7
Training is unnecessary, and themes of equality is a field that staff should already be aware of	11	3.6
Concern about the cost of training staff and believe that the funding should be spent in other fields	7	2.3
Councillors need training to be able to represent everyone fairly	6	2.0
Training is important to identify the barriers faced by disabled people	5	1.7
Training strengthens decisions and policies	8	2.7
Training is important to identify the barriers for LGBTQ+ matters	1	0.3
Total	300	100.0

Of those who noted 'unsure', the themes raised were as follows:

Theme	Number	Percentage
Training improves the skills of our staff as they deal with the community's needs	14	27.5
Recognise that training is important	6	11.8
Training is unnecessary, and themes of equality is a field that staff should already be aware of	7	13.8

Unsure	5	9.8
Other	5	9.8
Training can improve the standard of Council services	3	5.9
Training is important and good to be able to measure the success of the organisation	7	13.9
Concern about the cost of training staff and believe that the funding should be spent in other fields	2	3.9
Training can affect decisions and policies	2	4.0
Total	51	100.0

Of those who noted 'no', the themes raised were as follows:

Theme	Number	Percentage
Concern about the cost of training staff and believe that the funding should be spent in other fields	11	22.9
Other	9	18.8
Training is unnecessary, and themes of equality is a field that staff should already be aware of	7	14.6
Recognise that training can be beneficial but still disagree	5	10.4
Training can improve staff skills but other things should be given priority to improve services.	5	10.5
Think that an objective on training is unnecessary	3	6.3

Think there is a need to examine different priorities when examining policies and decisions	4	8.4
The objectives need to examine other things in order to be an inclusive organisation.	3	6.3
Linguistic matters	1	2.1
Total	48	100.0

Objective 2 – Gather different people’s opinions

The objective promises **“To improve the information we receive from people with protected characteristics and the information we have about them.”**

- **Action point 1** – Conduct a full public survey in order to identify the barriers faced by Gwynedd residents with various characteristics, and what we can do to respond.
- **Action point 2** – Develop more contact with groups or individuals who have protected characteristics, by making our Equality Core Group more diverse. The Equality Core Group is a group of people who come from organisations that support or represent people with protected characteristics.
- **Action point 3** – Ensure that there is a way for everyone in the Council to know what people with the various characteristics need. We will use the information gathered to improve our services. We will also review our Access/Equality Policy based on the observations received.

We had to conduct the survey during lockdown. This meant that it was difficult to do it as fully as we had hoped. We are currently working on increasing the size of the Equality Core Group. The Equality Group has been updated.

a) Do you think that we should continue to have an objective to ask for the opinions of people with protected characteristics?

	Number	Percentage
Yes	366	61.3
Unsure	118	19.8
No	84	14.1
No response	29	4.9
Total	597	100.0

A higher percentage of women have stated 'yes' compared with any other cohort. A higher percentage of respondents who note that they are disabled have stated 'yes'. A higher percentage of respondents who note that they are a gay man / gay woman / lesbian also said 'yes'.

b) Explain why you say this

These free text responses were analysed into themes by the equality team.

Of those who noted 'yes', the themes raised were as follows:

Theme	Number	Percentage
Important for the community to get an equal opportunity to voice their opinion	69	27.9
Important to gain an understanding of diversity and inclusion	62	15.7
It is always a good idea to improve understanding more widely	28	11.2
The information is needed to gain a better understanding and to recognise the success of the services provided by the Council and what needs to change	26	14.8
It improves staff knowledge in order to improve skills and policy matters, and to work towards continuous success	28	12.0
Other	25	10.8
To identify the equality barriers and needs of the community	11	4.4
Important for our understanding of accessibility and disability	7	2.8
Linguistic matters	5	2.0
Total	249	100.0

Of those who noted 'unsure', the themes raised were as follows:

Theme	Number	Percentage
Unsure	27	54.0
Other	10	20.0
Concern about the cost of engagement, believing that the funding should be spent in other fields	3	6.0
A good idea for the council to gain a better understanding of the community's views and to be more inclusive.	6	12.0
Gives everyone the same opportunity to voice their opinion	2	4.0
Believing that the Objective is unnecessary	2	4.0
Total	50	100.0

Of those who noted 'no', the themes raised were as follows:

Theme	Number	Percentage
I feel that the Objective is unnecessary and that there are better priorities.	34	59.9
Concern about the cost of engagement and believing that the funding should be spent in other fields	13	22.8
Other	6	10.5
Linguistic matters	2	3.5
Agree that it is important for people to have the opportunity to voice an opinion, but do not feel that it should be an Objective	2	3.6

Total	57	100.0
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Objective 3 – Improving our Equality Impact Assessment system

The objective promises "**To build on the work already carried out to embed Equality Impact Assessments as a tool to ensure better decision-making**". Equality Impact Assessments are a way of ensuring that the needs of people with different equality characteristics are considered when drawing up or amending new policies or services.

- **Action Point 1** – Produce additional training on impact assessments.
- **Action Point 2** – Provide assistance to Councillors to ensure that equality is central when making decisions.
- **Action Point 3** – Give due consideration to equality needs when savings or cuts need to be identified.

The training will be created and offered to relevant staff members and Councillors by the end of the period. Equality officers shared their opinions on savings.

a) Do you think we should continue to have an objective to improve our equality impact assessment arrangements?

	Number	Percentage
Yes	344	57.6
Unsure	137	22.9
No	88	14.7
No response	28	4.7
Total	597	100.0

A higher percentage of women have stated 'yes' compared with any other cohort. A higher percentage of respondents in the 25-34 and 35-44 age group have stated 'yes'. There are no major differences of opinion between the respondents who have noted that they are disabled and those who have noted that they are not disabled. A higher percentage of respondents who are bisexual, a gay man / gay woman / lesbian noted 'yes', with a higher percentage of respondents who are heterosexual / straight noting that they are unsure.

b) Explain why you say this

These free text responses were analysed into themes by the equality team.

Of those who noted 'yes', the themes raised were as follows:

Theme	Number	Percentage
Think that an impact assessment is essential for various reasons	42	21.8
Believe that an assessment is a good way to see continuous success in the equality field	51	26.5
Feel that it is a good idea for any organisation to have an assessment system in place and that it is a good way of getting community feedback	40	19.7
Other or unsure	24	12.4
Essential to be an inclusive organisation that considers the diversity of the community	15	7.5
An assessment improves staff skills in the field and, therefore, improves services	7	3.6
Assessments are important for specific equality characteristics and for the inclusion for all.	6	3.1
Linguistic matters	4	2.1
Believe that they are important but still concerned about the cost	2	1.0
Assessments are important to question quality	2	1.0
Total	193	100.0

Of those who noted 'unsure', the themes raised were as follows:

Theme	Number	Percentage
Unsure	29	60.4

Other	6	12.5
Feel that the impact assessment is unnecessary and that there are other priorities	6	12.5
Concern about the cost and believe that the funding should be spent in other fields	3	6.3
It could be a good idea to measure success and to improve continuously if it is done correctly.	3	6.3
Linguistic matters	1	2.1
Total	48	100.0

Of those who noted 'no', the themes raised were as follows:

Theme	Number	Percentage
Feel that the impact assessment is unnecessary, a tick-box exercise and that there are other priorities	30	50
Concern about the cost and believe that the funding should be spent in other fields	14	23.3
Other	14	23.4
It could be a good idea to measure success and to improve continuously if it is done correctly.	2	3.3
Total	60	100.0

Objective 4 – Pay gap

This pay gap is an equality measure that shows the difference between the average earnings of men and women. It is different to an equal pay measure, which shows whether women and men receive the same salary for the same type of jobs within an organisation.

We promise "**To act to reduce the gender pay gap and identify any pay gap based on any other characteristic.**"

- **Action Point 1** – Try to get more staff to complete the equality data questionnaire to improve the information we have. The Council cannot force anyone to complete it.
- **Action Point 2** – Continue to conduct an annual audit on the pay gap between men and women, and work to develop our ability to undertake an audit on other characteristics. In addition, undertake a pay audit every three years to ensure that we continue to pay equal salaries.
- **Action Point 3** – Continue with the Women in Leadership project to promote the number of women who apply for and attain higher positions within the Council by reviewing work conditions and the working environment.

The audit has been completed and it shows that we provide equal pay. The figures show that the Council has a pay gap between men and women, as all other Councils, although the pay provided to men and women for the same type of work is equal. However, Women in Leadership is a separate project that will continue regardless. The guidelines state that we must have an objective that deals with the pay gap.

a) We must have an objective about the pay gap. Do you have you any observations about this objective?

These free text responses were analysed into themes by the equality team.

Theme	Number	Percentage
Believe that men and women should be paid fairly for the same job.	157	40.2
Feel that the objective is important and should be one of the Council's priorities.	82	21.0
Concern about the cost and believe that the funding should be spent in other fields as this is something that is unnecessary	47	12.0
Other	36	9.3

Feel that the person's gender is not important and that the salary should only reflect the job	29	7.5
No	25	6.4
Unsure	5	1.3
Recognise that a pay gap exists	4	1.0
Linguistic matters	3	0.8
Is important and corresponds with other Equality characteristics	3	0.9
Total	391	100.0

Objective 5 – More diversity among the people applying for jobs in the Council

We have promised "To take action to attract a range of applicants for posts in order to increase the diversity of our workforce"

- **Action Point 1** – Use the information that has been gathered from the equality questionnaire for staff (see Objective 4) and the engagement (Objective 2) to identify whether there are any matters that prevent specific cohorts of people from applying for jobs.
- **Action Point 2** – Work jointly with other public bodies within our region on any barriers.
- **Action Point 3** – Prioritise working towards reaching Level 2 of the 'Disability Confident' Scheme in order to be a 'Confident Employer', and look into becoming a Stonewall Champion.

We have identified some barriers and are working on them. We are still working with public bodies to see what we can do on a joint basis. We hope that we will reach level 2 of the 'Disability Confident' Scheme by the end of the period. We decided to apply for an accreditation with Inclusive Employers, rather than Stonewall, in order to address all of the protected characteristics.

a) Do you think that we should continue to have an objective to improve the diversity of people who apply for jobs?

	Number	Percentage
Yes	371	62.1
No	108	18.1
Unsure	91	15.2
No response	27	4.5
Total	597	100.0

A higher percentage of women have stated 'yes' compared to any other cohort within gender. A higher percentage of respondents in the 35-44 and 55-64 age group have stated 'yes', while a higher percentage of respondents in the 25-34 age group have stated 'no'. A slightly higher percentage of respondents who note that they are disabled note 'yes', than those who note that they are not disabled. A higher percentage of respondents who note that they are bisexual, a gay man / gay woman / lesbian note 'yes'.

b) Explain why you say this

These free text responses were analysed into themes by the equality team.

Of those who noted 'yes', the themes raised were as follows:

Theme	Number	Percentage
This objective is important to promote inclusion and diversity	93	37.5
Linguistic matters	41	16.5
A good idea to continue with this objective in order to continue to improve	31	12.5
Feel that it is a good idea to promote equal opportunities but the best person for the job should be appointed, whatever their protected characteristics	29	11.7
Other	20	8.1
An objective that is important to disabled people to promote equal opportunities in this community	16	6.4
An objective that is important to LGBTQ+ people to promote equal opportunities in this community	7	2.8

A good way of removing barriers and discrimination	5	2.0
A way of improving services by having a more diverse workforce	6	2.4
Total	248	100.0

Of those who noted 'no', the themes raised were as follows:

Theme	Number	Percentage
Feel that the Council should look at the skills of an applicant when recruiting, and appoint the best person for the job	50	60.2
Concern about the cost and believe that the funding should be spent in other fields	2	2.4
Agree that it is good to remove barriers for specific characteristics and promote inclusion, but still feel that it should not be an objective	7	8.4
Other	7	8.4
Unnecessary objective as positive discrimination is already happening	14	16.9
Linguistic matters	3	3.6
Total	83	100.0

Of those who noted 'unsure', the themes raised were as follows:

Theme	Number	Percentage
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Feel that the Council should look at the skills of an applicant when recruiting, and appoint the best person for the job	13	36.1
Other	9	25.0
Unsure	5	13.9
Agree that it is good to remove barriers for specific characteristics and promote inclusion, but still feel that it should not be an objective	6	16.7
Unnecessary objective as positive discrimination is already happening	2	5.6
Linguistic matters	2	5.6
Total	36	100.0

Other matters we should consider

Thank you for giving your opinion on the objectives we already have for us to see what is important to include in the next Equality Plan.

Is there anything else that needs to be included in 2024-28, in your opinion?

a) Do you believe that we should consider including any other matters in our new objectives?

Nearly half the respondents noted that they had no opinion, with nearly a third noting that consideration needed to be given to other matters.

	Number	Percentage
No opinion	275	46.1
Yes	184	30.8
No	95	15.9
No response	43	7.2
Total	597	100.0

If you answered 'yes' to the question "Do you believe that we should consider including any other matters in our new objectives?", what is your first suggestion? Why do you want to include this objective?

These free text responses were analysed into themes by the equality team.

153 responses were received to this question. The table below shows the themes raised.

What is your first suggestion?

Theme	Number	Percentage
Concern about the Council's expenditure on equality objectives and believe that there should be expenditure on other things entirely.	21	13.8
Further comments on salary or recruitment matters	8	5.2
Comments on inclusion and diversity for specific protected characteristics.	32	21.7
Others matters beyond equality	37	25.2
Further comments on the need to improve services in general	26	17.1
Comments on staff skills	8	5.2
Linguistic matters	21	13.7
Total	153	100.0

What is your second suggestion?

Theme	Number	Percentage
Other	24	41.4

Comments on inclusion and diversity for specific protected characteristics.	16	29.2
Further comments on the need to improve services in general	5	8.6
Comments emphasising the importance of environmental matters, and to note them as a priority instead of equality matters	3	5.2
Need to examine the transport situation to improve this service	3	5.2
Further comments on salary or recruitment matters	2	3.4
Feel that the consideration given to equality matters is unnecessary and we should prioritise other things	2	3.4
Linguistic matters	2	3.4
Total	58	100.0

What is your third suggestion?

Theme	Number	Percentage
Other	22	58.4
Concern about the Council's expenditure on equality objectives and believe that there should be spending on other things entirely.	5	12.8
Comments on inclusion and diversity in general	5	12.8
Further comments on specific training ideas	4	10.3
Linguistic matters	2	5.1

Total	39	100.0
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See attachment one for further analysis.

Part 2: Meetings with Groups

It was decided that the best way to reach people with protected characteristics would be to attend meetings of the relevant groups to ensure that we get a variety of people with life experience responding and meeting some people who wouldn't take part otherwise. This way, every effort is made to reduce the gaps in our knowledge of experiences the different equality characteristics groups.

List of engaged groups:

- Independents Advocacy Service NWAAA
- Balchder Gogledd Cymru
- GISDA
- Young Carers Group (8-13)
- Young Carers Group (13-18)
- Unique Transgender Network
- Arfon Access Group
- Galwch acw
- Porthmadog Boccia event
- Gwynedd Council Equality Core Group

In addition, an email was received from the Arfon Access Group, after they had discussed the matter further.

A variety of methods were used that suited the group and the circumstances including a simplified questionnaire, slides, pictures, stickers, conversation.

In most situations 5 specific questions were asked to find out the changes we would like to see in the new plan and what is important for us to continue working on.

- **Is it still important to give training to our staff and Councillors?**

The groups felt that this was important to be able to build staff understanding on equality issues and to update people on the correct terms to use and the best practice when engaging with a diverse community. The community said that through diversity and training we learn together what is important. It is important that the objectives focus on all types of characteristics and not just one type, to give fair representation to everyone, so the training will need to reflect this. It was said that training teaches people how to respect each other and ensures that the council's workforce gets the support they need when dealing with broad issues of equality. It was also noted that this is a matter of duty and work that the Council should be doing anyway. The training needs of Councillors was also raised

- **Is it important that we still ask people for their opinion?**

The community also felt that this objective was important to be able to ensure continuous improvement. It was said that it was important to ask people's opinions because it is good practice in being inclusive and to understand the obstacles some groups face. Some said that asking questions to different groups of people was important in order to get more diverse responses and show that the council were listening to people. Another group said that engagement gives different people better representation from the council. One group noted that engagement work is highly valued by LGBTQ+ communities as it shows that the council is ready to learn and improve.

- **Is it important for us to keep improving our Equality Impact Assessment procedure, to make sure that our policies are fair for everyone?**

After an explanation of how impact assessments worked, as many of the groups were not familiar with impact assessments, the groups agreed that assessing impact was essential to the council's work. One group said it was worth keeping and improving and another group said it was a useful way for the council to identify unfairness. It was also noted that this is a matter of duty and work that the Council should be doing anyway.

- **Is it important for us to continue working to reduce the gender pay gap and identify any other pay gaps?**

In a number of groups we discussed the difference between the pay gap and fair pay. Groups again, on the whole, agreed that this was important, but a few individuals were of the opinion that it was not a priority because everyone was paid based on the requirements and responsibilities of the job and not gender issues. However, in general everyone agreed that women should be paid fairly and that further work needs to be done to specifically look at the pay gap between the sexes.

- **Is it important for us to continue working to increase the diversity of our workforce by attracting different candidates?**

Once again almost everyone agreed that this was an important objective to ensure equality and equal opportunities. Some who took part in the engagement said that there is always a need to think about diversity in the workplace and that more positive discrimination is needed to attract and retain diversity in our workforce. Another group went on to say that having a variety is always a benefit to any workplace when it comes to dealing with problems. Another group thought that this was the best way to find the best staff and to keep the best staff. On the other hand some felt that it should be ensured that the best people are chosen for jobs, regardless of their equality characteristics.

After gathering opinions specifically about these objectives, there was then a chance for people to discuss any other issues they believed we should consider in the new equality plan. Below are the most common and repeated categories.

- **Disability matters**

The groups felt that there was a need for better training in general for disability issues and a number of different areas within the field had been mentioned. One person mentioned autism awareness training in general but especially in schools. One group had said that there was a need for more Braille and BSL learning opportunities and a better understanding of neurodiversity. Mental health was often raised, with suggestions of working with ICAN and ensuring better mental health training for council staff to deal with work-related stress. Dementia had also been identified by one group, who felt that more work was needed to raise awareness of Alzheimers. Beyond training, there were practical things such as taking another look at disabled parking spaces, public transport and more leisure opportunities. They also noted the need to remember disability as a characteristic, as not doing so can endanger lives, and as the Government has not created an Action Plan on the matter.

- **LGBTQ+ matters**

One group said that there is a need for more representation for trans people and to ensure that there are trans policies in the workplace and that they are consistent. Another group said that it is necessary to look at operational things such as the use of the public toilets, and how the Council will be able to be more inclusive with the trans community in this matter. It was said that we need to consider people who have more than one protected characteristic using the example of the LGBTQ+ community, mental health and young people. The mental health of LGBTQ+ young people was emphasised

- **Data and information**

Some groups were of the opinion that it was necessary to improve data and the use of data in order to identify where there are problems in order to focus on them. One group said this helps identify patterns to improve a number of other aspects that need more work such as the training needed for specific equality topics.

- **Schools, Children and Young People**

Issues around schooling and children or young people were often raised by the groups. Some groups felt that there was a need for better accessibility for physical disabilities in the schools and that there was a need to create more safe places for children with learning difficulties or neurodiversity. The groups also felt that more needed to be done for school children outside of school such as more places to cross, more activities for children after school and an effort for young carers to get a free or reduced fair bus ticket. More comments arose specifically for young carers including more time away from school or letting carers use mobile phones in an emergency. Some felt that children needed more one-to-one support to ensure early intervention for equality barriers. One other group raised the need for the council to be doing more to reduce the concerns of the people of Gwynedd around the education system of school children.

Some of the matters raised by the groups were operational issues and are being passed on to the relevant services.

Attachment 1 – Further analysis of the question: Do you think we should consider any other matters in our new objectives

The analysis of this question in Part 1 of the document is done on the basis of the question's three parts. This analysis brings the answers in the 3 parts together and considers what was said in the supplementary question to each part: "Why do you say that". The information below has therefore taken into account all the comments made by those who answered Yes to the question above. It also shows our response.

Issues regarding Equality and Socio-economic Disadvantage

Matter raised	Sylwadau
Fair wages, and paying the living wage	This is addressed in Objective 1 where there are action points regarding the pay gap
Diversity within employment – disability (especially hearing impairments, neurodiversity), immigrants, people who do not speak Welsh or who are not fluent, respect for various religions and customs, local people. Remembering that diversity is needed at all levels of the workforce. Work towards Disability Confident level 3 (and beyond). Mentoring program, and "reverse" mentoring (where a member of staff with an equality characteristic mentors a manager). Equality experts on interview panels. Provide feedback to unsuccessful candidates. Act positively.	This is addressed in Objective 1 where there are action points to improve diversity within the workforce and work towards Disability Confident level 3. The Council already offers a variety of language training for staff.
Other employment issues – flexible working and clear communication with staff	This is also addressed in Objective 1
Improving access to buildings, facilities, services and jobs for disabled people bearing in mind people with dyslexia etc, and for people who do not drive. Consultation on access. These matters were raised regarding the area in general as well as the Council specifically.	This is addressed in part in Objective 1 (improving diversity within employment – there are action points on making adjustments and document accessibility) and Objective 3 (action points on a survey of service accessibility, website and museum accessibility). We recognise that the Council has the duty to promote equality more widely, but we believe it is better to focus on internal issues at the moment.

Accessibility of communication and information, correct use of terminology. Use different ways of communicating	This is addressed in Objective 3 (action points on a survey of the accessibility of services, the accessibility of the website and museums).
Engaging with groups of people with different protected characteristics and supporting those groups in order to ensure safe places to meet, guidance and support for the third sector to with the Council on this work.	The first part of this is addressed in Objective 2. The Council already has a number of ways to support community groups. We encourage any organization that wants to contribute to the equality agenda to contact equality@gwynedd.llyw.cymru to discuss and perhaps become part of our Equality Core Group.
Housing issues – safety, more quality social housing	The information has been passed on to the Department
Welsh issues outside of employment - free Welsh lessons, the belief that the Welsh language leads to discrimination, need to ensure that Council meetings take place in Welsh with translation rather than switching to English.	Some of the issues that have been raised are a matter for the Council's Language Policy and the comments have been passed on to the service. Funding Welsh lessons (for those who do not work for the Council) is a matter for the Welsh Government, but the Council works in partnership with Menter Iaith Gwynedd to give people opportunities to practice and gain confidence in the language.
Training for staff – outsourcing training, gender reassignment training, training on different aspects of communication, neurodiversity, British Sign Language, sensory impairment awareness, in employment	The Council already uses specialist providers to give specific training, and an action point on training is included in Objective 3.
Promote understanding of equality in society as a whole	Most of the Council's staff live in Gwynedd so any work that is done in the training action point will contribute to this. An action point is included in Objective 1 for being a leader in this field within employment.
The Council should have and implement an Anti-Racist strategy	We have considered the Welsh Government's Anti-Racism Wales Action Plan and have included issues as part of the draft Objectives

Consider tourists	The changes to our website, and museums and arts (Objective 3) will apply to this.
Digital training for the public, especially people who have been excluded	Information passed to the relevant service
Public transport – specifically for disabled people, but so that everyone can access services, jobs and facilities	A survey of the public transport system is currently taking place as part of another strategy
Consider socio-economic disadvantage when implementing	The Council already requires this to be considered as part of the socio-economic duty when a policy or way of working is changed or initiated
Promoting equality through Procurement (ensuring that everyone who does work for the Council complies with expectations in the field)	Gwynedd Council has social options in its contracts
Issues regarding Members – more age diversity etc in terms of Members, quota of disabled people	Who is elected is a matter for the candidates, the parties and, most especially, the electors who is elected, but the Council is already working to encourage more diverse candidates.
Ensure that consideration is given to all characteristics, and everyone within those characteristics, to ensure balance.	We have considered all the protected features when creating the Objectives. A question about this has been put in the questionnaire that accompanies the consultation document.
Improve the accessibility of the Objectives	Every attempt is made to make the Objectives as accessible as possible. Easy-to-read versions have also been created.
Accountability of the Scheme, both regularly and transparently	We publish an Annual Report in accordance with the guidelines of the Equality Act
There needs to be action every day, no need for this survey, mainstreaming equality	It is a statutory requirement for the Council to reassess its Objectives every 4 years and also to include the views of people with equality

	<p>characteristics when doing so. The Council's Cabinet has identified equality as one of its priorities in the Council's Plan.</p>
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We have omitted a few comments which, unfortunately, discriminated against different protected characteristics.

Operational Matters

A number of people had drawn our attention to operational issues. We will pass these comments on to the services that deal with these issues. These included bin collection and recycling, town centre improvement, climate change and sustainability issues, Council Plan, grass cutting, employment, taxes, parking, street and road issues, second homes, partnership working, care services issues , creating quality jobs, engagement in general, training on business needs, behaviour of Members, education, anti-social behaviour, 20mph zones, specific wages, atmosphere in rural areas, tourism etc.

There were also a number of comments regarding the Council in general e.g. bringing in people from outside in order to get new ideas, accepting ideas from outside, working effectively in order to make financial savings, more scrutiny, Council jobs in South Meirionnydd, promoting people based on merit not relations, acting in a way that is right for the people of Gwynedd not because of the ideology6-

of a political party, staff development, positive leadership, transparency in terms of spending. These comments have also been passed on to the relevant officers within the Council.

Matters outside the Council's remit

The Council is not responsible for some of the things that have been raised here. These include medical and health issues, a bypass, giving more money to low income families, matters relating to Anglesey, Snowdonia National Park issues, social housing estates, private business issues (while accepting our duty to promote equal opportunities), the Police, the civil service (Government), telephone networks, water and dams, the number of Members, the amount of benefits, speed awareness courses.

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

The Council's Equality Objectives 2024-28

The Council is required (under the Equality Act 2010) to consider the impact that any changes in any policy or procedures (or the creation of a new policy or procedure) will have on people with protected equality characteristics. The Council also has additional general duties to ensure fairness and to foster good relationships. Therefore, a timely assessment should be made before any decision is taken on any relevant change (i.e., that affects people with protected equality 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 impact that any change in policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure), will have on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than English. This document therefore ensures that these decisions safeguard and promote the use made of the Welsh language. This document therefore ensures that these decisions safeguard and promote the use made of the Welsh language.

From 1 April 2021, the Council has a duty to give due attention to addressing socio-economic disadvantages in strategic decisions.

Author: Delyth Williams. Equality Advisor

Version: 2

STEP 1

1. What is being assessed?

- Setting objectives.
- New project proposals affecting staff, communities or accessibility to the built environment, e.g. new construction work or adaptations to existing buildings, moving to on-line services, self-service, changing location, etc.

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

The aim of the Equality Objectives is to act as a framework for the main work we will be undertaking in the equality field during the period in question (2024-28) to ensure fairness for everyone. The Council should pay attention to equality matters in everything they do, but these will be our strategic priorities for the period. The Objectives will be included in our Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28. They should improve our services for people with the nine protected characteristics.

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

People of Gwynedd - every person has at least 5 protected (equality) characteristics and therefore it's important that everyone has the opportunity participate. However, we have targeted groups and representatives of people with the different characteristics to make sure that we get a broad range of replies. We have engaged with Cyngor Gwynedd's Equality Core Group, which is a group of organisation representatives that represent people with protected characteristics.

In addition, there are some groups that don't always get the chance to engage, because we do not prepare for them properly. We have therefore ensured that we have a range of ways to engage and have discussed with various groups and individuals as part of the work (see question 4).

STEP 2

4. Have you complied with the duty to engage as described above and are you sufficiently informed to proceed?

Yes

Note any consultation or engagement you have done:

Consultation / Engagement	Date	Method
The Centre for Sign Sight Sound (CoS) were asked their opinion regarding the best way to engage, and they said they would help people as part of their usual work for the Council	May 2023	The organisation to act
Ask the self-advocacy group to give their opinion on the easyread document	May June 2023	Receive opinions
Ask the refugee officers about the best way to engage	March 2023	Receive opinions
Te am Tri meeting (Advocacy group)	12/05/23	Used slides and a chat
Visit to the Galwch Acw shop	18/05/23	Give support to the service recipient to fill out the easy read questionnaire
Visit the LGBTQ+ GISDA group, Caernarfon	03/07/23	Use visual resources and a discussion
Arfon Young Carer group	11/07/23	Use visual resources, stickers and a chat
Arfon Access Group	12/07/23	Discussion on the questionnaire
Arfon Young Carers Group (11-18 years old)	18/07/23	Use visual resources, stickers and a chat
Visit the Unique Transgender Network	03/08/23	Discussion to consult
Attend Pride North Wales, Caernarfon	24/06/23	Distribute QR codes, ask people to fill out a short form of the questionnaire
Visit to the Boccia event in Porthmadog	04/09/23	Give attendees with various impairments, and their carers, an opportunity to fill out a short questionnaire and discuss the objectives
Gwynedd Council Core Equality Group	18/04/23 &	Two meeting to discuss the present

	05/07/23	objectives and what else should be included
Questionnaire in electronic and paper form	April - August 2023	Available in easy read versions, in Ukrainian and Dari. Promoted on social media platforms, papers, Newyddion Gwynedd, cards with QR codes, on the website and through various organisations including the Equality Core Group

5. Data, Engagement and Assessing the Impact - What information do you have regarding the impact on all of the characteristics, the Welsh language, socio-economic disadvantage and other matters

Equality characteristic	Evidence	Impact
General	<p>ENGAGEMENT:</p> <p>The full report on the consultation can be seen here. There were more people in favour than against each of the objectives and a number were not sure. There was some variation by characteristic, which is noted below. A variety of ideas for additional matters to include were also received.</p> <p>Every one of the organisations that represent people with equality characteristics on our data base were e-mailed to advertise and promote the questionnaire and to offer a visit.</p> <p>DATA:</p>	<p>Our intention is to adapt this assessment continuously over the next few months and any information we get from the consultation will be helpful in doing so.</p>

	<p>The North Wales Public Sector Service Boards have funded the data document, commissioned by North Wales Public Sector Equality Network. <u>Equality in North Wales 2023: Data and Evidence Report</u> follows a document commissioned in 2020 that was based on the <i>Is Wales Fairer?</i> 2017 by the Equality and Human Rights Commission. We expect that the Commission will publish the next version of this document by the end of the year. The north Wales document collects the latest information from various sources and is therefore very useful for creating the Amended objectives.</p>	
<p>Race</p>	<p>ENGAGEMENT:</p> <p>Method:</p> <p>Some ethnic minority groups are represented on the Equality Core Group: Indians and Friends Organisation, Africa North Wales Organisation. Refugee groups. Others had been invited but hadn't accepted.</p> <p>An easy read questionnaire was created (useful for people that don't speak Welsh or English as a first language), as well as Dari and Ukrainian copies for the refugee groups. A message on providing for a different language or different format as needed was placed on the questionnaires and the advertisement messages.</p> <p>The representative from Africa North Wales Organisation promised to put information on their Facebook page.</p> <p>Outcome:</p> <p>43.2% of the responders noted they were Welsh, 23.5% were British and 15.6% were English. 82.6% of those that completed the questionnaire were White, a little below the county percentage (see below). Fewer people from</p>	<p>The consultation work has had a positive effect as we have facilitated people from ethnic minority backgrounds to participate in decisions.</p> <p>The data clearly shows that there are obstacles facing people from ethnic minority groups, and that varies according to the group in question.</p> <p>The aim of the Objectives is to improve the way we work in order to reduce any barriers that people with various protected characteristics face.</p> <p>With regards to the new Objectives, Objective 1 will be positive for people from different ethnic backgrounds as it will include ways of improving the</p>

	<p>an Asian Ethnicity completed it also, with more people from Black backgrounds and any other ethnicities than the percentages in Gwynedd. Caution had to be taken of course as the numbers were quite low.</p> <p>There are no statistical differences identified in terms of race when filling out the questionnaire, but some observations have been made regarding race. Some of those were regarding the need to consider the Anti-Racist Wales Equality Scheme. But a number of them were regarding the feeling that the Council discriminates against non-Welsh speaking people, regardless of their ethnic origin.</p> <p>DATA:</p> <p>Equality in North Wales 2023: Data and Evidence Document</p> <p>The 2021 Census shows that fewer people in Gwynedd identify as White (96.2%) than the rest of the counties in the north, except for Wrexham (96%). 66.6% noted that they were born in Wales, fewer than Wrexham and similar to Anglesey. 59% noted that they were Welsh, higher than the rest of the counties.</p> <p>The data shows that ethnic background has an impact on people's lives statistically from the beginning - e.g. children from Chinese backgrounds are more likely to meet the expected outcome in the foundation phase than their peers, whilst children from "any other ethnic background" (i.e. not identified as from a White, Black, Chinese, Asian or Mixed background) were less likely to do so (statistics on Wales). In Gwynedd the employment rate of White people was 74% (an average statistic for North Wales) whilst the employment of people from an ethnic minority was 53% (which is the lowest county but one). However, the number of White people who have a degree</p>	<p>diversity of our workplace and attract more people from ethnic minorities to apply for posts. It is also proposed to look at, and explain, the expected skills when applying for posts, including the language expectations. As a number of people have said that they feel that the use of Welsh is discriminative, see also the part on the Welsh Language (below).</p> <p>Objective 2 will be positive as there clearly was a lack of data on race locally.</p> <p>It is expected for Objective 3 to be positive as it would ensure anti-racism training, which would ensure that the needs of people from different ethnic backgrounds are considered, and we will look at the narrative of our museums.</p> <p>Objective 4 will be positive as some groups, especially Black male learners and children from traveller and gypsy backgrounds, have a lower attainment level in the classroom compared to other groups. It will also get to grips with matters such as</p>
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or higher qualification was lower.

The cohort of Black people in Gwynedd from a home without a car or van was much higher than any other ethnic group, and much higher than any other county in North Wales. The White ethnic group is the least likely to be living in this sort of household. Not having a car or van can be a sign of a socio-economic disadvantage.

In Gwynedd the people from a Black background are least likely to live in over-crowded houses (1%) whilst people from other minority groups (i.e. that don't identify as Black, White, Asian or Mixed) are most likely to live in over-crowded houses (12%).

Well over half the hate crimes recorded by North Wales Police are related to Race (including nationality) - which was 58% in 2021/22.

The number of Gypsies and Irish Travellers was a little higher in Gwynedd (0.095% of the population) than North Wales (0.083%). The number of Roma people was a little lower (0.038% compared to 0.039%). 14 caravans were on an official site and 8 on an unofficial site on 21 July 2022 (out of 271 in the whole of North Wales)

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has said that it is probable that Covid-19 has had an impact on children who weren't performing as well before the pandemic e.g. Black learners, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners. This also had a greater impact in terms of illness and death amongst people from ethnic minorities.

Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan:

This plan provides guidance on the matters that need addressing in this field.

bullying.

	<p>When considering local factors, we identify these specific fields: education, work, data collection, and ensuring that we act in an anti-racist way.</p>	
<p>Disability</p>	<p>ENGAGEMENT:</p> <p>Method: Disability groups are represented on the Equality Core Group: Self-advocacy Group NWAAA (people with learning disabilities), Access Groups (people with a physical impairment), CoS Group (Deaf people). Others have been invited but did not join.</p> <p>CoS promised to help by offering support to the members they meet as part of their everyday work to understand and fill out the questionnaire. The equality officers visited: Arfon Access Group (on-line) to discuss the questionnaire and encourage members to fill it out; Te am Tri Group (on-line) which is a self-advocacy group for people with learning disabilities, by using slides to explain the situation and gather opinions; a Boccia event where different groups with different impairments were meeting by using a short version of the questionnaire; two Young Carers Groups (7-11 years old and 11-18 years old) where slides and a chat were used.</p> <p>Outcome: The percentage of people who identify as a disabled person and have answered the questionnaire (19.6%) was very similar to the percentage in Gwynedd (19.2%). We also consulted with specific groups, see above.</p> <p>There was a higher percentage of disabled people, compared to people who had noted that they were not disabled, who felt that engagement (Objective</p>	<p>The engagement has had a positive effect as we have facilitated people with different impairments to take part in a consultation on the Council's equality objectives.</p> <p>The data clearly shows that there are obstacles facing a disabled person in a number of areas, including access to services, buildings, jobs and information.</p> <p>The data clearly shows that there are barriers that a disabled person faces in several fields, including access to services, buildings, jobs and information.</p> <p>With regards to the new Objectives, it is expected for Objective 1 to be positive for disabled people as it aims to work towards a level 3 'Disability Confident'. It is anticipated that the other work to promote the diversity of our workforce will also be positive for disabled people.</p>

	<p>2) was important to be included this time. The percentage of disabled people who had said that they supported diversity in the workforce (Objective 5) was also higher.</p> <p>When responding to the questionnaire, and when engaging with groups, a number of people said that training is particularly important in the field of disability. A number of topics were identified e.g. awareness of autism, Braille, BSL and mental health (talk about collaborating with ICAN). Adjustments within employment were also a priority with some mentioning Stage 3 Disability Confident, support around interviews and mentoring. There was also special mention of understanding, access needs (to services, information, buildings and public spaces including suitable parking), terminology, transport and suitable toilets. See also the comments in Age.</p> <p>DATA:</p> <p>Equality in North Wales 2023: Data and Evidence Document</p> <p>Data shows that fewer people in Gwynedd noted that they were disabled in the 2021 Census than any other county in North Wales expect for one. Having said that, the percentage was 19%, nearly 1 in every 5 people. Nearly 10% more women were disabled than men. The highest percentage of disabled people were aged 45-69 in Gwynedd, with a slightly fewer in the 70+ age group.</p> <p>The data shows that this characteristic affects many parts of life. In 2021-22, 74% of people who weren't disabled in Gwynedd were employed (which is exactly the same as the average in North Wales) but that only 43% of disabled people were working (5% less than the cohort in North Wales). In</p>	<p>Objective 2 on data will also be positive as we will be collecting more data on every field and cross-sectioning will be important. It will also address the need to engage with disabled people and groups in suitable ways.</p> <p>Objective 3, on anti-discrimination will be positive as it will consider the provision of museums, accessibility of the website and consider the needs and rights of disabled people when changing policies and ways of working. We have started the work and a range of training on disability matters will be offered during the 4 years</p> <p>Learners at the schools will also see a positive effect due to Objective 4, which deals with bullying and attainment.</p> <p>The Objectives are also expected to be positive for carers for similar reasons.</p>
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Wales, the pay gap difference between disabled people and people that aren't disabled is 11.6% (more local data is not available). 3% of apprentices note a disability that affects their learning.

In Gwynedd, according to the census, over 23% of households with a head of the family with a disability do not have access to a car or van. This compares to 10% of families with a head of the family that wasn't disabled. The percentage living in homes without a car or van in North Wales according to health status was at its highest for those in bad health or in very bad health (29.8%), and lowest amongst those in very good or in good health (9.5%). This is consistent with the pattern in Gwynedd also. Although this compares favourably to the gap in North Wales, it is concerning in such a rural county.

During 2021/22 100% of the DFG approved in Gwynedd were completed, but the numbers were very low here.

The number of people that identify themselves as carers was lower in Gwynedd than other counties in the north. It is likely that the numbers are lower in general as every person that could identify as a carer does not do so. People between 50 and 64 years of age are more likely to be carers than any other age group and women more typically than men (13.1% compared with 10%). People who are carers are more likely to report that their health is fair or poor than they are to report it as being good. This is very different to most of the population, where most say that they're in very good or in good health.

Disabled people are one of the groups that are most likely to experience digital exclusion.

	<p>248 cases of hate crime based on disability were recorded in 2021/22, an increase of 359% since 2016/17.</p> <p>The Equality and Human Rights Commission notes that disabled people are more likely to die from Covid-19, and to experience financial difficulties. Also, the risk that remote learning has increased the inequality for pupils that didn't perform as well at school before Covid, including pupils who needed educational support.</p> <p>Locked Out: liberating disabled people's lives and rights in Wales beyond COVID-19:</p> <p>This report notes the data and life experiences of disabled people during the Covid-19 crisis. Most of what's included is aimed at Welsh Government, but the data is also useful for local authorities. The report notes that disabled people said that the social model of disability had lost ground and the medical model was being used more and more. More than half the people who died of Covid-19 during the period in question were disabled and it is said that social factors were a major reason for this, e.g. substandard health care for disabled people (especially people with learning disabilities), lack of PPE and unsuitable housing. It also notes that disabled people had found it difficult to get suitable services during the crisis and transport was also problematic.</p>	
Sex	<p>ENGAGEMENT:</p> <p>Method:</p> <p>Although we have invited groups, and some have attended in the past, no</p>	<p>There is no impact from the engagement as we have not done anything extra to engage with people with this characteristic.</p>

	<p>organisations currently represent men or women on the Equality Core Group. No specific contact had been made with organisations representing this characteristic during the consultation.</p> <p>Outcome: The number of males and females that completed the questionnaire was fairly equal. A high percentage of women, more than any other gender category (men, prefer not to say and no answer), had said that Engagement (Objective 2), Impact assessment (Objective 3), and Workforce Diversity (Objective 5) was important to be included this time.</p> <p>DATA:</p> <p>Equality in North Wales 2023: Data and Evidence Document 51.09% of Gwynedd's population are female.</p> <p>In Wales, the percentage of girls that reach the expected outcome in the foundation phase was higher than boys in every year between 2017 and 2019. The number that reached Level 2 in Year 11 in 2018/19 in Gwynedd was higher amongst girls than boys, although the difference was low compared to North Wales on a whole. More girls report being bullied (37% to 33%).</p> <p>More people in Gwynedd aged 25-65 have a degree compared to other counties in the North, which is 45.8% of women and 36.2% of men. More women received job-related training in Gwynedd in 2021-22 (23.1% to 15.4% - the county's figures not the Local Authority's figures). 72% of the male population (aged 16-64) in Gwynedd are employed, and 75% of females</p>	<p>The data clearly shows that barriers exist relating to gender.</p> <p>It is anticipated that Objective 1 will have a positive effect especially on women because of the action points on the pay gap.</p> <p>Objective 2 should also be positive for men and women as it is always good to have full data. It will also be positive for those who identify themselves differently to men and women as data is very difficult to obtain currently.</p> <p>It is also positive that Objective 3 on anti-discrimination considers everyone.</p> <p>The action points on Education in Objective 4 will be especially positive for cohorts of boys, who have a lower attainment level than girls generally, and the cohorts that are affected by cross-sectioning (e.g. young black men).</p>
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(smaller difference than the north as a whole). More females than males work as apprentices also. The gender pay gap in 2022, namely 8.6%, was lower than any other county in the north except for Anglesey (figures for the county not for the Local Authority workforce, and based on home location, not work location). A higher percentage of women (28.2% to 25.9% of men) in Gwynedd are in high paying jobs. But on the other hand, 44.8% of women are in low paying jobs compared to 21.9% of men.

In Gwynedd, nearly 70% of families at threat of becoming homeless were being led by a woman - much higher than any other county in the north. Having said this, 70% of families that were homeless and needed support were being led by males (including single males) - again the biggest gap in the north.

Statistics show that women are more likely to be carers than men. Also more women than men note that they are disabled. (See Disability above). Women on average live for about 3 years more years than men in Gwynedd.

In the year that ended in March 2020, crime data recorded by the Police showed that 84.5% of sexual offence victims were females, with 90% of sexual violence victims recorded as females and 81.2% of other sexual violence victims also females. There was no analysis of domestic abuse offences based on characteristics on a local level, but in Wales and England, 74.1% of victims recorded were females and 25.9% of victims recorded were males in the year up to March 2022. Women were one of the groups that felt less safe in their community (especially after dark).

The Equality and Human Rights Commission notes that there is more pressure and reliance on unpaid carers, during the Covid-19 crisis, with women more likely to be unpaid carers, due to social care pressures. Also

	that the crisis has caused more domestic violence (which affected women more). In addition, the risk that remote learning can increase inequality for pupils that didn't perform well at school before Covid, including boys.	
Age	<p>ENGAGEMENT:</p> <p>Method: Some age groups are represented on the Equality Core Group: Older People's Council, Age Cymru Gwynedd and Anglesey, LGBTQ+ GISDA Group, Yr Urdd.</p> <p>The equality officers visited two groups of young carers, 1 group were aged 7-11 and the others were 7-18 years old. Slides and alternative methods were used to promote a discussion. There was also a meeting with GISDA's LGBTQ+ Group where alternative methods were used to engage. They also visited a Boccia event where groups with different impairments, including Dementia, met. A short version of the questionnaire was used.</p> <p>Outcome: A small number of young children under 25 completed the questionnaire but as we had visited the organisations above, an opportunity was provided for more young people to share their opinion.</p> <p>A higher percentage of respondents aged between 25 - 34 have noted 'unsure' and a smaller percentage of them have noted 'yes' compared to other age groups regarding continuing with the objectives on training (Objective 1).</p> <p>A higher percentage of the respondents in the 25-34 and 35-44 age groups</p>	<p>The engagement work has had a positive effect as we have facilitated older people and young people to take part in a consultation on the Council's equality objectives.</p> <p>The data clearly shows that age-related barriers exist.</p> <p>Objective 1 (diversity in our workforce and pay gap) is expected to be positive for different age groups. It is obviously going to help working age people, especially those with other specific characteristics (intersectionality). It will also be helpful for older people and younger people seeking work.</p> <p>It is anticipated that Objective 2 (data) and Objective 3 (anti-discrimination) are positive for every age. It is always useful to have full data and to have anti-discriminative methods. This is especially true for people with other specific equality</p>

	<p>noted that we need to continue to include impact assessments (Objective 3).</p> <p>A higher percentage of respondents in the 35-44 and 55-64 age groups notes 'yes', while a higher percentage of respondents in the 25-34 age group notes 'no'.</p> <p>Some of the issues raised regarding children and young people were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to keep local young people in their area, by offering support and securing jobs • Learners need more one to one support and early intervention • The mental health of LGBTQ+ young people • More attention to the needs of young carers at school, especially being able to keep in touch with school. • Better accessibility for learners with physical impairments in school • Safe places for children with learning difficulties and neurodiversity outside the school <p>Some of the issues raised regarding children and young people were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The needs of older LGBTQ+ people who are likely to have historically hidden their identity • The need to hear the voice of older people • The need to support older people by supporting carers in the workplace <p>DATA:</p> <p>Equality in North Wales 2023: Data and Evidence Document</p>	<p>characteristics (intersectionality).</p> <p>Objective 4, on Education, will obviously be positive for children and young people, once again due to the cross sectioning. It deals with well-being which will include young carers, learners with neurodiversity etc</p>
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There are more individuals under 25 in Gwynedd than any other county in the north (28.7%). The number of people over 65 was a little lower than the average for North Wales.

The attainment level of year 11 children in Gwynedd in 2018/19 was at its highest in north Wales. During the 2019-20 period, 19% of boys and 12% of girls said they had bullied someone at school (north Wales). 35% of secondary age children (years 7 to 11) in North Wales said that they had been bullied, which was less than the average in 2017/18 but higher than Wales as a whole. The number of young children not in education, work or training in north Wales reduced significantly for the 2020-22 period to 12.8% which was very similar to the numbers for Wales on a whole. This compares to 14% in 2018-20 (when the average for Wales was around 13.1%).

During April 21 - March 22, 51% of people aged 16-24 were employed, a little less than the average for the north. 89% of people aged 25-49 were employed (higher than the average regionally) and 66% of people aged 50-64 (lower than the average).

In Gwynedd, the highest proportion of people who provide un-paid care were those between 50 and 64 years old (15.4%) and the lowest was 15 years of age and under age group (1.1%). This was similar to the rest of the counties in the north. In Gwynedd, as in every other county, those in poor or very poor health increases with age, with 11.5% of people over 65 in those categories.

The highest percentage of people living in a home without a car or van in north Wales based on age were in the 65 and over age group (17.8%), and the lowest was the 50 to 64 age group (9.1%). This pattern is very similar to

	<p>the rest of the north. But in Gwynedd, the number of people aged 15-24 were in the same situation (15.9%) which is significantly higher than the other counties.</p> <p>Welsh Government noted that older people were amongst the groups that were likely to experience digital exclusion (although older people's use of the internet is increasing). They are also one of the groups that feel unsafe in their communities. The number of people that attend heritage and artistic events in Gwynedd falls with age - with just over half of the people ages 75+ not attending three events a year.</p> <p>The Equality and Human Rights Commission notes that older people are more likely to die from Covid-19, and that, and the isolation experienced during the crisis, was likely to have a long-term effect on mental and physical health. Also that education, achievement levels and future jobs for young people had been affected. In addition, there's the risk that remote learning had increased inequality for children and young people that weren't performing as well in school before Covid-19.</p>	
<p>Religion and Belief</p>	<p>ENGAGEMENT:</p> <p>Method: Some religious groups are represented on the Equality Core Group: Bangor Islamic Centre, Cytûn (Christianity). We have asked other belief groups to join but haven't succeeded yet.</p> <p>Outcome: The percentages in terms of completing the questionnaire were comparative with the percentages in Gwynedd. Having said this, fewer people identified as Christians, without a religion or from another religion, and the number</p>	<p>Regarding the engagement, apart from the above arrangements, no additional work was undertaken to connect with people of religions and beliefs. But there was a chance for everyone to contribute so the effect is positive.</p> <p>The data clearly shows that there are issues to be addressed regarding religion and belief.</p>

noting Other was higher.

Observations have been made regarding religion in the questionnaire, namely that the Council was anti-Christian and that reasonable adjustments needed to be made regarding religious observance.

During the consultation the main theme mentioned about this characteristic was mental health especially among young LGBTQ+ people. The importance of training was also emphasized. Other issues raised were respect, support within the Council, data and terminology. One group said that engagement work is highly valued by LGBTQ+ communities as it shows that the Council is ready to learn and improve. It is also necessary to remember the needs of older LGBTQ+ people, many of whom are used to hiding their identity.

DATA:

Equality in North Wales 2023: Data and Evidence Document

46.2% of the people of Gwynedd identify as Christians, and this is the lowest percentage in North Wales. 44.2% noted that they did not have a religion, which is the highest percentage in the north. The percentage that didn't answer was also the highest in the region, at 7.5%. 1% of the population are Muslim.

The people that didn't answer the question on religion are the ones least likely to have a degree (38%), and then the ones without a religion (39%) and Christians (42%). The other religions were quite equal between 55-60%. This pattern was similar to the one in North Wales except that the religions in the middle were equal at about 45-48%.

It is anticipated that Objective 1 (employment) is positive as it will consider the needs of different beliefs. Collecting data in Objective 2 is also beneficial.

Objective 3 (anti-discrimination) is positive as we will consider beliefs as part of the impact assessments, and it will be a part of the re-consideration on the narrative of our museums.

Children from some religions perform less well than others in terms of attainment so Objective 4 (Education) is positive. The action point on bullying is also positive.

	<p>Jewish people in Gwynedd were much more likely to identify themselves as carers (around 17%), people from "other" religions were second (16%). People who didn't answer the religion and belief question (just under 5%) was the lowest, and Muslims (just over 5%). It is obvious from looking at the results of the different counties that there is no obvious pattern here, this is likely due to the low numbers in some religions. Figures show that people of the Muslim religion were less likely to report that they had bad or very bad health in Gwynedd (1%), followed by Hindu people (2%). People from other religions were most likely (11%). Again, caution is needed as the figures are low.</p> <p>There were 40 incidents of hate crime based on religion noted in North Wales during 2021/22, an increase of 150% since 2016/17</p>	
<p>Sexual Orientation</p>	<p>ENGAGEMENT</p> <p>Method: LGBTQ+ groups are represented on the Equality Core Group: GISDA's LGBTQ+ Group, Unique Transgender Network and an individual member.</p> <p>The equality officers visited North Wales Pride in Caernarfon, distributing cards with QR codes on them to those who were participating and to the public in general. Some individuals were also asked to complete a short version of the questionnaire. In addition, they visited the LGBTQ+ GISDA Group where alternative methods were used to engage and the Unique Transgender Network where there was a general discussion to promote the questionnaire.</p> <p>Outcome: A lower percentage of heterosexual or straight people had filled out the questionnaire (76.5%), compared with the population of Gwynedd (87.3%)</p>	<p>The engagement has had a positive effect as we have facilitated LGBTQ+ to participate in a consultation on the Council's equality objectives.</p> <p>The data clearly shows that there are issues to be addressed regarding the field.</p> <p>It is anticipated that Objective 1 will be positive as it is related to diversity in the workforce. Young LGBTQ+ people especially have told us about the challenges they face due to mental health conditions and making the workplace a welcoming place as possible would be a step forward.</p>

	<p>and the number of gay males, gay or lesbian females, bisexual people and people of another sexuality had completed it is higher.</p> <p>A higher percentage of respondents who note that they are a gay man / gay woman / lesbian supported continuing with consultation (Objective 2). Regarding Objective 3 (Impact assessment) a higher percentage of the bisexual, gay or lesbian respondents noted 'yes', with a higher percentage of the heterosexual / straight respondents noting 'unsure'. A higher percentage of respondents who note that they are bisexual, gay or lesbian noted that diversity in the workforce is important.</p> <p>During the consultation the main themes that arose about this characteristic was mental health especially among young LGBTQ+ people. The importance of training was also emphasised. Other issues raised were respect, support within the Council, data and terminology. One group said that engagement work is highly valued by LGBTQ+ communities as it shows that the Council is ready to learn and improve.</p> <p>DATA:</p> <p>Equality in North Wales: Data and Evidence Document</p> <p>Fewer people in Gwynedd identify as heterosexual or straight than any other counties in the North (87.3% - the average for the north was 89.4%). There are more people with a Bisexual identity (1.6% - the percentage for the north was 1%) and more who chose not to answer the question (9.4%) than any other county in the region. The number identifying as Gay or Lesbian was equal with the percentage of the north (1.3%).</p> <p>There were over 334 incidents of hate crime recorded in North Wales based on sexual orientation in 2021/22, an increase of 430% since 2016/17. People</p>	<p>Data is in short supply, especially locally, for LGBTQ+ people therefore Objective 2 will be beneficial. The work of re-interpreting, assessing impact and training in Objective 3 will also be positive steps.</p> <p>As young LGBTQ+ people had told us about the challenges they face due to mental health conditions, as we have mentioned previously, the action points on bullying and well-being will be especially important.</p>
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	<p>who do not identify as heterosexual felt less safe in their communities.</p> <p>LGBTQ+ Action Plan, Welsh Government: Not much work had been noted for Local Authorities in the first place in this Plan. The Housing field was the only one where a specific reference was made but that was long-term work. It is, therefore, necessary to wait for further guidance from Welsh Government following the work they need to do, in order to identify our duties properly. In the meantime, of course, it is necessary to respond to local factors.</p>	
<p>Gender reassignment</p>	<p>ENGAGEMENT:</p> <p>Method: Some organisations are represented on the Equality Core Group, namely LHDTG+ GISDA Group, Unique Transgender Network.</p> <p>The equality officers visited North Wales Pride in Caernarfon, distributing cards with QR codes on them to those who were participating and to the public in general. Some individuals were also asked to complete a short version of the questionnaire. They also visited the LGBTQ+ GISDA Group where alternative methods were used to engage, and the Unique Transgender Network where a general discussion was had to promote the questionnaire.</p> <p>Outcome: The percentage of people who had answered yes to the question "Has your sexual identity changed from when you were born? (for example you are transsexual or trans etc)" was 1.3%, which is higher than the number of people who said they were a trans man, trans woman or any other gender (0.3% in all, see below) in the census.</p>	<p>The engagement has had a positive effect as we have facilitated trans people to take part in a consultation on the Council's equality objectives.</p> <p>The data clearly shows that there are issues to be addressed regarding gender reassignment.</p> <p>It is anticipated that Objective 1 will be positive as relates to diversity in the workforce. Young LGBTQ+ people especially have told us about the challenges they face due to mental health conditions and making the workplace a welcoming place as possible would be a step forward.</p> <p>Data is in short supply, especially locally, for LGBTQ+ people therefore</p>

	<p>During the consultation the main theme that arose about the feature was mental health especially among young LGBTQ+ people. The importance of training was also emphasised. Other issues raised were respect, support within the Council, public toilets, data and terminology. One group said that engagement work is highly valued by LGBTQ+ communities as it shows that the Council is ready to learn and improve. It is also necessary to remember the needs of LGBTQ+ people, many are used to hiding their identity and are nervous about letting people know.</p> <p>DATA:</p> <p>Equality in North Wales 2023: Data and Evidence Document</p> <p>Fewer people in Gwynedd (91.7%) note that their sexual identity was the same gender as registered at birth than any other county in North Wales (92.8% was the percentage for the North) but there were more who hadn't answered the question (8% - the percentage for the North was 6.9%). The percentage that identifies as a trans male, trans female and every other gender was the same as the North (0.1% each).</p> <p>There were 50 incidents of transgender hate crime recorded in north Wales in 2021/22. This is an increase of 525% since 2016/17. Stonewall undertook research in 2017 and noted in their report "LGBT in Britain: Trans Report", that most trans people don't report incidents to the police, and therefore it is under-reported. Therefore, the hate crime figures above are unlikely to show the full extent of the hate crime incidents in North Wales.</p> <p>LGBTQ+ Action Plan:</p> <p>Not much work had been noted for Local Authorities in the first place in this</p>	<p>Objective 2 will be beneficial. The work of re-interpreting, assessing the impact and training in Objective 3 will also be positive steps.</p> <p>As young LGBTQ+ people had told us about the challenges they face due to mental health conditions, as we have mentioned previously, the action points on bullying and well-being will be especially important.</p>
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	<p>Plan. The Housing field was the only one where there a specific reference was made but that was long-term work. Therefore there was a need to wait for further guidance from Welsh Government following the work they need to do, in order to identify our duties properly. In the meantime of course it is necessary to respond to local factors.</p>	
<p>Marriage and Civil Partnership</p>	<p>CONSULTATION: No additional work was undertaken to approach this group as nothing had been identified that would prevent them from participating.</p> <p>A higher percentage of people in Gwynedd have never married or been in a civil partnership (40%) than in the rest of the counties in the north. Therefore there was fewer married people (41.5%), separated (1.7%) or divorced or in a civil partnership that had broken down (9.2%). The number of widowed people or a partner who had survived a civil partnership was fairly average in the region (7.5%).</p>	
<p>Pregnancy and Maternity</p>	<p>No needs had been identified regarding engagement, as there were no barriers to prevent people with this characteristic from taking part. We haven't identified that the work we do has a negative impact on any cohort but we will monitor this when moving forward.</p> <p>There were 977 births in Gwynedd in 2022, down from 1039 in 2021.</p>	
<p>The Welsh Language</p>	<p>ENGAGEMENT: Every resource was bilingual. The officers spoke in the language choice of those taking part, holding some discussions bilingually. More specifically, there was a standard question regarding the Welsh Language in the questionnaire.</p>	<p>We welcome the commitment to the Welsh Language in the first observations and believe that the Council acts on the positive factors that have been named already.</p> <p>We do not accept a number of the</p>

	<p>33.8% of those that responded noted they were fluent in Welsh, 11.6% had the ability but weren't confident and 13.9% were learners. 25% noted that they speak the language only, with 15.2% noting that they couldn't speak or understand the language. Nearly 10% did not wish to answer the question.</p> <p>A specific question on the Welsh Language was asked in the questionnaire, namely:</p> <p>Are there any matters we should consider in terms of the Welsh Language?</p> <p>The main observations in response to the question were:</p> <p>Positive factors regarding the language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to protect the Welsh Language was emphasised • That support for the language within the economy keeps young people in the area • The importance of Welsh education • The need to protect Welsh signs and names • The need to use the language first • The need for a Welsh workforce and the rights of people to receive services in the Welsh language <p>Negative factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allegations that requiring Welsh language skills within employment 	<p>statements made in the negative factors. The Welsh Language is a skill, like any other skill within a job description and it is a skill that nearly every person can learn. It is entirely wrong, for example, to say that people from an ethnic minority background cannot speak the language. Having said this, we do acknowledge that we have further work to do to ensure that people are aware of the fact that different posts ask for different levels of ability in Welsh. The work noted to look at the job requirements in Objective 1 will address this.</p> <p>We do not accept that our use of the Welsh language affects the effectiveness of our work. To the contrary, it ensures that the people of Gwynedd receive services in the language they need.</p> <p>Regarding the recommendations, we already provide a range of Welsh lessons for staff. We also work with organisations such as Menter Iaith Gwynedd to ensure that lessons are available in the communities.</p>
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	<p>was racist, and that it causes a disadvantage for non-Welsh speaking people and ethnic minorities. One person said that nobody from an ethnic minority can speak Welsh.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to appoint the best person to the post, regardless of their linguistic ability • Claims that the use of the Welsh language also discriminates and alienates more generally, within the community and tourism. • Some disabled people, especially those with learning disabilities, find it harder to learn the language • That the Welsh language is bad for the economy as professional people who might come to the area to work aren't keen for their children to receive a Welsh education • The use of the Welsh language shouldn't be at the expense of services and efficiency, due to the cost of using two languages. <p>Suggestions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide learning opportunities and the support for non-Welsh people to learn the language, with a request for free lessons within the Council and the community • Explain the importance of the language and culture to those who are unaware. • Use easy to understand language, when communicating and within lessons, and use methods such as a video for those who can't read the language easily. • Respect other languages and cultures. <p>DATA:</p>	<p>Explaining the importance of the language and culture is part of the work in Objective 1 which has already been addressed.</p> <p>Simplifying the language is something that has been mentioned previously and is part of the work on our website in Objective 3</p> <p>The Council respects other languages and cultures and we hope that more ideas on this will come from the work on workforce diversity, especially the staff forum.</p> <p>Therefore, the largest effect we foresee the objectives having on the Welsh Language will be in the fields above. The work of spreading the message about the reason for employing people with Welsh language skills will be positive, within the Council and in the community in Gwynedd, by ensuring a better understanding of what is happening. Using language that is easy to understand will promote the use of the Welsh language.</p>
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	<p>64.5% of the people of Gwynedd (three years of age or older) noted that they spoke Welsh, which was 73,600. This was the highest in Wales in terms of numbers and percentage.</p> <p>The Council has a statutory responsibility, under the Welsh Language Standards, to set linguistic requirements for every job advertised. This means that language skills are identified as an essential skill for each job, and the exact level of skills required is determined by the nature of the job. It seems that a misunderstanding about these requirements, and a tendency to think that essential means a need to be able to speak fluently, leads to the opinion that the Council discriminates.</p>	
<p>Socio-Economic Considerations</p>	<p>CONSULTATION:</p> <p>We believe that people living in a situation of socio-economic disadvantage are addressed in the equality characteristics. This is because the statistics show that people with specific characteristics are more likely to experience such disadvantage (see above). As we are trying to meet a range of people in meetings they would normally attend, we hoped to reach the ones who wouldn't normally fill out questionnaires. This will help us to reach people who don't use computers or have transport problems.</p> <p>DATA:</p> <p>Equality in North Wales 2023: Data and Evidence Document</p> <p>Much of the data is shown under the specific characteristics. Some examples are that disabled people have less access to a car or van, the gender pay gap, the fact that some cohorts were more likely to be afraid in their community etc.</p>	<p>The impact of the engagement was positive, as we tried to reach people who would not otherwise take part in consultations and target groups experiencing disadvantage.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the impact of the objectives will be positive because their intention is to ensure equality, and data shows that people with different protected characteristics experience a socio-economic disadvantage.</p> <p>Objective 1 relates to improving pay inequalities. It also relates to encouraging people from various backgrounds to apply for work within</p>

	<p>54% of learners in Gwynedd who weren't eligible for free school meals did not reach Level 2 in Year 11 (2018/19 data), and 30% of learners that were eligible for free school meals. 1.9% of households in North Wales are overcrowded (not enough bedrooms), nearly the same percentage as North Wales (2%).</p> <p>The number of households which receive Universal Credit had increased from 8.4% in November 2021 to 9% in November 2022, but Gwynedd had the lowest number in north Wales. The number of people in Gwynedd living in a home that experience material deprivation was 13%, more than any other county except for Wrexham which was equal. The number of women in this situation was 14%, once again the highest of every county and equal to Wrexham. In 2018, 23% of Gwynedd homes were experiencing fuel poverty, much higher than other counties (closest was Anglesey at 17% and the lowest was Flint with only 9%). This was the most recent local data and of course does not consider the inflation seen over the past few years.</p> <p>People in Gwynedd are more likely to say that their health is very good than other counties in the north and are less likely to say that they are in poor health.</p> <p>The Wales National Survey asked for a sample of people in every county and found that the people of Gwynedd were very satisfied or quite satisfied with their ability to reach local services. Most were also very satisfied or quite satisfied with the availability of services at hand.</p> <p>The number of people living in a household without access to a car or van was 12.4%, which is 0.1% less than the average for North Wales. The percentage of households with access to the internet has increased slowly</p>	<p>the Council. This should contribute to removing socio-economic disadvantage.</p> <p>Collecting data is always beneficial in order to identify where action is needed. This is particularly the case when asking for the opinions of various groups.</p> <p>Objective 3 will contribute to reducing socio-economic disadvantage by removing barriers that people face when trying to find information on the Council's website and when trying to access the arts. It will also be helpful for people who experience this type of disadvantage due to a protected characteristic, as the training will improve staff understanding. Additionally, every impact assessment includes questions on socio-economic matters.</p> <p>Objective 4 helps rectify any differences within Education and is therefore also important in this field.</p>
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	<p>from 85% in 2018/19 to 87% in 2021/22, and Gwynedd had the lowest number in the North. The number of people that use the internet has also increased from 87% to 91%, which is joint lowest with Anglesey. Welsh Government note that the people at the highest risk of being digitally excluded in Wales are: older adults (although older adults' use of the internet is increasing), disabled people or people with long-term health conditions, people with a lower educational attainment, people or families on lower income, rural population, Welsh speakers, people who do not speak English as a first language, people who are isolated socially or lonely and homeless people.</p> <p>The number of people attending art, culture or heritage activities in Gwynedd has increased from 2017/18 to 2019/20, while every other county saw a reduction. This meant that all the counties were quite similar. The number of people that take part in sports or physical activity also increased from 53% in 2016/17 to 59% in 2021/22.</p> <p>The number of people over 16 years old that were satisfied with their local area as a place to live had increased in Gwynedd from 89% in 2018/19 to 92% in 2021/11. In the same period the people who felt that they belonged to the area, that people from different backgrounds got along well, and that people treated each other with respect had increased from 53% to 73%. In 2021/22, 11% of the people of Gwynedd said that they felt lonely.</p>	
Human Rights	<p>Article 14 Protection from discrimination was especially relevant but other articles were also relevant:</p> <p>Article 5 The right to freedom and safety</p> <p>Article 8 The right to respect towards life, home and private communication</p> <p>Article 9 The right to freedom of choice, belief and religion</p> <p>Article 12 The right to marry and establish a family</p>	<p>The engagement had a positive effect as people gave their opinion in order to influence our objectives. It is anticipated that the objectives will also be positive because they are in line with the articles.</p>

<p>Other</p>	<p>Two groups of young carers were questioned. Adult carers were questioned as part of the Boccia event</p> <p>We didn't targeted other people but the questionnaire was open to everyone</p>	<p>The engagement was positive for the carers and had no effect on the other groups.</p> <p>The objectives will be positive on groups such as carers (see Disability above).</p> <p>It is required, under the Armed Forces Act 2022, that we pay due attention to the impact on members and ex-members of the armed forces and their families, so that they are not treated less favorably than others. The plan should have a positive impact on some sections of this community because it takes into account the needs of children in schools and disabled people.</p>
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6. Are there any data or information gaps and if so, what are they and how do you intend to address them?

We succeeded to get nearly 600 people to fill out the questionnaire, which is very good for this type of questionnaire. This, as well as the further data we had collected when meeting individuals, means that we have a store of information to use. The Equality in North Wales 2023: Data and Evidence Document is a very useful document, which collects all the data together in one place, based on the Is Wales Fairer? 2017. We are waiting for Is Wales Fairer? 2023 to be published in the next few months and it will be possible to see if there is any information that isn't in the Data Document. But it is obvious from the information that we have that there are gaps in the data, especially on protected characteristics, except for gender and age. Welsh Government have promised to work on this, and we will give them as much support as possible and will look for alternative information sources.

7. What is the cumulative impact of this proposal on different protected groups when considering other key decisions?

Lots of engagement and consultation is currently taking place. It is important that we ensure that the information collected here is available for other officers in order to avoid duplication. The work we undertake on the objectives should go hand in hand with the rest of Cyngor Gwynedd's work in order to improve fairness. We are aware that this work may be affected by the budget available over the next 4 years and we will keep an eye on this.

8. What does your proposal include to demonstrate you have given due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (to advance equality of opportunity; help to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, or victimisation and foster good relations and wider community cohesion as covered by the 3 aims of the General Duty in the Equality Act 2010)?

The purpose of the plan is to ensure fairness therefore it touches on these three aims. We are helping to remove discrimination, harassment or victimisation by asking for the opinions of people, improving diversity in our workforce etc. One Objective promises to get to grips with anti-discrimination and is therefore integral to this. We have promoted equal opportunities by encouraging people to take part in the consultation in the best way for them. This means that we receive a range of opinions to form these objectives. Ensuring fairness through the objectives also promotes equal opportunities and ensures that we provide for people depending on their needs. The above means a better relationship between people with various characteristics and as we will treat them as needed, ensuring that their voices are heard.

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

As mentioned previously, we address this through the fact that we empower people with different characteristics to take part and influence our new objective. See the details about the Objectives in question 5.

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

Every resource was bilingual and discussions took place in the language choice of those taking part. This sometimes meant having bilingual discussions.

As shown above, we have acted on suggestions that have been received in the engagement to create action points that are beneficial to the language. We are looking at the ways we operate within employment, and this will include explaining why we need a workforce that can speak the language, but also showing that you don't have to be completely fluent to get a job within the Council. It is hoped that this will cause less ill-feeling in the future. Using language suitable for the audience on our website will also promote the language, ensuring that more people will be able to use it.

11. How does this proposal meet the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act by implementing the five ways of working, and responding to the 7 national well-being goals including creating a More Equal Wales?

The well-being aim in question here is "A More Equal Wales" as this was the purpose of this work. It will also contribute towards A Prosperous Wales, as it will improve people's situations and equality characteristics. Also, a Wales of Cohesive Communities, where people with different equality characteristics receive better fairness. The 5 ways of working are met like this: Long-term - the objectives that will be created are 4-year ones, but their impact should be greater than this; Prevent - by allowing people to give their opinion we will create characteristics which will work for us to remove barriers; Integrating - this plan will be a project with the Council's Plan and will affect the Council's work as a whole; Collaboration - we collaborate with the public by including them in the engagement and also with other public organisations in the region through the North Wales Public Sector Equality Network and this will feed in to meeting the objections for North Wales; Inclusion - the purpose of the consultation is to allow people to give their opinion and influence on these objectives before we make any decision.

STAGE 3

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

No, although we will be working in collaboration as mentioned above.

STAGE 4

13. When considering proportionality, does the policy or practice have a significantly positive or negative impact or create inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage? (please give brief details)

Significantly Positive Impact:

The purpose of the new Equality Objectives is to have a significantly positive impact on people with protected characteristics. We have ensured that there is strong reasoning for our choice, including a wide-ranging engagement.

Significantly negative impact:

No

14. What measures or changes you will introduce to the policy or practice in the final draft which could reduce or remove any unlawful or negative impact or disadvantage and/or improve equality of opportunity/introduce positive change; or reduce inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage?

The purpose of the Objectives is to improve equal opportunities and reduce or remove inequitable outcomes. The data noted in question 5 shows clearly that having some specific protected characteristics, such as being a disabled person, a female head of the family, or part of a specific ethnic group means that there is more chance for you to experience socio-economic disadvantage. The aim of the objectives is to deal with this inequality.

We have ensured that we held a wide consultation, before making any decision, in order to collect the opinions of people with a life experience of these characteristics, and therefore face a socio-economic disadvantage. The methods we used have varied in order to ensure that as many people as possible were able to participate.

Before we create a final draft we will be consulting with the public, especially people with protected characteristics, and will adapt or change the Objectives and Action Points in response to the information received.

15. Explain any intentional negative impact you have identified and explain why you believe you have justification for acting in this way (for example, on grounds of improving equal opportunities or developing good relationships with those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not due to objective justification or positive action

None have been identified

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

Not applicable

Note your reason for stating this and the justification for proceeding

Not applicable

17. What other measures or changes could you include to strengthen or change the policy/practice to demonstrate you have given due regard to equal opportunities; help to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, or victimisation; and foster good relations and wider community cohesion; as covered by the improvement aim of the General Duty in the Equality Act 2010?

Our first step was ensuring that we consulted with as much variety as possible. We have used this information, and other data, in order to form draft objectives. When moving forward now, we will consult on our draft characteristics in order to gain further opinions, and that will ensure that we have given due regard to the above.

18. What measures or other changes can you include to strengthen or change the policy / practice to demonstrate that you have given due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of outcome as a result of socio-economic disadvantage?

The consultation will be of assistance here also.

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

We will place a further question in the consultation document questionnaire to ask people about the Welsh language and we will adjust the objectives as a result of the responses

20. Do you have enough information to make a balanced judgement and to proceed?

Yes

If you answered Yes, please justify:

We believe that we have formed suitable draft objectives based on the information from the consultation and other data. We are therefore ready to move forward to the next step, with the expectation that changes will be made as a result of the consultation.

STAGE 5

21. Using the information you have gathered in Steps 1 – 4 above, please state below whether you are able to proceed with the policy or practice and if so, on what basis?

Yes – the policy or plan is suitable.

STAGE 6

22. Outline below any actions identified in Steps 1-5 or any additional data collection that will help you monitor your policy/practice when it is implemented:

Action	Timetable and Frequency	Lead Responsibility
Consult on the Objectives and Impact Assessment	November 2023 – January 2024	Equality Advisor

23. Outline below what arrangements you will make to monitor and review the ongoing impact of this policy or exercise including timetables for when it should be formally reviewed:

Monitoring and Reviewing Arrangements	Timetable and Frequency	Lead Responsibility
Analyse the responses and adjust the impact assessment based on the	February 2024	Equality Advisor

information gathered		
Write a Strategic Equality Plan, which will include the Objectives and submit it to the Cabinet for acceptance	March 2024	Equality Advisor
Adapt the Impact Assessment	As necessary	Equality Advisor
Report on the Plan	Annually	Equality Advisor

Committee	Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee
Title of Report	Education Annual Report 2022-23
Date of meeting	23 January 2024
Author	Gwern ap Rhisiart, Head of Education
Relevant Cabinet Member	Councillor Beca Brown

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 In accordance with the wishes of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee, the Education Department's Annual Report for 2022-23 is submitted before the committee.

1.2 The Education Department acknowledges that it is no easy task to ensure effective scrutiny of a document covering a years work by the Education Department at a committee meeting. As a result the report attempts to highlights the Department's main projects, the usual main day to day work of the Department, positive aspects, challenges, along with areas that need addressing over the next period. The Annual Report is to be found in Appendix 1.

1.3 In addition, GwE will detail what they have achieved in the field of school improvement to ensure a complete overview of the area for the committee for 2022-23.

2. THE CONTEXT FOR 2022-23

2.1 As a result of the pandemic period which started in March 2020, over the past year, we as a department, along with schools have continued to face the new 'normal'. This new 'normal' has meant continuing getting children and young people back to school, to support their physical and mental well-being, together with the well-being of staff, responding to behavioural challenges that are a side effect of the pandemic, with the aim of being able to provide quality education to all learners.

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

3 THE PRIORITIES FOR 2023-24

3.1 We are aware that 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.

3.2 Here is a taste of the departments' priorities over the next period:

- Education Strategy
- Education Language Policy
- Evaluate the provision of the Immersion Education System
- Well-being of staff and learners
- Education Transport
- Leadership in Schools

- Inclusion
- Attendance of learners
- Decentralize the Integration Budget

4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The members are asked to present any observations on what the Education Department has achieved during the year which is outlined in the Annual Report in Appendix 1, together with any observations on the Department's priorities for the next period.



Annual Report

Education Department

2022-23



EDUCATION ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23

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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 stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, sweeping 'G' followed by a few loops.

Gwern ap Rhisiart
Head of Education



A handwritten signature in black ink, featuring a large, stylized 'B' followed by a cursive 'eca' and a long horizontal flourish.

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:

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

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 -

- 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.

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 -

- 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.

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 -

- Receive education of the highest quality which will enable us to do what we want to do
- 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 Trefarthyr 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;

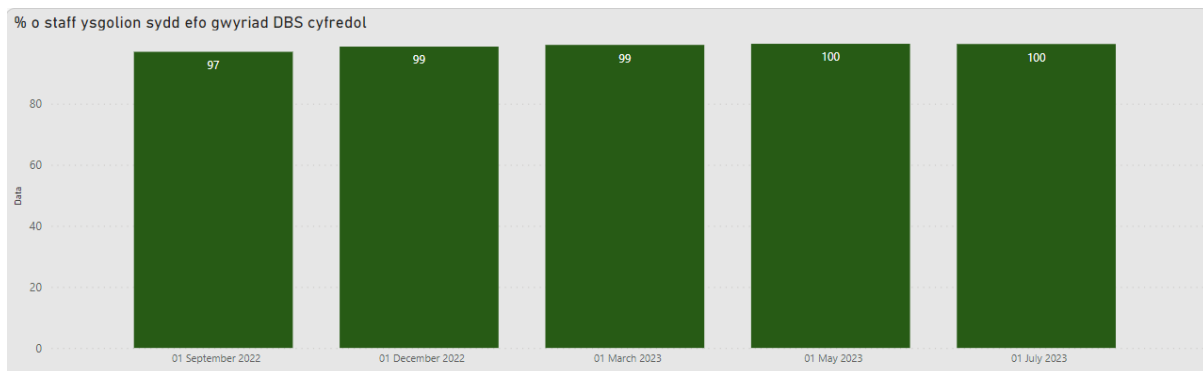
Safeguarding arrangements within the education service are generally sound. Officers understand their roles and responsibilities in this area and work effectively with children's services officers.

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

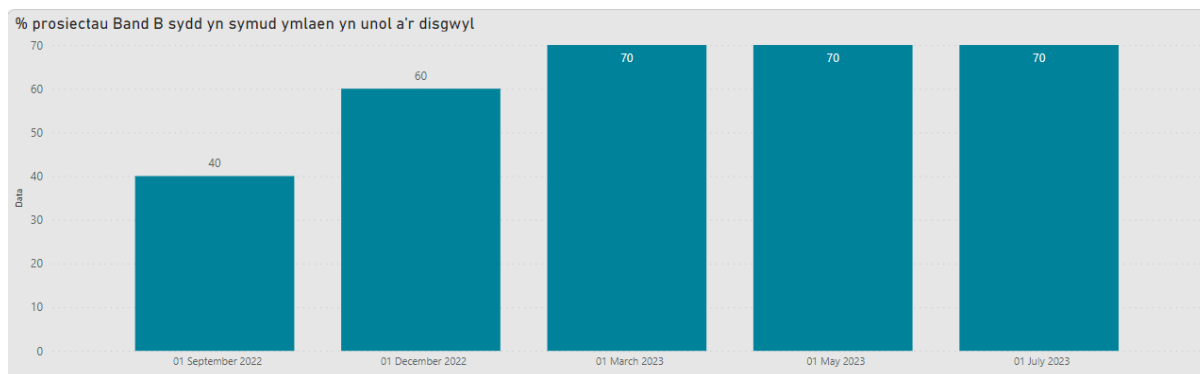
Some of our school buildings are old and unsuited to meet the needs of the Curriculum for Wales and learning and teaching in the twenty-first century. The purpose of this service is to plan and realise innovative projects to adapt or build new schools for Gwynedd's children and young people to be educated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

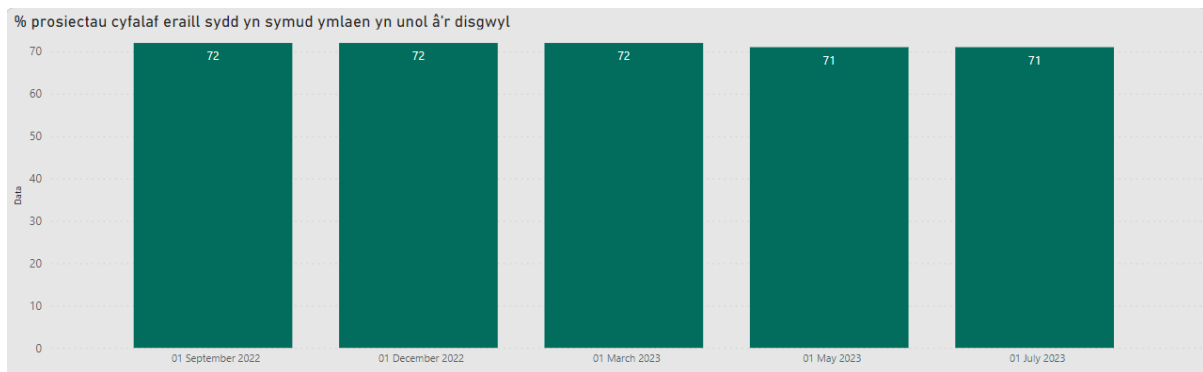


% of Band B projects that are progressing as expected

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 Llew 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

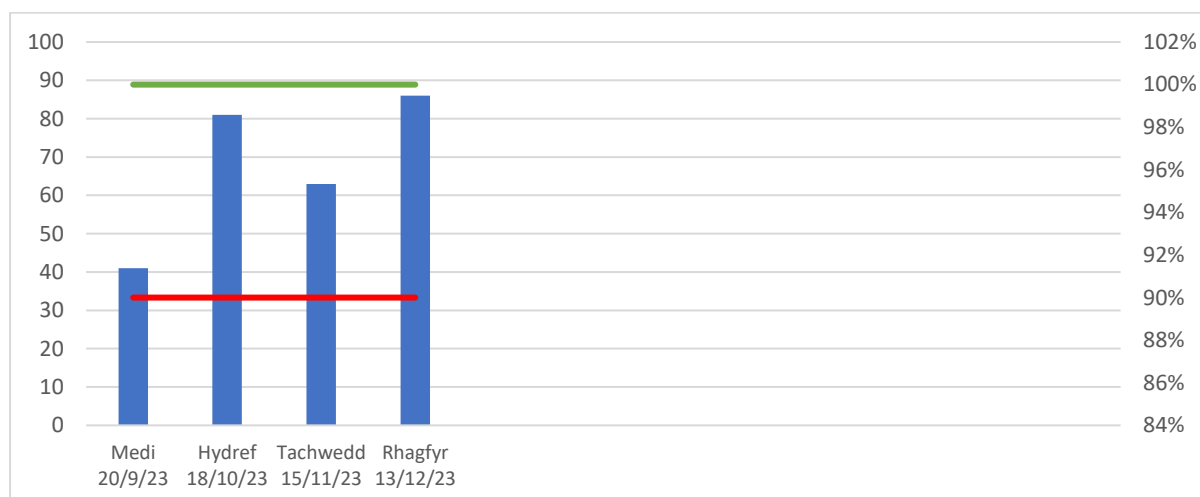
Purpose:

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

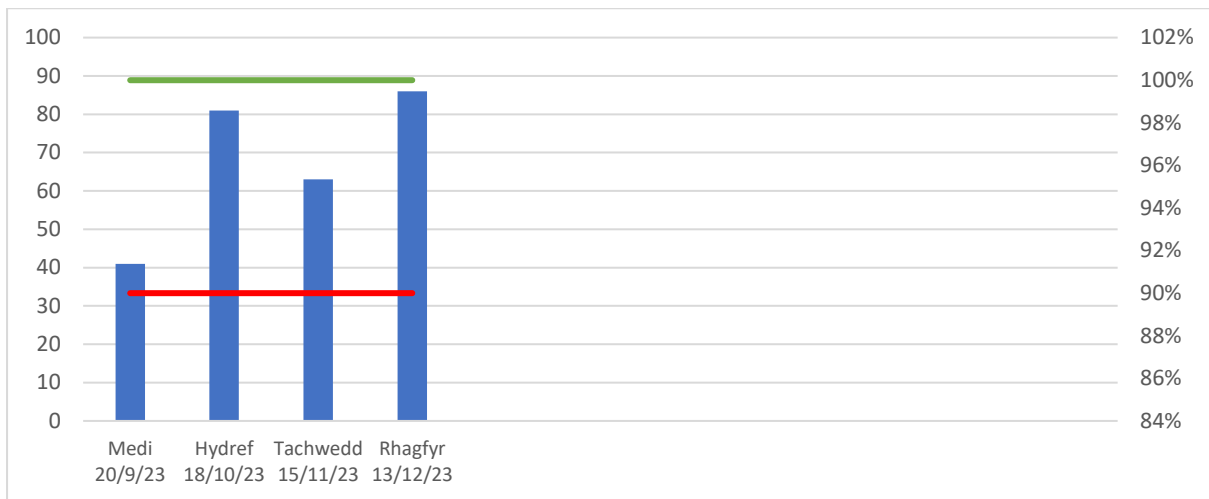
Number of Moderation Panels and Forum				
Month	Number of Panels	Number of on time Administration	Percentage	Target
September 13/9/23	45	45	100.00%	90%
October 11/10/23	73	73	100.00%	90%
November 8/11/23	66	66	100.00%	90%
December 6/12/23	84	84	100.00%	90%



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:

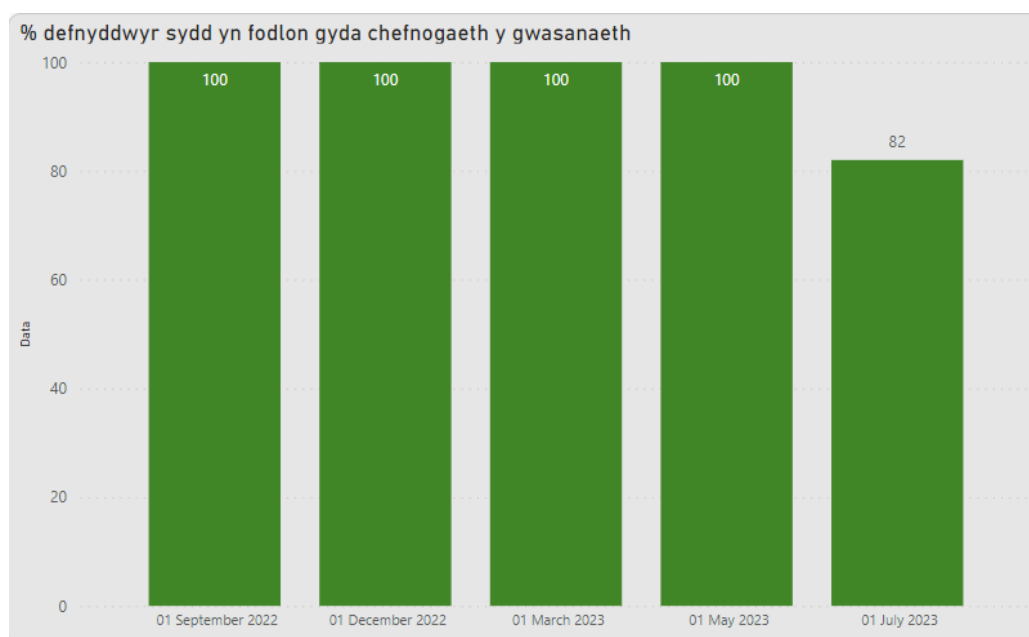
Ensure that the ALN statutory duties in relation to children under school age are fully implemented to recognise needs promptly and ensure appropriate interventions are implemented to prevent ALN from developing or getting worse.

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:

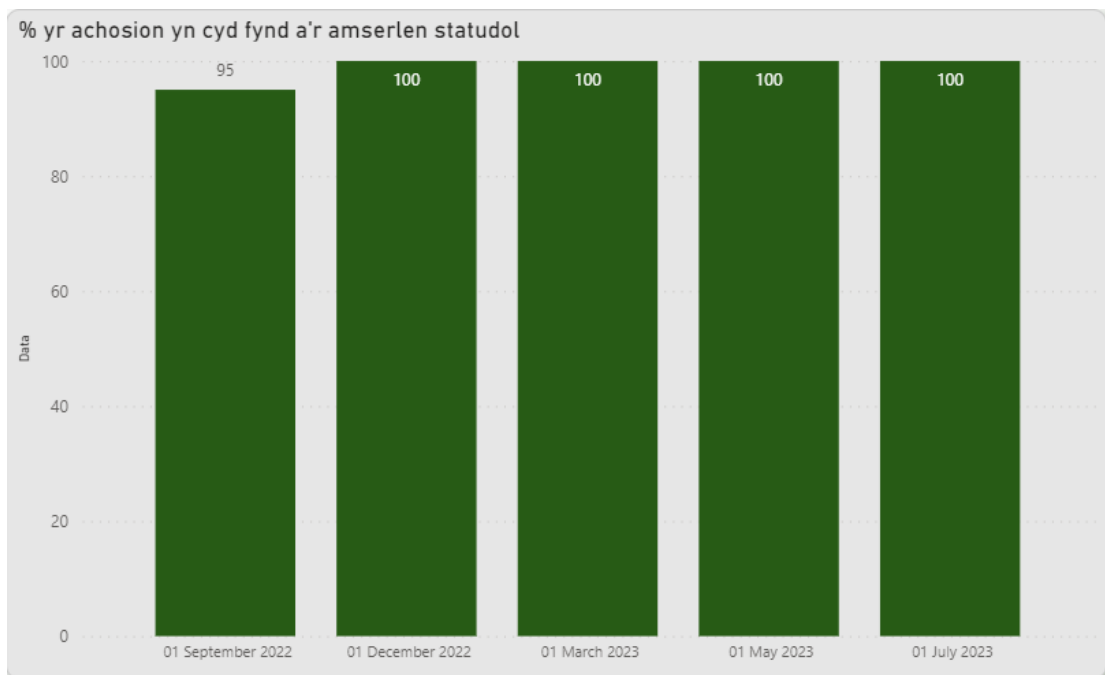
The Early Years ALN Lead Officer and the Early Years Senior Teacher work closely together to ensure that there is effective collaboration between the Early Years Team and the Early Years ALN Team. As a result, many of the children who are identified are operating at the targeted level. This shows that 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.

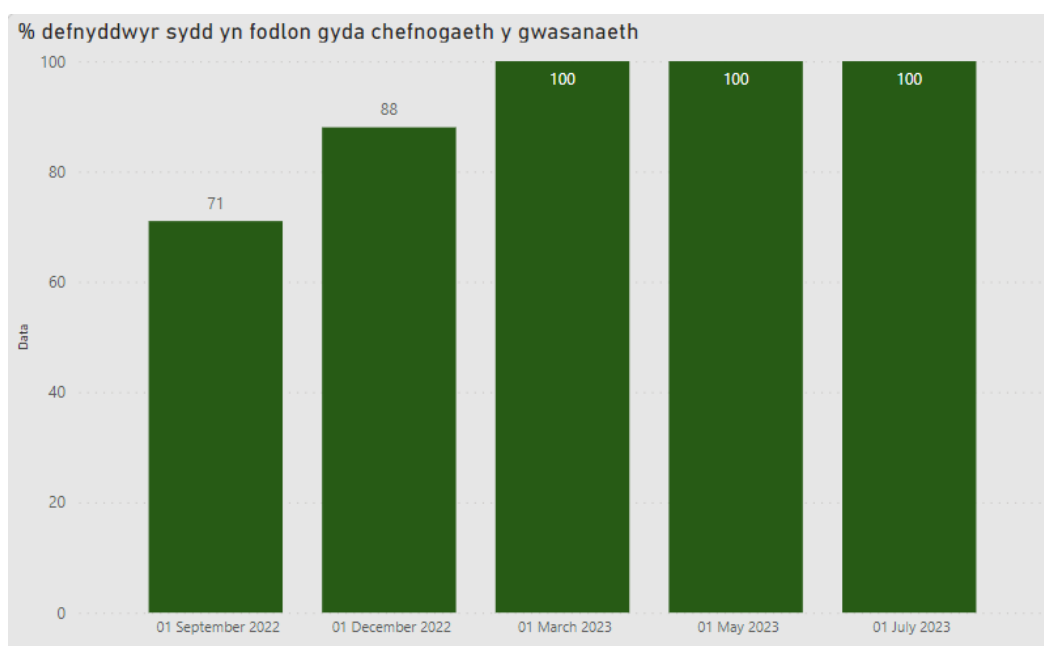
Early Years Assessment and Observation Service (ABC)

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.

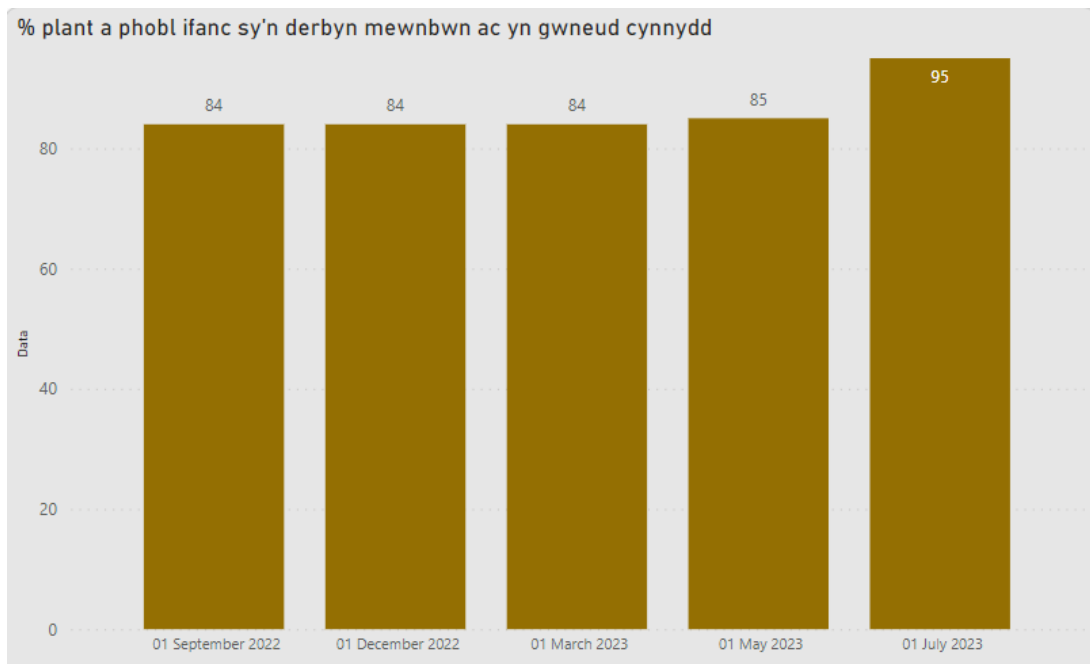
Positive features:

- 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:

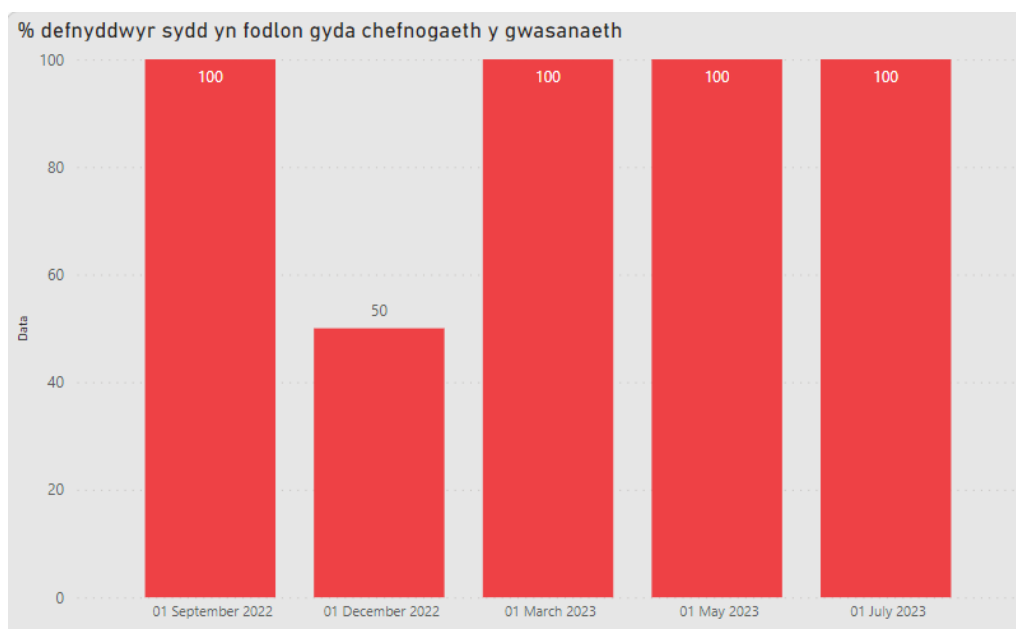
To improve the communication and interaction skills of pupils who are on the Autistic Spectrum or who have communication difficulties so that they can flourish educationally and socially.

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.

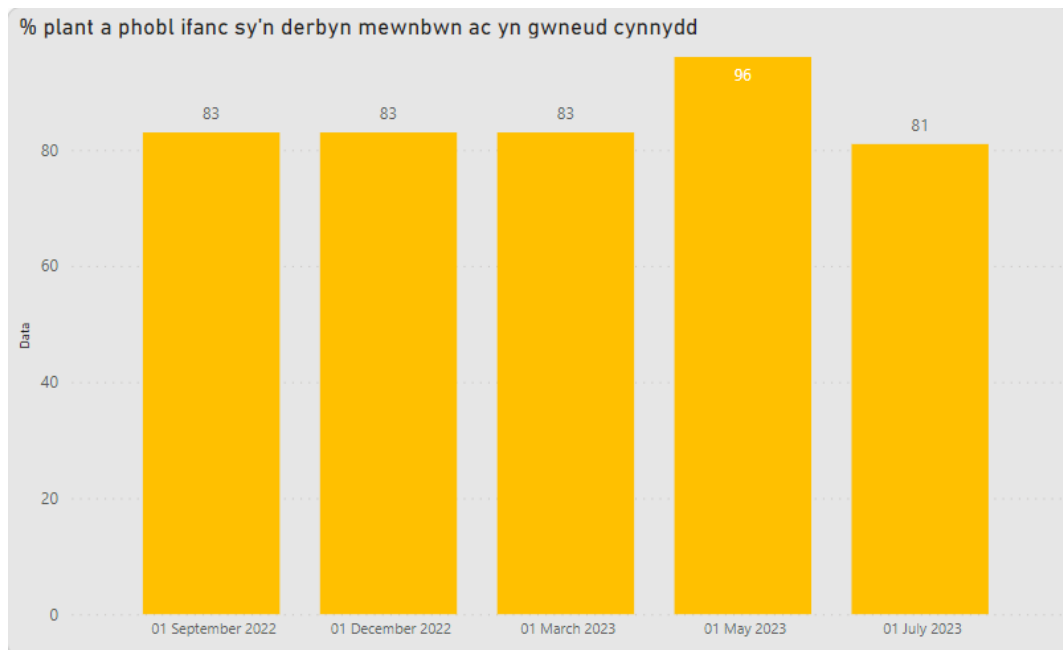
Positive features:-

- 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:

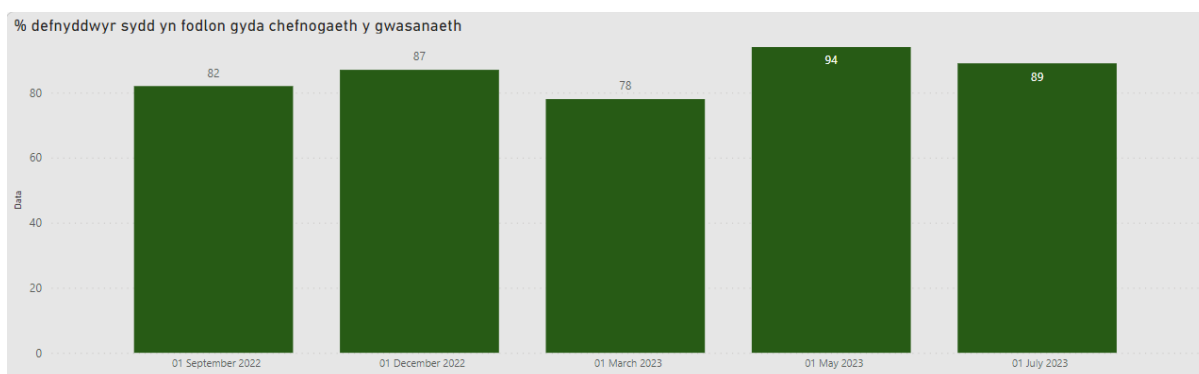
Provide timely and suitable counselling input to learners.

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.

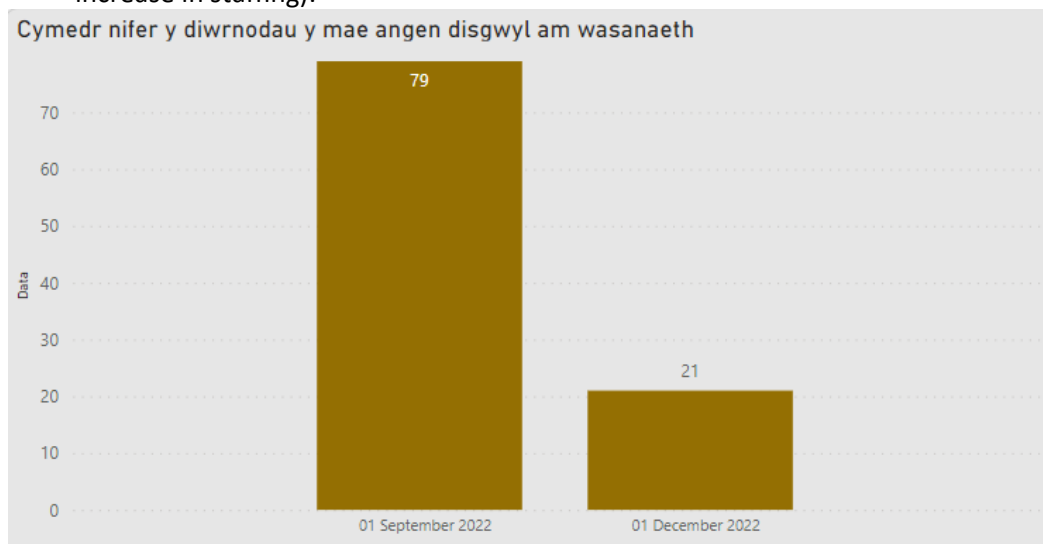
Positive features:

- 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:

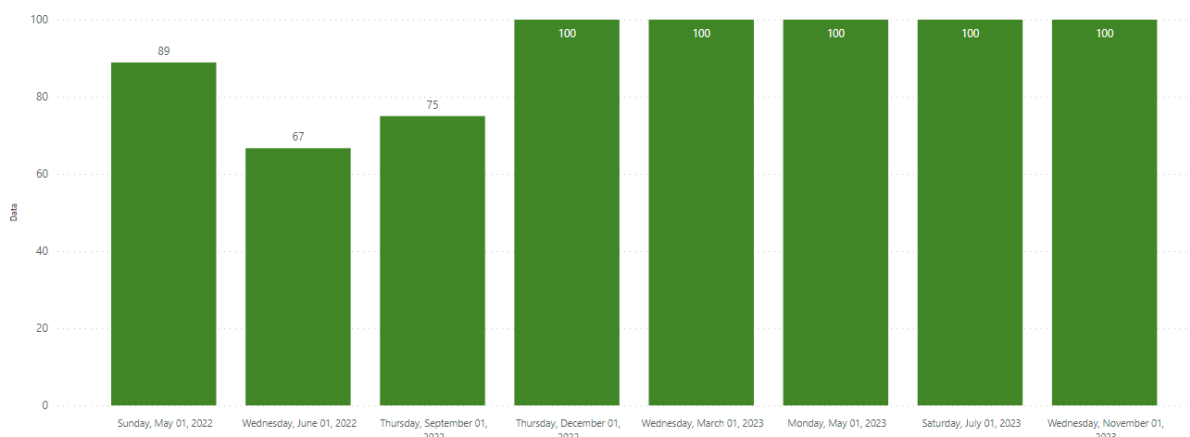
Work in partnership with schools, pupils, parents, and communities to ensure a right to education and regular attendance. Effectively collaborate with a network of agencies who provide education, health and social services for children and young adults.

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:

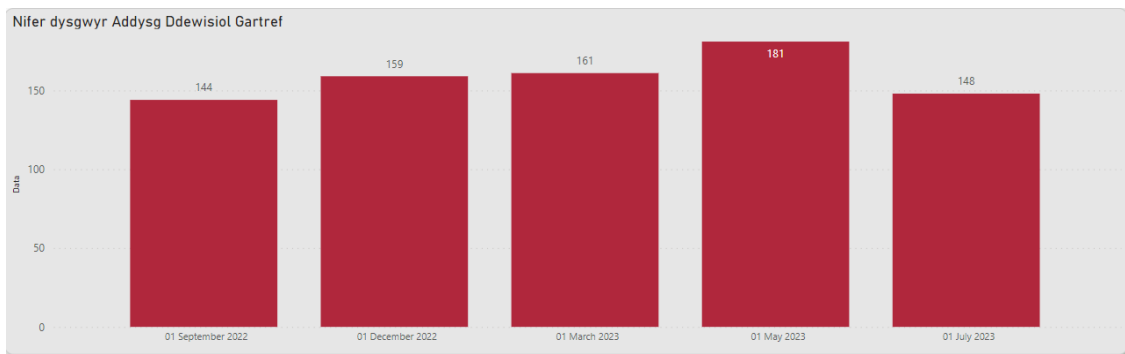
- Use data to support strategic and operational responses.
- Mature and pragmatic working partnership between the schools and the Welfare Service.
- Regular methods of timely engagement to reduce the number of FPN.
- Welfare Officers supporting families especially those most in need.
- Support at Home 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.



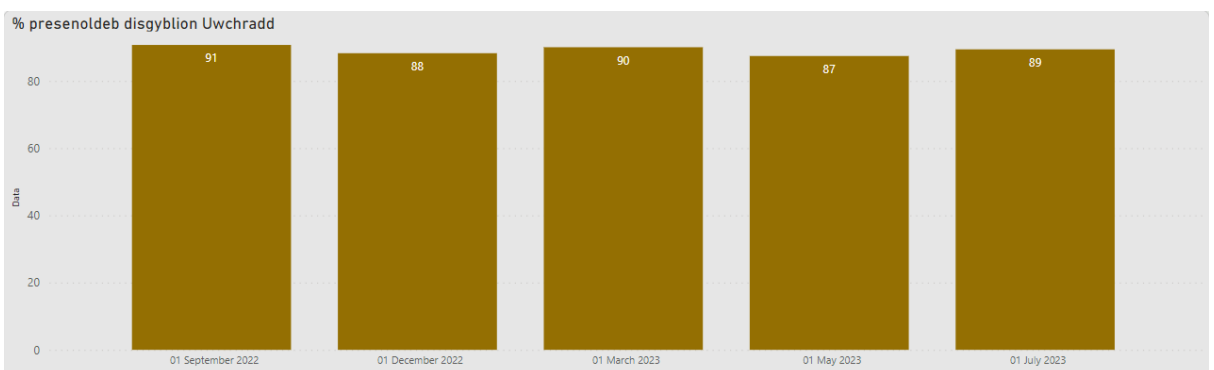
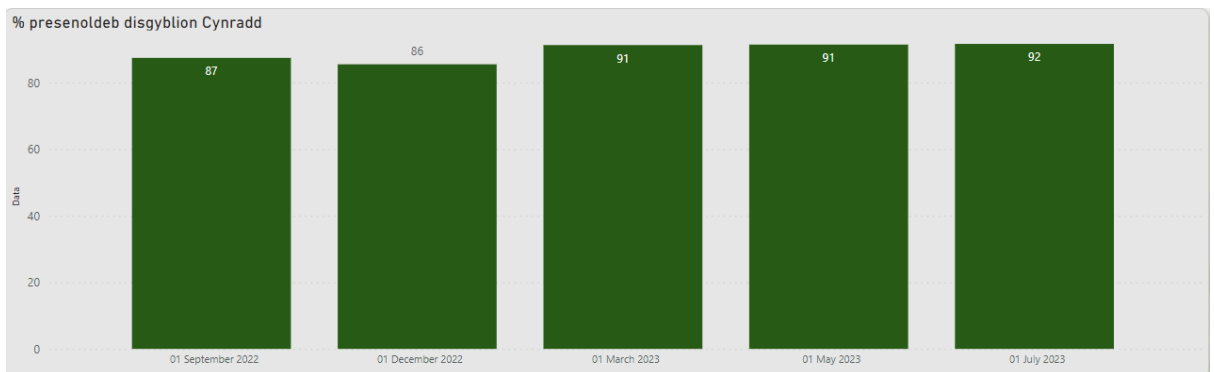
% of users who are satisfied with the service's support

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:

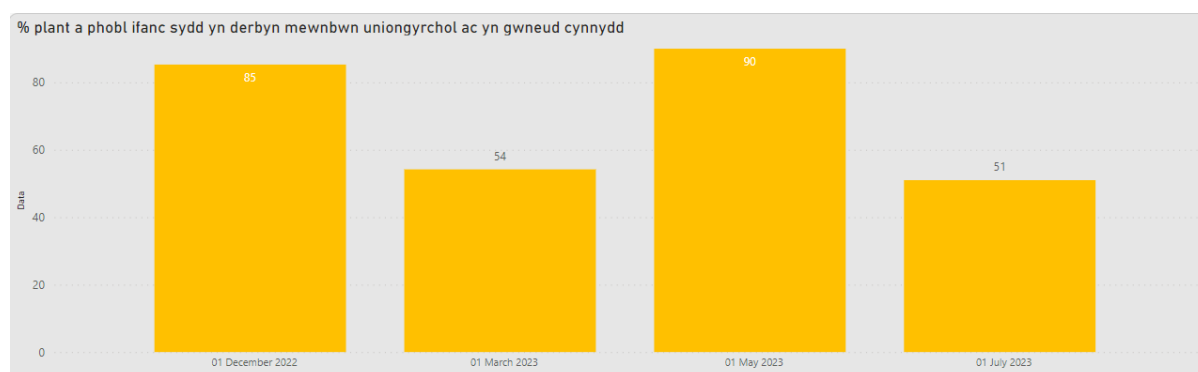
Support and assist schools to successfully meet the needs of EAL learners to enable them to flourish educationally and socially and reach their full potential.

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.

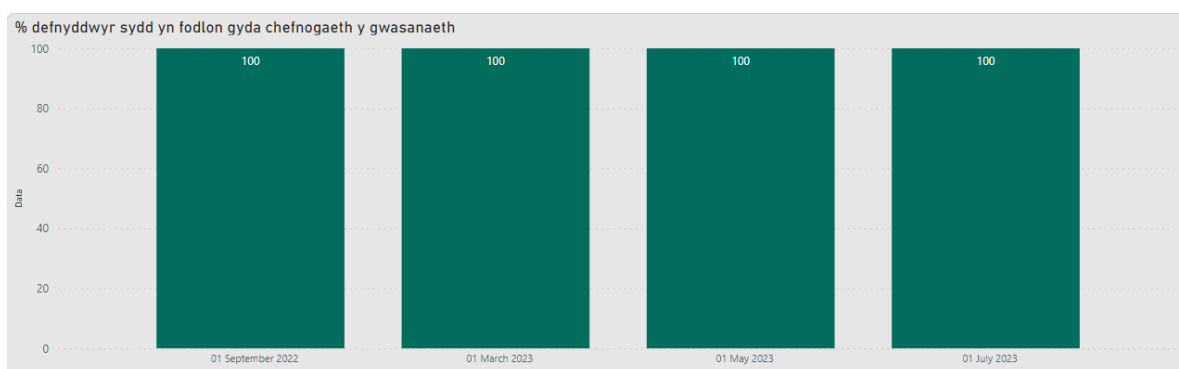
How we as a team achieve our purpose:

- 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)

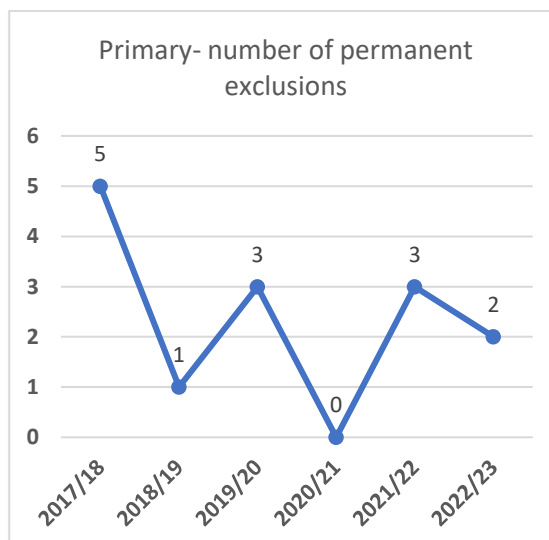
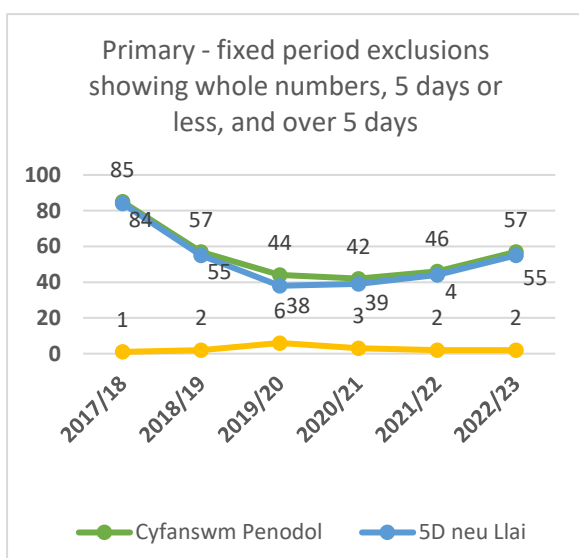
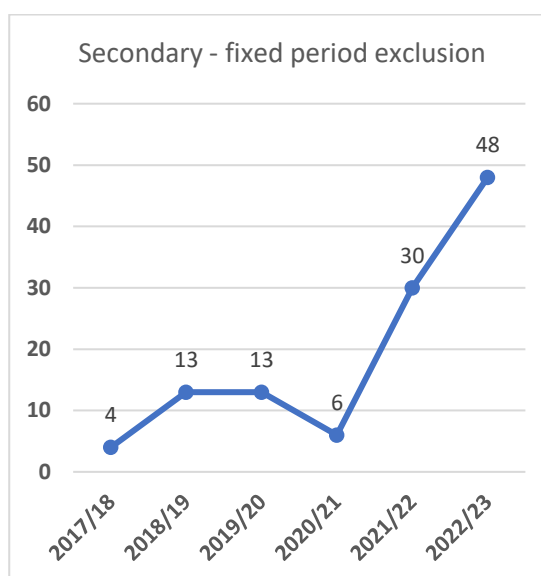
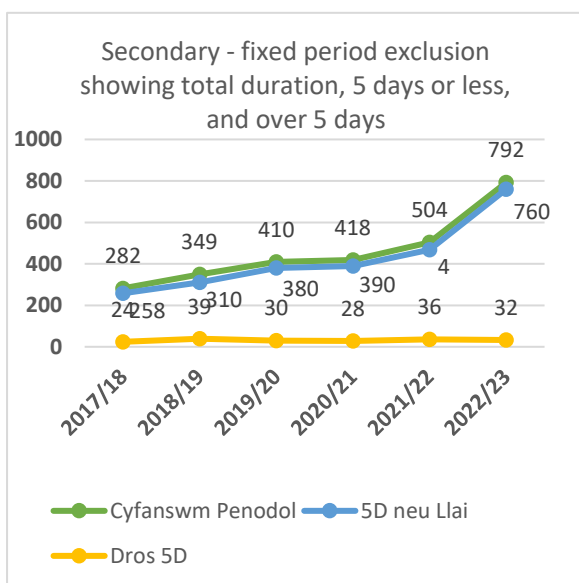


% of users who are satisfied with the service's support

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.



Cydweithio · Dysgu · Llwyddo
Collaborating · Learning · Succeeding



**GwE Annual
Report
2022-2023
Gwynedd**



GwE ANNUAL REPORT GWYNEDD 2022-23

GwE's Annual Report for this year is specific to every Local Authority and its schools.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Learning Service, via GwE's regional service, knows its schools well and provides a firm and appropriate challenge together with effective support and intervention for them. There are very clear strategies, policies and processes for school improvement that are clear to all stakeholders and which shape and steer the Learning Service. There are robust procedures in place for setting a direction and holding the regional service to account. The specific role of the regional service in school improvement is explicit and clear to all stakeholders and they are held to account effectively by local scrutiny procedures.

The Team of Supporting Improvement Advisers working across the schools has wide-ranging experience and subject and sector-specific expertise. This ensures that an appropriate level of challenge and support is targeted in a timely manner. There is a robust system in place to report to the authority on the performance and progress of schools overall. Through collaboration between the Learning Service and Regional School Improvement Service, there are effective processes and actions in place to challenge and support schools and to identify those causing concern. Where follow-up action has been identified by Estyn, progress was seen at an appropriate pace. There is no school in an Estyn statutory category.

Overall, the quality of senior leadership is robust across the schools' sector. Ensuring succession in headteachers' posts, especially in the secondary sector, has been and continues to be challenging. A rich array of professional learning is provided to develop leadership at every level, together with targeted focused support for schools as and when needed. Moreover, there are robust arrangements in place where school leaders collaborate to support one another in primary clusters and secondary alliances and take ownership and increasing accountability for one another's improvement journey.

The quality of teaching is good overall across the sectors and purposeful action is taken to further improve and align the quality of teaching in most schools. Positive steps have been taken to support leaders and teachers to improve the quality of teaching and learning prior to, during and after the Covid-19 period.

The increasing focus on supporting schools to improve the quality and consistency of leadership and pedagogy has resulted in improved standards across nearly every school. Improvement needs to gather more pace in a few schools.

All secondary schools are making more informed use of data and information about teaching, learning and assessment to evaluate standards and to identify priorities for further improvement however it is acknowledged that these processes need to be strengthened further to ensure more focus on pupil progress in some schools. Secondary schools also introduce intervention programmes which they monitor through tracking systems to tackle underachievement and variation. In some secondary schools, these approaches need to be further strengthened and fine-tuned.

Processes for tracking learner progress and raising standards are strongly evolving in most primary schools. Progress tracking spreadsheets have evolved to include learners' holistic progress. Many schools are currently working to fine tune ongoing assessment processes in schools to include more learner input. Where processes have not developed as effectively, support is provided for those schools to fine tune their processes for tracking progress and capturing impact.

All schools are on track to realise the steps outlined in the 'Journey to 2022' (Curriculum for Wales) document. There is specific support in place for the very few schools requiring further guidance. Since September 2022, 5 secondary schools have been formally delivering the new Curriculum. This is a significant percentage in comparison with the profile across the region.

Subject standards and standards in skills are robust overall across most schools and good in several schools. Work is ongoing to target further improvements in the provision and standards in skills with the most vulnerable groups of learners. In a minority of schools, more intense work has been undertaken to improve provision in the skills.

The following have been identified as main improvement and developmental priorities to further challenge schools' performance:

- continue to strengthen leadership at all levels, focusing in the secondary sector on further improving evaluation and improvement planning processes.
- further develop the capacity of senior and middle leaders to lead effectively on teaching.
- further strengthen schools' internal accountability processes to ensure robust and timely interventions to tackle underperformance.
- ensure that all leaders are actively involved in peer collaboration and review to move towards a self-improving system.
- strengthen systems for capturing the impact of improvement strategies on pupils' standards and progression.
- further improve the quality of teaching and assessment to minimise variation within and across schools.
- further strengthen the quality of the provision to develop learners' skills.
- ensure that all schools take firm approaches to support vulnerable learners.
- further develop tracking and intervention programmes to tackle under-performance and in-school variation - especially in relation to vulnerable learners.
- ensure that all secondary schools deliver the new curriculum successfully for Years 7 and 8 from September 2023 onwards.
- ensure that all schools ensure equity for all learners, and that they have an inclusive learning environment to support those who are vulnerable.
- ensure that all primary/secondary clusters implement effective transition plans.
- ensure that schools causing concern or in any follow-up action by Estyn gather pace to demonstrate marked improvements including improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and in the quality of leadership across the school.

These have been included in the business plan for 2023-24.

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

The Learning Service, via GwE's regional service, knows its schools well and provides a firm and appropriate challenge together with effective support and intervention for them. There are noticeably clear strategies, policies and processes for school improvement that are known to all stakeholders and which shape and steer the Learning Service. There are robust procedures in place both regionally and locally for setting a direction and holding the regional service to account. The specific role of the regional service in school improvement is explicit and known to all stakeholders and they are held to account effectively by local scrutiny procedures.

The regional service evaluates its work regularly and uses qualitative data and information effectively to ensure that areas for improvement are identified swiftly and are firmly addressed via detailed business planning. There is a clear and effective process in place to ensure that the regional service meets the Authority's corporate priorities and targets.

GwE has re-purposed its work appropriately and has employed flexible approaches over the past few years to deliver effective services and support to its school communities. The regional service has redirected its energy and resources several times during this period to meet the needs of the authority's schools and stakeholders. Flexibility and effective collaboration in different teams (often across sectors) have had a significant impact on institutional behaviour. At the core of the redirection, the need to ensure the wellbeing of school leaders, staff and learners was central to support processes.

Preparations for the Curriculum for Wales is a significant reform programme where effective teaching and realisation of the Four Purposes are central to its success. In line with delivering the new curriculum in September 2022, all primary schools have been supported by GwE to meet the new statutory requirements within the expected timescale. Support is ongoing across the LA for secondary and special school settings to prepare to deliver the new curriculum for Years 7 and 8 in September 2023. Curriculum reform, particularly direct engagement with secondary and primary schools, is ongoing to effectively support learner transition. In order to facilitate this professional dialogue, GwE continues to provide Curriculum for Wales networks. Schools have been developing and sharing effective practice to unpack the potential of the six Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLE) and whole school planning and assessment, with regular guidance and feedback from Professor Graham Donaldson.

The report notes progress against five key areas as well as the next steps along the improvement journey:

- Key Area 1 - Improve Leadership
- Key Area 2 - Improve Teaching and Learning
- Key Area 3 - Curriculum and Provision
- Key Area 4 - Learner Progression and Standards
- Key Area 5 - Support and Challenge for Schools causing concern.

IMPROVING LEADERSHIP

Overall, the quality of senior leadership is robust across the schools' sector. Ensuring succession in headteachers' posts, especially in the secondary sector, has been and continues to be challenging. Due to the focus and support for leadership:

- almost all schools have taken steps to further strengthen leadership focusing on fine tuning and improving evaluation and improvement planning processes at every level.
- almost all schools are prioritising guidance and support to develop the capacity of senior and middle leaders to lead and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning effectively.
- uptake on leadership development training and programmes has increased.
- an increasing number of schools have senior leaders who are trained peer reviewers and improvement facilitators and actively involved in peer review activities.

A rich array of professional learning is provided to develop leadership at every level, together with targeted focused support for schools as required. For instance, workshops were run this year on evaluation and improvement planning for leaders in every school as part of the support to implement the School Improvement Framework. This has had a positive impact on the ability and understanding of leaders to implement strategic plans.

GwE has effective procedures to support schools with their self-evaluation and improvement planning which includes a series of guidance workshops to help them with the process. Schools are firmly challenged on the quality and accuracy of their self-evaluation processes. SIAs are actively involved in evaluation activities in schools such as work scrutiny, lesson observations and learning trails and gathering learners' voice.

Most schools managed to continue to evaluate the quality of their provision throughout the Covid-19 period using various sources of useful information and evidence, including regular discussions with other schools and a discussion with GwE's Link Adviser. Most schools in Gwynedd have gathered the views of stakeholders effectively via questionnaires for pupils and parents, telephone calls or conversations with individuals. Based on these findings, most schools adapted and improved their provision considerably by finding new ways of teaching throughout the pandemic. Since the summer of 2022, most schools have been working to ensure that evaluation activities are strengthened following the pandemic working towards the expectations of the new School Improvement Guidance.

In response to the recruitment and retention challenge, a good number of practitioners have followed the National Leadership Programmes contributing towards developing leadership capacity across the Authority at every level. This includes middle leaders, senior leaders, new head teachers and experienced head teachers. However, staff recruitment and retention are still a challenge. Effective collaboration takes place between the Learning Service and GwE to support leaders' development across the 'Leadership Pathway'. Information about their progress is communicated on a regular basis through meetings of the Regional Leadership Group. Such collaboration and communication ensure an understanding of developmental needs and where further support needs to be targeted, if necessary.

During 2021-22, 54 practitioners attended the Leadership Programmes. During 2022-23, 7 practitioners have reached the standard in order to obtain the NPQH qualification.

There are effective arrangements to support new heads and acting heads. The programme consists of a rich array of regular training including briefing sessions on finance management, safeguarding, site safety amongst other managerial elements. It equips head teachers to be able to successfully undertake their work. All new heads have access to a mentor who are experienced and successful head teachers to provide firm support on local managerial matters. This means that new heads are provided with timely and punctual support and that they have access to several sources of support.

An inclusive training programme is in place to support Governors' development. The programme has been put together partly in consultation with Governors in response to their specific developmental needs. Feedback from governors on the programme has been very positive. The regional service has a diverse training provision to enrich the training offer.

A rich provision is available to support the professional development of teaching assistants via the national programmes, i.e., the Teaching Assistants Learning Pathway (TALP). TALP includes 'Induction', 'Practising Assistants' and the 'Aspiring HLTAs' programme, leading up to HLTA status assessment. In the same manner as the Leadership programme for teachers, these programmes encourage individuals to become reflective practitioners who evaluate their practice against the 'Professional standards for assisting teaching'.

All TALP programmes have been adapted for virtual delivery, a change that was very well-received by assistants during the pandemic. The 'Induction' programme was put in the form of a digital playlist and during 2020-21 and 2021-22, 20 assistants successfully completed this programme. The 'Induction' Programme will continue in this format.

The 'Practising Assistants' programme was also adapted during 2021-22 for virtual delivery. Towards the end of 2021-22, the programme gradually returned to being a face-to-face provision, as the situation permitted. This was welcomed by assistants and facilitators alike. The programme is available on a regional basis or can be delivered to a cluster of schools.

A new national Aspiring HLTA programme was created in 2020 which has now been running over four cycles, with 20 teaching assistants from Gwynedd participating. Upon completion of the new Aspiring HLTA programme, and meeting literacy and numeracy qualification requirements, teaching assistants can apply for HLTA status assessment. Twelve assistants have recently been awarded HLTA status.

Overall, effective cluster collaboration exists in the primary. This year, work to develop the role of secondary school alliances within the Authority is starting to become embedded. There exists thorough knowledge of the strengths and needs of schools and clusters. There are numerous examples across the primary catchment areas showing that systems and processes for collaboration are maturing and, consequently, sharing expertise and successful practices have been more prominent. At best, collaboration involves leaders from all tiers meeting regularly to discuss and share good practice, collaborating in a structured and directed manner and successfully developing a wide variety of areas such as Curriculum for Wales, pedagogy, Additional Learning Needs, digital and primary-secondary transition. This collaboration has resulted in improving learner experiences and outcomes.

A Digital Facilitator Programme has been up and running since November 2021, where all clusters have nominated an individual to lead on strategic aspects of digital learning, to collaborate closely with the Local Authority and GwE to develop strategic leadership within every school in their clusters. As a result, 77% of clusters in Gwynedd have established a digital learning working group, with 61% schools engaging in these groups. The aim of these groups is to oversee digital developments and fully incorporate digital competence as a mandatory element of the Curriculum for Wales. All clusters that have formed a working party have now established a shared vision between all schools for digital learning to ensure alignment of schools' objectives and aspirations. Thus far, the programme has provided training for 128 practitioners and has facilitated 18 strategic meetings in the authority. A total of 46 practitioners have attended a training session offered through the digital professional learning offer for 2023-24. A total of 16 digital leaders attended the digital leadership development programme over the last year. This was a 2-day programme to develop key strategic leadership skills that would help to strengthen their role as digital lead in their school.

All Primary, Secondary and Special Schools have been involved in the pioneering assessment for learning project (guided by Shirley Clarke), and good work has been undertaken to embed these principles as a natural part of teaching and learning in most of the Authority's schools.

A total of 11 secondary schools and 18 primary schools are taking part in the *Schools Partnership Programme*. Under this arrangement, all schools are engaged in a cycle of self-review and peer-review and mutual support to improve priority areas. A rich training programme was organised to up-skill leaders and to establish the 'improvement facilitator' role in every school.

IMPROVING TEACHING

Summary of main findings, engagement and impact

Due to the increasing focus on support and guidance to improve teaching:

- almost all schools are demonstrating improvements in specific aspects of pedagogy.
- almost all schools have taken appropriate steps to strengthen pedagogy.
- targeted subject-specific support has resulted in improved teaching across many subjects and improved depth and breadth of understanding.
- support in the cross-curricular skills has resulted in improvements in the quality of planning, provision and standards in many schools.
- nearly all schools have appropriate literacy and numeracy interventions.

However, the pace and scale of improvement needs more attention in some schools.

The quality of teaching is good overall across the sectors and purposeful action is taken to further improve and align the quality of teaching in most schools. Positive steps are taken to support leaders and teachers to improve the quality of teaching prior to, during and after the Covid-19 period. Steps are taken to tackle areas causing concern and to minimise in-school variations.

Since the beginning of lockdown, the Learning Service and GwE have been proactive in their support for schools. A wide range of quality materials and models for remote/distance and blended learning have been provided through digital platforms such as 'Google Classroom' and GwE Support Centre. [GwE Support Centre - Canolfan Gefnogaeth GwE \(gwegogledd.cymru\)](#) The work has drawn on the findings of research into effective international practices.

Almost all head teachers have appreciated the input of Supporting Improvement Advisers and officers of the Learning Service in providing guidance and support for schools and clusters to further develop their provision. Almost all head teachers noted that the SIA's role in facilitating cluster meetings had been crucial in order to share ideas and good practice to develop their distance/remote and blended learning provision. It was also noted that these meetings have had a positive impact on their mental health and wellbeing.

GwE has also provided a range of high-quality guidance and resources to support schools to improve parental engagement and has also worked with Mike Gershon to facilitate parental access to quality materials. 'Helping your Child to Learn' (HYCTL) and 'Helping your Teen to Learn' (HYTTL) materials and the 'Revise with Mike' resource have all been very well-received. The range of revision strategies has also impacted on teachers' classroom floor practices as they prepare learners for end-of-year examinations.

Over recent years, most schools have made very effective use of guidelines and guidance from the Local Authority and Regional Service on delivering remote/distance and blended learning. These have included guidance on planning successful recall of knowledge and recall of learning as pupils return to face-to-face education. There has also been an appropriate focus on identifying a baseline upon learners' return to formal education and ensuring the implementation of purposeful plans in response to any gaps in learning.

Over the period, GwE supported schools to evaluate the quality of their blended and remote/distance learning provision, and shared examples and local case studies of effective provisions to minimise variations. Regular discussions with leaders and teachers over the period, scrutiny of learners' work (both on-site and virtually) and learning trails, resulted in valuable and focused experiences being provided to the ability range. There is also explicit evidence that a higher number of practitioners are now able to use technology more confidently to support learning. This is one of the key 'growth points' arising from the Covid-19 period.

Schools have received purposeful guidance and guidelines to support their preparations for delivering the new curriculum. The focus on pedagogy and the 12 principles are central to this work. The service and school representatives have been working effectively with Professor Graham

Donaldson in an attempt to deepen understanding of the Curriculum for Wales Framework. This work has involved promoting successful collaboration meaning that teachers have been able to jointly-plan examples and models to share across schools.

The Curriculum Networks share the fruits of their labour with all schools via GwE's Support Centre. Under the guidance of network members, effective webinars have taken place for all school leaders on curriculum design, assessment and progression and planning principles. Most schools noted that the presentations have boosted their confidence to develop their high-level curriculum design to incorporate the four purposes in their planning. All schools have accessed these workshops either via a live recording or through subsequent discussions with the Link Supporting Improvement Adviser. The regional service has placed a strong focus on developing pedagogy as part of the support for developing the Curriculum for Wales.

There has also been a consistent focus on supporting schools to improve differentiated support across the ability range. Establishing the secondary More Able and Talented [MAT] Coordinators' Network is one specific example of this work. Specific guidance and support have been issued to develop better understanding and confidence amongst coordinators to lead on this across schools and to develop their processes and systems for identifying, tracking and supporting this particular group of learners. There was also input to ensure that they were aware of the national developments in this respect. As a group, they have collaborated to ensure a shared understanding and how to ensure an appropriate level of challenge and how to promote recall and revision strategies.

A range of networks and forums are operational to support leaders in the secondary sector, at all levels, to lead on pedagogy with more confidence and effectiveness. This includes networks for senior leaders on teaching and for core subject heads of department. There is evidence that this collaboration within the networks has been a particular strength and mutual support has been vital to ensure consistency of teaching.

Subject networks have focused on supporting middle leaders to take the lead on teaching; on facilitating and supporting peer collaboration and on strengthening evaluation and improvement planning processes and procedures; on promoting a better understanding of planning and pedagogy in the context of the new curriculum; on improving literacy and numeracy interventions as well as supporting specific aspects of KS4 and KS5 preparations and assessments. The work of the networks is much appreciated by secondary leaders who make effective use of the quality resources that have been jointly developed and hosted on GwE's Support Centre.

The Welsh, English and Literacy Networks have been a combination of presenting key messages, training and discussions on pedagogy development, GCSE schemes and approaches, developing literacy, recall practice and oracy strategies. Following meetings of the Maths and Numeracy Heads' network, individual schools have had further support to implement various approaches discussed. Heads of Science meetings allow discussions and activities on planning, delivery and evaluation of new CfW activities, GCSE schemes of work, examples of assessment and pedagogic approaches that work well in their schools.

The impact of the subject networks is clear on several levels and across a range of aspects:

- middle leaders have been up-skilled in their knowledge and understanding of methodology and quality of planning e.g., recall strategies, strategies to improve oral and writing work, use of technical equipment to develop subject skills etc.
- middle leaders have improved their knowledge and understanding of the 12 pedagogical principles and preparations for the new curriculum.
- good practices have been disseminated and are being more widely adopted. A considerable number of leaders have noted their appreciation of the opportunities to share ideas and developments and to support one another professionally.
- increasing use of the digital library resources on GwE's Support Centre and of the subject websites to improve learner experiences, to prepare learners for examinations and to prepare purposeful intervention programmes.

- leaders and teachers are more confident in their digital skills.
- leaders and teachers are more confident with predictions, pupil assessment and grading.
- effective targeting to promote Welsh oracy skills.

In addition to the networks and forums, specific support is available for every individual secondary school and such targeting has resulted in visible improvements in several instances. The content of the Support Plan for individual schools is based on the school's specific needs arising from their self-evaluations and is a priority in the School Development Plan. Support to improve aspects of teaching underpins these plans. They are jointly produced with the senior management teams and Supporting Improvement Adviser. The relationship and collaboration between schools and GwE is very strong, and the positive impact of the support is evident in several aspects of schools' work.

Supporting Improvement Advisers work with primary leaders to develop a bespoke Support Plan for every school. This aligns with the expectations of the new School Improvement Framework. There are numerous examples of purposeful and effective support for schools on improving specific aspects of teaching, learning, pupils' skills and leadership. For example, all SIAs support their schools to monitor through a range of activities including work scrutiny, learning walks and listening to learners and staff. This enables primary school leaders to fine tune their monitoring and self-evaluation processes to identify, focus and develop areas for improvement and focused improvement planning. SIAs provide first-hand guidance, signpost practitioners to relevant professional learning or alternatively support schools to access support from various sources. This enables every primary school to access targeted support.

There is robust evidence that guidance and support for 3–8-year-olds have a positive impact on teaching and learning at an individual school and cluster level. In most schools, this has had a positive impact on provision and pupil outcomes as well as reducing variation within schools. The support has also ensured a deeper understanding of 3-8 principles and pedagogy, in line with the Curriculum for Wales 'Enabling Learning' and 'Pedagogy' guidance. The toolkit includes a professional offer for SLT, teachers and assistants of 3–8-year-olds in the form of termly networks, a regional training programme and bespoke cluster training. The focus is primarily on developing aspects of pedagogy, teaching and wellbeing within practical and holistic learning experiences, and training practitioners to become effective learning facilitators. All practitioners have access to the professional offer and resources to support learning via GwE's Support Centre. Many schools within the Authority use the webinars in staff meetings and INSET to up-skill the workforce. Evidence from schools notes that this has a positive impact on the quality of provision (teaching experiences) and on pupil outcomes.

The professional offer includes support for Year 3 practitioners to build on some of the Foundation Learning Principles higher up in the school in preparation for Curriculum for Wales. The professional offer continued throughout lockdown with the provision designed to target those aspects identified by schools as needing to be prioritised following Covid-19, e.g., pupils' communication skills, health and wellbeing. The focus was upon developing these skills within developmentally appropriate pedagogy. Evidence of the impact of this support programme includes:

- deepening practitioners' understanding of how the pedagogical principles (including the 12 CfW principles) are interconnected to create productive and effective learning experiences.
- practitioners using a range of developmentally appropriate pedagogical methods that meet the needs of learners (including emotional and social skills).
- practitioners creating effective cross-curricular links to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum, drawing on learners' previous knowledge and experiences.
- practitioners not only considering the physical learning environment, but also the emotional climate that supports learners to reach their potential.
- practitioners' deepening their understanding of the importance of daily practice to improve their understanding of pupils' needs, skills and progression; allowing practitioners to find the preferred learning approaches of children and young people and how best to engage them in learning; identifying those pupils who might require extra support to help them reach their full potential.

- practitioners understanding that effective observations enable them to plan an appropriate provision that supports learner commitment and enjoyment within their learning activities, as well as planning to support them to move on to the next stage in their learning.
- practitioners understanding the need for assessment to be an ongoing process rooted in day-to-day practices, invisible within teaching.

Overall, observations by Supporting Improvement Advisers and Estyn inspection findings where relevant, note that the support programme has a positive impact on the quality of provision and pupil outcomes with practitioners making better use of observations and Assessment for Learning strategies to plan the next stages of learning.

Collaboration and engagement between GwE and schools were strong during the pandemic and resulted in a better classroom floor provision in general and further development of approaches to support vulnerable learners. As a result, almost all schools develop their provision to provide educational equity for all learners, and they have an inclusive learning environment in which to support vulnerable children and young people so that they are given every possible opportunity to achieve their potential.

Almost all primary schools agree that the support of the Accelerated Learning Programmes has had a positive impact on basic skills and wellbeing once children had returned to formal education following the lockdown periods. Almost all schools had ensured that they carried out either a qualitative or quantitative internal assessment procedure to identify the impact of lockdown on children's wellbeing and learning. Teachers believed lockdown had affected the confidence and wellbeing of the majority of pupils with some pupils' behaviour having worsened. School leaders successfully drove the accelerated support work once baseline standards and pupils' basic skills had been identified.

Almost all schools have made purposeful use of the various grants, and most have employed or extended the hours of teachers or assistants in order to target groups and individuals in literacy, numeracy and wellbeing. GwE provided guidance and guidelines, with a good number of schools accessing specific training such as Trauma Informed Schools wellbeing sessions, SAFMEDS, Headsprout and Elklan training.

Overall, Gwynedd schools have responded well to the challenge and can testify to visible improvements and progress in the basic skills of many pupils targeted through these accelerated programmes.

Schools continue to deliver effective intervention strategies for pupils, e.g., through daily precision teaching sessions, SAFMEDS, RILL and iFOR sessions to develop Welsh and English reading/spelling skills, 'Tric a Chlic' sessions to develop literacy skills in the Foundation Phase, specific Trauma Informed Schools activities, conducting Nurture groups, Talkabout, or Mind Mechanics. All schools acknowledge that this precise targeting has had a positive impact on pupils' standards, wellbeing and confidence and a good number note that they have seen vulnerable pupils being able to cope well with mainstream classroom challenges and various social challenges.

In addition to the professional learning menu, individual schools have received specific input and support in response to their developmental needs. The impact of these interventions is visible in the quality and standards of skills in several schools, in teachers' confidence levels and in the progress seen in collaboration between schools. The guidance and support provided for schools includes planning guidance for Literacy and Numeracy Coordinators and Teaching Assistants; support for NQTs on effective lesson delivery, specific support for developing oracy in order to improve mathematical and scientific skills; guidance to improve the level of challenge in planning; deepening mathematical skills and improving higher-order reading skills. The programme is further enhanced by termly meetings of the relevant networks. Over lockdown, there was close collaboration with schools to develop materials and remote/distance learning packs to support schools in developing learners' basic skills. The impact of the work has been captured in several monitoring and evaluation reports and in the feedback received from school leaders.

In cooperation with Bangor University and research experts, resources, programmes and packs have been developed to support reading proficiency in both languages. Collaboration has also taken place on SAFMEDS materials to support numeracy skills and RILL/iFOR to support reading fluency/literacy. In

several schools, these programmes have had a positive impact on learners' standards in numeracy and reading and on the confidence of teachers and staff to deliver.

Live briefing sessions were delivered to heads and leaders on how to make effective use of the national assessments in reading and number to improve understanding and confidence amongst the workforce when measuring individual learners progress over the period.

In the secondary schools, there was a specific focus on supporting accelerated learning programmes and providing intervention resources in KS3 and guidance on strategies to improve parental engagement. A toolkit was also developed for literacy to support planning and scaffolding opportunities for reading and writing and helping with learning and developing vocabulary along with revision and recall materials. These have been shared with schools via the Tanio website and GwE's Support Centre. This has resulted in better quality intervention programmes and schools report improved fluency and confidence in learners and a better understanding amongst staff of how to approach scaffolding and planning.

In terms of Digital Competence, the professional learning offer has been operational in every school. The offer focuses on making effective use of the services available through Hwb to develop teaching and learning and to develop learners' digital competence.

CURRICULUM AND PROVISION

Summary of the main findings, engagement and impact

Due to effective collaboration and engagement between the LA, GwE and schools:

- all schools are responding to the four purposes of the new curriculum.
- all schools are working to develop a balanced curriculum offer to meet the needs of their learners, including the more able.
- all clusters operate transition plans.
- all schools are actively involved in cluster/alliance collaboration within and across sectors.
- all secondary schools are on track to meet the statutory requirements by the time they deliver the Curriculum for Wales in September 2023.
- all primary schools and 5 secondary schools are delivering the new curriculum which they are currently evaluating and evolving.

The regional service has supported leaders effectively to prepare for the Reform Journey and Curriculum for Wales and has been flexible in its provision to meet schools' various needs during the pandemic. Sessions were held for leaders on the following areas: leading change, vision and curriculum design, and thinkpieces were shared which had been developed in collaboration with Professor Graham Donaldson. These training sessions were run in the form of clusters of primary schools and their secondary schools for a meaningful discussion to take place across the 3-16 continuum. In June and July of 2021, Professional Learning sessions were held over a 3-week period for senior leaders, focusing on developing vision, curriculum design and development. These sessions were delivered in a virtual format in clusters and provided rich and regular opportunities for breakout discussions with peers. Link Advisers ran successful follow-up cluster sessions to drive further collaboration and form a joint catchment area vision.

High-level engagement has ensured that primary schools are more confident in delivering the new curriculum. Primary/secondary collaboration is also strengthening and transversal themes such as Schools as Learning Organisations have emerged in their approach - Time, Technology, Trust and Thinking Together. The Professional Learning presentations to senior leaders have been cascaded to teachers and assistants via staff meetings and/or specific INSET, meaning that all staff now have a better understanding of the framework. Effective engagement with wider stakeholders in order to collaborate to develop a shared vision has developed successfully across Gwynedd. Effective use is made of the resources presented in the sessions for leaders to continue with discussions and deepen understanding back at school.

Representatives from every cluster attended a recent professional learning conference by GwE on transition, where all clusters jointly planned their next steps to improve continuity for pupils across the learning continuum. This Professional Learning was a follow up to the regional 2-day conference which included updates from Estyn, Welsh Government, and educational experts to determine a common approach to school improvement. Consequently, all clusters are collaborating on an action plan for the delivery of the new curriculum and a consistent approach to continuity. SIAs continue to support every cluster to develop their transition plans. This support has resulted in better consistency in the quality of curriculum design within and across schools.

LEARNER PROGRESS AND STANDARDS

The increasing focus on supporting schools to improve the quality and consistency of leadership and pedagogy has resulted in improved standards across almost every school. Subject standards and standards in skills are robust overall across most school and robustly good in several schools. In a minority of schools, more intense work has been undertaken to improve provision in the skills. Work is ongoing to target further improvements in the provision and standards in skills with the most vulnerable groups of learners. Improvement needs to gather more pace in some schools and particularly so around the skills.

Secondary Schools

All secondary schools:

- are making more informed use of data and information about teaching, learning and assessment to evaluate standards and to identify priorities for further improvement however it is acknowledged that these processes need to be strengthened further to ensure more focus on pupil progress in some schools.
- introduce intervention programmes which they monitor through tracking systems to tackle underachievement and variation. In some secondary schools, these approaches need to be further strengthened and fine-tuned.
- are developing a purposeful offer for KS4 pupils so that there is clear progression to further education, training, or employment once they leave school.

The Link SIA and Subject SIAs collaborate with individual schools who need to improve or align specific aspects - at a subject level and in the cross-curricular skills.

Primary and Special Schools

Schools have generally:

- accessed workshops and guidance on embedding assessment for learning to allow opportunities for learners to work independently and improve their own work following feedback from teachers and peers.
- adapted their schemes in line with CfW requirements and are currently collaborating on long- and medium-term planning to ensure progression and continuity in the application of skills through rich cross-curricular activities.
- identified groups of pupils requiring support and are providing interventions to target their progress. In almost all schools, this progress is captured by recent systems that track progress and attitudes.
- targeted Welsh oracy because of the detrimental impact of the pandemic. A scheme such as Ein Llais Ni is up and running in most schools and progress is already visible in standards of speaking, listening and in learners' confidence to speak Welsh.

SUPPORT AND CHALLENGE FOR SCHOOLS CAUSING CONCERN

Summary of actions and impact

The Team of Supporting Improvement Advisers working across the schools has wide-ranging experience and subject and sector-specific expertise. This ensures that an appropriate level of challenge and support is targeted in a timely manner. There is a robust system in place to report to the authority on the performance and progress of schools overall. In collaboration with the Learning Service and Regional School Improvement Service, there are effective processes and actions in place to challenge and support schools and to identify those causing concern. Where follow-up action has been identified by Estyn, progress was seen at an appropriate pace. There is no school in Estyn statutory category.

The Learning Service has recently reviewed and revised its support and monitoring procedures. In response to the national pilot to support schools causing concern through the multi-agency model, procedures, and structures for supporting, monitoring and challenging schools were reviewed. The aim was to ensure that all schools could access good-quality support in a timely manner in order to move along the 'desired' pathway at the required pace. A regional Task and Finish Group was established consisting of officers from each authority, together with GwE advisers, to drive the work.

There is a clear strategy for schools causing concern and all identified schools have a support plan which clearly notes the nature and intensity of the support provided by GwE.

Within the revised structure there exists a group to identify needs consisting of senior officers, lead officers from the relevant services and GwE staff who meet regularly to share information and evidence so that concerns are identified at an early stage. This group is held accountable by the County Quality Board. Thresholds and triggers have been adopted to ensure consistency in identifying concerns in relation to standards, teaching, assessment, leadership, inclusion, or managerial matters. To ensure an agreed understanding and consistency of approach, training was organised for all officers and advisers. Once a school is identified as causing concern, the lead officer, Core Lead and Link Improvement Support Adviser work with the school's leadership team to develop a bespoke support plan. The above group has responsibility for ensuring that this plan is developed, delivered, and monitored effectively. Where concerns arise about lack of pace or progress, these are escalated to the Chief Education Officer so that an appropriate decision is taken regarding whether to execute statutory powers. GwE Core Leads share a steady, timely, appropriate, and regular flow of information with officers of the Learning Service.

KEY PRIORITIES FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT OF SCHOOLS

Improve Leadership

- continue to strengthen leadership at all levels, focusing in the secondary sector on further improving evaluation and improvement planning processes.
- further developing the capacity of senior and middle leaders to lead effectively on teaching.
- further strengthen schools' internal accountability processes to ensure robust and timely interventions to tackle underperformance.
- ensure that all leaders are actively involved in peer collaboration and review to move towards a self-improving system.
- strengthen systems for capturing the impact of improvement strategies on pupils' standards and progression.

Improve Teaching

- further improve the quality of teaching and assessment to minimise variation within and across schools.
- further strengthen the quality of the provision to develop learners' skills.
- ensure that all secondary schools take firm approaches to support vulnerable learners.
- further develop tracking and intervention programmes to tackle under-performance and in-school variation - especially in relation to vulnerable learners.

Curriculum and Provision

- ensure that all secondary schools deliver the new curriculum successfully for Years 7 and 8 from September 2023 onwards.
- ensure that all schools ensure equity for all learners, and that they have an inclusive learning environment to support those who are vulnerable.
- ensure that all primary/secondary clusters implement effective transition plans.

Improve Challenge and Support for Schools Causing Concern

- ensure that schools causing concern or in any follow-up action by Estyn gather pace to demonstrate marked improvements including improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and in the quality of leadership across the school.

APPENDIX 1

Leadership: Progress and Impact in Secondary and Special Schools

The size, context and nature of the communities of the 14 secondary schools in Gwynedd vary considerably, including pupil numbers entitled to free school meals.

A number of secondary schools have also seen considerable changes within the senior leadership teams over the past few years. Senior leaders at all levels have been supported by the Authority, and every new head teacher in post has been assigned a mentor. Head teachers and senior leaders also receive support and training through national programmes, the professional offer from GwE and bespoke support from SIAs.

In most schools, members of the SLT in schools support their head teachers well and have an appropriate understanding of areas of responsibility.

Most schools have clear systems in place to support middle leaders, to provide support and to ensure a high level of accountability for the quality of their work at this tier. At best, there is a meeting calendar in place and discussions focus on teaching, standards, and learner progress.

At the middle tier, there are several examples in schools of effective leadership that ensure robust experiences for learners and high standards on the classroom floor and beyond. Nevertheless, there is still variation in the quality and impact of middle leaders in general across schools in the authority.

There are clear self-evaluation and improvement planning processes across most schools and there are fixed periods for lesson observations, discussions with learners and stakeholders and work scrutiny across the school. SIAs have collaborated with all schools to support their quality enhancement processes. Within Gwynedd schools, five networking partnership alliances have been established. Meetings have now been scheduled between schools, including joint scrutiny of work exercises and lesson observations. This has boosted the confidence of senior leaders in evaluating the quality of experiences for learners and provides schools with an independent judgement on their provision. At best, this collaboration has resulted in creating agreed professional development programmes between teachers within the alliance. Overall, leaders at every level are confident in reaching a judgement on strengths and areas for improvement within their schools. There is room to boost the confidence of leaders in evaluating the impact of teaching on learners' standards and progress.

Collaboration with Governors is beneficial in most schools and, at best, members of the Governing Body are actively involved in schools' evaluation processes and collaborate closely with leaders to set a strategic direction.

Addressing further improvements

- Respond purposefully to the requirements of the new Framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability.
- Continue to respond to findings from evaluation processes and ensure subsequent monitoring to measure the impact of implementation.
- Continue to align the quality of approach by leaders at every level.
- Ensure better understanding and accuracy of standards and progress in subjects, particularly so the skills.

Improve Teaching and Learning: Progress and Impact in Secondary and Special Schools

Developing pedagogy in the Authority's secondary schools has involved a great deal of work and investment. Useful and high-quality guidance and training has been delivered to teachers internally by senior leaders and externally by GwE. The strategies followed to improve the quality of pedagogy in schools vary e.g., Building Learning Power, Mike Gershon and Mark Burns teaching principles. Following the pandemic, several schools have also invested in strategies to develop pupils' independence and ability to work more independently.

Evaluation processes over the last year have focused on positive learning environments and good teacher-pupil relationships in a large number of lessons. Expectations were high in several lessons observed with teachers providing useful support and guidance to learners. Various activities are found to be appropriately challenging in most lessons and engage learners. There is room to further develop elements of differentiation in lessons and to ensure an appropriate level of challenge to meet the requirements of pupils of different abilities.

The quality and effectiveness of feedback varies in schools. Although a number of teachers acknowledge good work and give advice on how to improve, this is not consistent and further work remains to be done to ensure improvements in the area.

Addressing further improvements

- Improve the quality and impact of feedback for learners.
- Align standards of teaching and quality of planning for skills.
- Support and train practitioners to set an appropriate level of challenge.
- Ensure that there are appropriate accountability arrangements in place to drive improvements in pedagogy.
- Align the quality of feedback given to pupils ensuring that it allows pupils to make appropriate progress in their learning.

Curriculum and Provision: Progress and Impact in Secondary and Special Schools

Schools deliver a broad and balanced curriculum for pupils. Successful collaboration exists with other schools and colleges to widen choices for KS4 and sixth form pupils. A wide variety of general and vocational courses are offered which meet pupils' interests and abilities. There are comprehensive extra-curricular programmes in place in schools.

All schools have developed a clear and focused vision for the delivery of the new Curriculum. They have also continued to develop an understanding of the 4 purposes which are celebrated in classrooms and underpin planning. Every school is also continuing to experiment with different approaches to planning, teaching and ensuring rich experiences. Planning over time to ensure progression, ensuring attention is given to each statement of what matters and the mandatory elements, is still developing. Schools will need to evaluate the provision and modify as required.

The Welsh language is prominent in schools' curriculum design, and the provision reflects this vision successfully in most schools. The experiences planned to promote pupils' skills in Welsh and literacy are rich and broad. In most schools, there are well-planned opportunities to promote the development of skills in the curriculum. There is further work to be done to ensure planning for progression and continuity in skills.

Assessment arrangements for the new curriculum vary from school to school and continue to be undeveloped in a few schools.

There are good examples of effective partnerships with feeder primary schools. This work is ongoing.

Addressing further improvements

- Continue to strengthen plans for delivering the new curriculum focusing on reflecting the vision shared by all stakeholders, assessment and progress and on further developing transition from primary.
- Ensure progression and continuity for learners in the skills.

Learner Standards and Progress: Progress and Impact in Secondary and Special Schools

Schools operate tracking systems allowing leaders to identify those pupils underperforming. The response to findings in schools varies, with some examples of thorough procedures in place to target appropriate support in some schools. Other examples show insufficiently robust follow-up resulting in outcomes not being as good as expected.

According to findings from lesson observations in schools, overall, most pupils are making appropriate progress in their lessons with the majority pupils listening attentively and being prepared to respond. Most pupils were seen to be responding positively to their teachers in the majority of schools however a large number of schools in the authority are prioritising developing positive attitudes to learning by learners. Overall, pupils' reading skills vary. Some learners were seen to be confident readers and given the opportunity, using reading strategies successfully to help them analyse and understand text. Oral skills vary with most pupils being able to confidently express themselves orally in both languages, whilst others are more reluctant to respond. Given the opportunity, pupils produce extended writing for a range of purposes and audiences in a large number of subjects however the quality of work is inconsistent.

The majority of pupils were seen to be applying numeracy skills appropriately across the curriculum and their digital skills are developing. GwE SIAs have worked closely over the course of the year to support schools to develop clear strategies to develop learners' literacy, numeracy and digital skills across every school.

Addressing further improvements

- Align GCSE standards of attainment.
- Continue to plan and map out opportunities to ensure progression in skills.
- Ensure that developing pupils' Welsh language skills is a priority.
- Improve and align the quality of feedback to ensure progression in standards.

APPENDIX 2

Leadership: Progress and Impact in Primary School Clusters

Across Gwynedd primary schools there is a mix of headteachers, from the most experienced in the authority to those who have been appointed to their first headship role in the last three years as well as acting headteachers. Headteachers' teaching responsibilities vary - some teach over half the time and others teach part-time or less.

Leadership in the majority of schools is good with many very good aspects. There are two primary schools in Estyn follow-up category. There is no primary school in Estyn statutory category.

Most schools have a clear staffing structure, with leaders on all levels aware of their responsibilities and playing an important part in school improvement processes. Most have robust evaluation procedures. Every school is gradually evolving their evaluation processes to meet the requirements of the new curriculum and in every cluster, there are plans in place to develop a response to the new accountability framework. Nearly every headteacher has engaged in GwE's self-evaluation and improvement planning workshops. Most schools have a comprehensive improvement plan with priorities leading clearly to evaluation processes as a result. In many clusters, schools collaborate on cluster-agreed priorities in aspects such as Pedagogy, ALN and Digital.

At a headteacher level, most schools in the clusters collaborate well with mature discussions taking place to agree on whole cluster strategic matters or to ensure similar local approaches. Collaboration on documents and plans is well-established in many schools within and across clusters. In most individual schools in the clusters, teachers collaborate well, and successful practices are shared across schools and across clusters. In most clusters, collaboration between teaching assistants is

developing effectively to create a very effective tier of assistants in almost every school who are willing to take the lead and experiment to support individuals and specific groups of children.

Some clusters and individual schools have committed to GwE's Schools Partnership Programme. Schools committed to the programme have engaged in cycles of self-review and peer-review and provide mutual support to improve priority areas. Following training for Peer Reviewers and Improvement Facilitators over the year, work is ongoing in these clusters and cycles are being completed. Further training is proposed to equip more improvement facilitators and to roll out the mindset to all school staff.

Almost all schools give high priority to developing Welsh and have a relevant priority or plan to continue to develop their provision based on a thorough self-evaluation of the area. Cluster work to develop the Welsh language reinforces this effectively.

Collaboration with local secondary schools is strengthening. It is hoped that the cluster's transition strategy will strengthen this collaboration even further.

Addressing further improvements

- Continue to develop teachers' leadership roles and collaboration between schools.
- Respond successfully to the requirements of the new Framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability.
- Continue to develop leadership on all levels and create self-improving organisations.

Improve Teaching and Learning: Progress and Impact in Primary School Clusters

Nearly all headteachers are leading teams of good teachers with many examples of excellent teaching. Teachers in most schools are enthusiastic and are successful in ensuring good standards or better in the majority of classes.

In most schools, evaluation processes have found teaching and learning to be good, at least, with many being very good or better. This judgement is reinforced through professional conversations with headteachers, teachers and the rest of staff. This has been confirmed by SIAs during visits by means of learning walks, joint scrutiny of work with schools and opportunities to talk to pupils about their work. There are a number of examples where the work of individual teachers or cluster groups was used to contribute to regional training, or national presentations on pedagogy.

Expectations are high in nearly all classes, with pupils' work and assessments capturing the progress they make in developing cross-curricular skills through rich experiences.

Provision for the 3-8 age range is a strength in the majority of schools, with Foundation Learning principles and effective use of outdoor learning areas having been well-established. Many schools are gradually transferring the mindset to develop similar approaches in terms of outdoor learning for all classes.

Leadership in the majority of schools is very good. Pupils are given regular opportunities to influence their learning and to have a strategic input in their schools' activity.

Arrangements for pupils on the ALN register are good or better in almost every school and cluster. In some clusters, coordinators from every school meet on a regular basis, under the guidance of the catchment area advocate, and their work has been used as regional good practice. The expertise of assistants also drives good progress by these groups of pupils.

The close working relationship between staff and pupils is a strength in all clusters, with concern and respect ensuring a pleasant atmosphere and ethos in every school. Teaching staff in every

school are models of good spoken language, which has a very effective influence on pupils' language development. The enthusiasm and concern shown by staff in all schools ensures that the majority of pupils have a very positive attitude to their learning, showing interest and dedication. Most schools have appropriate wellbeing interventions in place for the few pupils whose attitude is not as good. Teachers in all schools give their pupils a voice and ensure valuable opportunities for them to influence their learning.

Many schools in the clusters are prioritising the understanding of wellbeing amongst their staff. A high percentage of staff in the clusters, head teachers, teachers and assistants alike, have either followed or are following the Trauma Informed Schools Diploma training. This has had a positive impact on pupils in most schools.

Addressing further improvements

- Continue with the effective collaboration in cluster groups
- Ensure allocated time for teachers to share aspects of excellent learning across the cluster.
- Continue to develop the provision for the Welsh language promoting high standards and social use amongst pupils.

Curriculum and Provision: Progress and Impact in Primary School Clusters

Preparations for delivering the Curriculum for Wales in September 2022 have been good or better in most schools. Every school has a clear vision developed through discussions and gathering the views of all stakeholders. Some schools have been identified to showcase successful practices on a regional and national scale in regard to their approach to forming a vision and planning for the new Curriculum.

Every school has turned its vision into an effective curriculum design, which continues to develop and evolve as the depth of knowledge and provision plans mature.

The Welsh language is prominent in schools' curriculum design, and the provision reflects this vision successfully. The ethos and provision in schools for developing Welsh language skills and literacy are rich, and the experiences provided have been carefully and purposefully planned and are both stimulating and contemporary. Most practitioners understand the importance of their role in modelling and developing the language. Consequently, this promotes learners' enjoyment and confident use of the language in lessons and beyond their classrooms.

This year, all schools have continued to develop an understanding of the 4 purposes. They are being celebrated in classrooms and are a focus in planning. Every school is also continuing to experiment with different approaches to planning, teaching and ensuring rich experiences. The process of planning over time to ensure progression, ensuring attention is given to each statement of what matters and the mandatory elements, is still developing.

The majority of clusters have also created groups to discuss and develop the Areas of Learning and Experience which has ensured that all members of staff in every school have been involved in the discussion surrounding the areas, have understood the progression steps and learning descriptions and collaborated on planning. INSET and twilight sessions have been used over the year to cascade information from one group to the other.

Addressing further improvements

- Continue to identify what progression looks like to plan next steps purposefully over time.

- Continue to conduct discussions/professional dialogue regarding learner progress with learners themselves, school staff and staff in other schools.

Learner Standards and Progress: Progress and Impact in Primary School Clusters

Standards and the progress pupils make are good in most schools, and very good in the majority.

Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are developing well and are being applied across the curriculum in the majority of schools, with digital skills developing well. The majority of pupils in most schools have good Welsh language skills, and they listen, speak and communicate with increasing confidence in the language. However, the impact of the pandemic continues to affect the oracy skills of a few pupils and the standard of extended writing and application of numeracy of a few older pupils. These aspects are being addressed in improvement plans and intervention programmes in these schools.

The majority of schools have been collaborating to ensure a procedure for identifying pupils' baseline upon entering school. Many schools are also developing appropriate arrangements to assess pupils' progress as they follow the new curriculum.

In the majority of schools, there is agreement across the cluster to focus on capturing the progress of individuals in class through assessment for learning procedures.

In most schools, different personalised spreadsheets are used for individual pupils which capture examples of pupils' standard assessment results and wellbeing measures and attitudes to work and school over time. Many schools are also trialling tracking tools to help ensure that assessments lead to planning the next steps in learning.

Addressing further improvements

- Agree on ways to capture and ensure progress in skills, ensuring effective transition.
- Further develop pupils' ability to use and apply their literacy, numeracy and digital skills across the curriculum.

APPENDIX 3

REGIONAL PRIORITIES AND PROVISION 2022-2023

OBJECTIVE 1 - CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT

Supporting a national curriculum with equity and excellence at its core that sets high standards for all learners.

3-16 EDUCATION CONTINUUM

<p>Regional data:</p> <p>Pedagogy transition project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools: 25 <p>Pontio (Transition) workshop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools: 284 <p>3-8 Toolkit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for schools: 74 Number of visits: 184 Cluster support (number of schools): 132 3-8 Network: 735 attended regionally. Workshops for Teachers and Teaching Assistants new to the 3-8 age 778 attended regionally. 	<p>Local Authority Data:</p> <p>Pedagogy transition project</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Clusters</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Schools</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>Y Moelwyn/Maenofferen Dyffryn Ogwen/Bodfeurig/Tregarth Ardudwy /Cefn Coch</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Pontio Workshops:</p> <table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>71</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>3-8 Toolkit:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Number of schools</th> <th>Number of visits</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>18</td> <td>39</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Cluster support (number of schools):</p> <table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>65</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Network:</p> <table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>180</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Workshops:</p> <table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>191</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Clusters	Gwynedd:	3		Schools	Gwynedd:	Y Moelwyn/Maenofferen Dyffryn Ogwen/Bodfeurig/Tregarth Ardudwy /Cefn Coch	Gwynedd:	71		Number of schools	Number of visits	Gwynedd:	18	39	Gwynedd:	65	Gwynedd:	180	Gwynedd:	191
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Gwynedd:	18	39																					
Gwynedd:	65																						
Gwynedd:	180																						
Gwynedd:	191																						

CURRICULUM REALISATION (CURRICULUM FOR WALES)

<p>Regional data:</p> <p>Number attending national on-line CfW Professional Learning sessions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total of 668 across Wales - 251 from GwE 	<p>Local Authority Data:</p> <table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>39</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Gwynedd:	39
Gwynedd:	39		

AoLE TEAMS

<p>Regional data:</p>	<p>Local Authority Data:</p>
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<p>More website hits - access to materials and examples shared by networks and schools:</p> <p>Between 1/9/21 and 20/1/23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8418 CfW GwE Support Centre 8100 CiG Canolfan Cefnogaeth GwE <p>Between 1/9/21 a 30/3/23:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9021 CfW GwE Support Centre 8504 CiG Canolfan Cefnogaeth GwE 	<p>N/A</p>
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OBJECTIVE 2 - DEVELOPING A HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION PROFESSION Improving teaching and learning in our schools											
MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES											
<p>Regional data:</p> <p>Primary webinars</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Power Language + Institut français: May - June 2022: 35 schools (41 teachers) <p>Primary upskilling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> June - July 2022 - 3 sessions - 8 schools (13 teachers) November 2023 - 1 session - 7 schools - (9 teachers) January 2023 - 2 sessions - 8 schools (10 teachers) <p>Power Language - Primary Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16.11.22 - 28 schools (30 teachers) 21.3.23 - 31 schools (36 teachers) <p>Primary Network Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> February - March 2023 - Number of schools: 25 	<p>Local Authority Data:</p> <p>Primary webinars</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="826 1016 1414 1061"> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>7</td> </tr> </table> <p>Power Language - 3 Year Subscription</p> <p>Gwynedd (31.10.22): 2 Gwynedd (31.03.22): 15 Gwynedd (04.07.22): 16</p> <p>Primary upskilling:</p> <p>Gwynedd (June/July 2022): 2 Gwynedd (November 2023): 1</p> <p>Power Language - Primary Training:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="826 1630 1383 1758"> <tr> <td></td> <td>16.11.22</td> <td>21.3.23</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>4</td> <td>4</td> </tr> </table> <p>Primary Network Meeting</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="826 1928 1401 1973"> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>10</td> </tr> </table>	Gwynedd:	7		16.11.22	21.3.23	Gwynedd:	4	4	Gwynedd:	10
Gwynedd:	7										
	16.11.22	21.3.23									
Gwynedd:	4	4									
Gwynedd:	10										

<p>Cerdd iaith German:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of schools: 3 <p>Sharing successful practice Primary February 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of schools: 6 <p>Designing for Languages Programme October 2022 - March 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Languages and the Welsh Language: 26 schools <p>Secondary Network Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> November 2022 - Number of schools: 29 February 2023 - Sharing successful practice: 15 schools. 	<p>Cerdd iaith German:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </table> <p>Sharing successful practice Primary February 2023</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </table> <p>Designing for Languages Project</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td>October 2022</td> <td>March 2023</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>10</td> <td>8</td> </tr> </table> <p>Secondary Network Meeting</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td>November 2022</td> <td>February 2023</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>7</td> <td>4</td> </tr> </table>	Gwynedd:	1	Gwynedd:	0		October 2022	March 2023	Gwynedd:	10	8		November 2022	February 2023	Gwynedd:	7	4
Gwynedd:	1																
Gwynedd:	0																
	October 2022	March 2023															
Gwynedd:	10	8															
	November 2022	February 2023															
Gwynedd:	7	4															

HLTA - TALP

<p>Regional data:</p> <p>Newly appointed teaching assistants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 62 <p>Practising teaching assistants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 137 <p>Aspiring HLTA Cylch 4, 5 and 6:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 88 <p>HLTA status Cylch 3 and 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 38 <p>New HLTA Assessors' Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 <p>Curriculum for Wales presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 219 	<p>Local Authority Data:</p> <p>Induction</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>3</td> </tr> </table> <p>Practising teaching assistants</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>20</td> </tr> </table> <p>Aspiring HLTA Cylch 4, 5 and 6</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>7</td> </tr> </table> <p>HLTA status Cylch 3 & 4</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>3</td> </tr> </table> <p>New HLTA Assessors' Training</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </table> <p>Curriculum for Wales presentation:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>30</td> </tr> </table>	Gwynedd:	3	Gwynedd:	20	Gwynedd:	7	Gwynedd:	3	Gwynedd:	0	Gwynedd:	30
Gwynedd:	3												
Gwynedd:	20												
Gwynedd:	7												
Gwynedd:	3												
Gwynedd:	0												
Gwynedd:	30												

Y Gymraeg (PL)

<p>Regional data:</p> <p>Sabbatical Courses 2022-2023:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 27 	<p>Local Authority Data:</p> <p>Sabbatical Courses 2022-2023: Gwynedd:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welsh in a Year course: 0 Part 2 Spring term: 0 Part 2+3: 0
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<p>GwE attendance at heads' forums:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 <p>Ein Llais Ni</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case studies submitted: 65 Schools committed to the project: 81 <p>Access to The National Centre for Learning Welsh courses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total learning activities: 54 Number continuing with learning activities: 23 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part 3 summer term only: 0 <p>Attendance at heads' forums:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="826 300 1415 344"> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </table> <p>Ein Llais Ni - case studies submitted:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="826 441 1415 486"> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>34</td> </tr> </table> <p>Ein Llais Ni – schools committed to the project:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="826 555 1415 600"> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>41/49</td> </tr> </table> <p>Access to The National Centre for Learning Welsh courses</p> <p>Total learning activities</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="826 741 1458 786"> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>11</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>Number continuing with learning activities</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="826 855 1458 900"> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>9</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Gwynedd:	2	Gwynedd:	34	Gwynedd:	41/49	Gwynedd:	11		Gwynedd:	9	
Gwynedd:	2												
Gwynedd:	34												
Gwynedd:	41/49												
Gwynedd:	11												
Gwynedd:	9												
A LEVEL													
<p>Regional data:</p> <p>Number attending post-16 leaders' conference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 35 	<p>Local Authority Data:</p> <p>Number attending post-16 leaders' conference:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="826 1133 1415 1178"> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>11</td> </tr> </table>	Gwynedd:	11										
Gwynedd:	11												
EVALUATION AND APPRAISAL													
<p>Regional data:</p> <p>KiVa Anti-bullying Research Study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of schools: 30 	<p>Local Authority Data:</p> <p>KiVa Anti-bullying Research Study:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="826 1386 1415 1431"> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>3</td> </tr> </table>	Gwynedd:	3										
Gwynedd:	3												
ITE													
<p>Regional data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant increase in the number (%) of short-term supply teachers (STS) attending national sessions 1 and 2 of the professional learning programme. There were 51 (81%) newly qualified STS in post in Session 1, a considerable increase in comparison with the previous year. External Validator Programme - 100% of GwE External Validators (83) and External Mentors attended the national training workshop and have a sound understanding of the NQT Induction Process. Number of NQTs attending mandatory PL 	<p>Local Authority Data:</p> <p>N/A</p>												

sessions: 172 Regional data: Analysis of NQTs attending mandatory PL sessions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 386 	
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DIGITAL

Regional data: Number registered on Digital Training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 386 	Local Authority Data: Data on Hwb use - average number of schools engaging during quarter 4: <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">96.5%</td> </tr> </table>	Gwynedd:	96.5%
Gwynedd:	96.5%		

MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

Regional data: <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th style="text-align: center;">Number of schools</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Number of visits</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Individual subject support for primary schools</td> <td style="text-align: center;">6</td> <td style="text-align: center;">18</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Individual support for secondary schools</td> <td style="text-align: center;">32</td> <td style="text-align: center;">79</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Network meetings for Heads of Mathematics</td> <td style="text-align: center;">47</td> <td style="text-align: center;">N/A</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Number of schools	Number of visits	Individual subject support for primary schools	6	18	Individual support for secondary schools	32	79	Network meetings for Heads of Mathematics	47	N/A	Local Authority Data: Support for primary schools: <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th style="text-align: center;">Number of schools</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Number of visits</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Number of clusters</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Number of cluster visits</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Gwynedd</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> Individual support for secondary schools <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th style="text-align: center;">Number of schools</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Number of visits</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Gwynedd</td> <td style="text-align: center;">7</td> <td style="text-align: center;">25</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> Network meetings for Heads of Mathematics <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th style="text-align: center;">Number of schools (November)</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Number of schools (March 2023)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Gwynedd</td> <td style="text-align: center;">12</td> <td style="text-align: center;">12</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> Secondary Numeracy Coordinators' Network Meetings Gwynedd: 10 Primary and Secondary Mathematics Workshop <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th style="text-align: center;">Number of secondary delegates</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Number of primary delegates</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Number of schools	Number of visits	Number of clusters	Number of cluster visits	Gwynedd	0	0	2	2		Number of schools	Number of visits	Gwynedd	7	25		Number of schools (November)	Number of schools (March 2023)	Gwynedd	12	12		Number of secondary delegates	Number of primary delegates			
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Gwynedd	12	12																																							
	Number of secondary delegates	Number of primary delegates																																							

	Gwynedd	23	40				
ENGLISH AND LITERACY							
Regional data: Bespoke support for schools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary: 145 Secondary: 50 	Local Authority Data: <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>12 - Secondary</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>14 - Primary</td> </tr> </table>			Gwynedd:	12 - Secondary		14 - Primary
Gwynedd:	12 - Secondary						
	14 - Primary						
WELSH AND LITERACY							
Regional data Literacy Co-ordinators Network Meeting (Welsh-medium and bilingual schools): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20 'Ein Llais Ni' Project (GwE) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of schools involved in the project: 12 'Designing for Languages CfW' project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secondary school Welsh Departments involved in the project: 6 Members of 'GwE' Teams/Google Classroom: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Y Gymraeg: 27 Y Gymraeg – Uwchradd YCS: 19 	Regional data Literacy Co-ordinators Network Meeting (Welsh-medium and bilingual schools): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gwynedd: 10 'Ein Llais Ni' Project (GwE) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gwynedd: 6 'Designing for Languages CfW' project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gwynedd: 3 Members of 'GwE' Teams/Google Classroom: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Y Gymraeg - Gwynedd: 14 						
SCIENCE							
Regional data: Heads of Science Networks Autumn term 2022: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 37 Technology Development Group Network: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 schools Heads of Science Networks Spring term 2023: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 38 Receiving bespoke school support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 22 	Local Authority Data: Heads of Science Networks Autumn term 2022: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gwynedd/Anglesey: 12 schools Heads of Science Networks Spring term 2023: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gwynedd/Anglesey: 11 schools Receiving bespoke school support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 22 						
3-8							

<p>Regional data:</p> <p>Support for schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of schools: 74 Number of visits: 184 Cluster support (number of schools): 132 <p>3-8 Network:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 735 attended regionally <p>Workshops for Teachers and TAs new to the 3-8 age:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 778 attended regionally 	<p>Local Authority Data:</p> <p>Support for schools:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Number of schools</th> <th>Number of visits</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>18</td> <td>39</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Cluster support:</p> <table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>65</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>3-8 Network</p> <table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>180</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Workshop:</p> <table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>191</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Number of schools	Number of visits	Gwynedd:	18	39	Gwynedd:	65	Gwynedd:	180	Gwynedd:	191
	Number of schools	Number of visits											
Gwynedd:	18	39											
Gwynedd:	65												
Gwynedd:	180												
Gwynedd:	191												

OBJECTIVE 3 - LEADERSHIP
Supporting inspirational leaders working collaboratively to raise standards. Including prospective leaders and professional networks

LEADERSHIP

Regional data:

	2021-22
1. Middle Leadership Development Programme	102
2. Senior Leaders' Development Programme	72
3. Prospective Heads' Development Programme (preparing for NPQH)	35
4. Acting and New Headteacher Development Programme	32
5. Development Programme for Experienced Headteachers	17
TOTAL	258

Numbers following Leadership programmes

<u>Programme</u>	<u>2021-22</u>	<u>2022-23</u>	<u>Difference</u>

MLDP	74	86	+14%
RhDAG	29	41	+30%
SLDP	44	74	+40%
RhDUA	27	30	+10%
Total	174	231	+25%

<u>Rhaglen / Programme</u>	<u>2021-22</u>	<u>2022-23</u>
RhDDB (CPCP) / AHT (NPQH)	35	*35 applications
Penaethiaid Newydd a Mewn gofal / New and Acting Headteachers	15	30
Penaethiaid Profiadol / Experienced Headteachers	17	6

OBJECTIVE 4 - STRONG AND INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS

Committed to excellence, equity and wellbeing

REIGNITING LEARNING

Regional data:

Improving Fluency in Oral Reading (iFOR)

- A total of 52 schools and 66 teachers have accessed on-line training videos.

The number of teachers who have used Google Classroom:

- 63 have used the English resources
- 41 have used the Welsh resources.
- Schools registering to access training videos and intervention resources in (2021/22): 52
- Schools registering to access training videos and intervention resources (September 22): 31

iFOR Training sessions

- A total of 28 schools and 32 teachers registered to receive training and resources relating to reading

Local Data:

Improving Fluency in Oral Reading (iFOR)

Schools registering to access training videos and intervention resources in (2021/22)

Gwynedd:	12
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Schools registering to access training videos and resources (September 22)

Gwynedd:	2
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<p>fluency interventions (Repeated Reading and High Frequency Words).</p>							
<p>Keeping Pupils Reading (KPR).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers from GwE schools partaking: 45 <p>Keeping Pupils Reading (KPR). Details regarding numbers of teachers and parents and on-line resources views:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of attendees: 9 <p>Keeping Pupils Reading (KPR) Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total of GwE schools engaging: 45 A total of 8 schools and 16 teachers accessed Webinar 1 and 1 school and 1 teacher joined to access Webinar 2. 	<p>Keeping Pupils Reading (KPR) Project. Number of schools partaking:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="820 423 1409 510"> <tr> <td></td> <td>2022-23</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>6</td> </tr> </table> <p>Webinar:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="820 584 1409 629"> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </table>		2022-23	Gwynedd:	6	Gwynedd:	1
	2022-23						
Gwynedd:	6						
Gwynedd:	1						
<p>Remote Instruction of Language and Literacy (RILL) - PHASE 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A total of 33 schools were trained in RILL (58 teachers) during the 2021-22 school year, with the majority being Welsh-medium A total of 61 schools have been trained in RILL during the autumn term 2022 (RILL Cymraeg = 27 schools, 39 teachers; RILL English = 34 schools, 60 teachers). 	<p>Remote Instruction of Language and Literacy (RILL)</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="820 1016 1409 1055"> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>21</td> </tr> </table>	Gwynedd:	21				
Gwynedd:	21						

Keeping Pupils Reading (KPR) Project

	07/2021	07/2022
Number of schools renewing licence(s) directly with SR since September 2021	30	15
Number of pupils joining Google Classroom	40	40
Number of staff joining Hwb	71	73
Viewed video guidelines: Headsprout at home (Parents and staff members)	399	513
Viewed video guidelines: How to use Headsprout stories (Parents)	106	363
Viewed video guidelines: How to administer Benchmarks (Parents)	18	46
Viewed video guidelines: How to administer	13	54

Developing Fluency (Parents)		
Viewed video guidelines: How to organise a free trial/purchase or renew licence (School staff)	65	77
Viewed video guidelines: How to add pupils to a programme (School staff)	84	135
Viewed video guidelines: How to check scores (School staff)	39	85
Viewed video guidelines: How to input Benchmark scores (School staff)	16	25
Viewed video guidelines: How to access Google Classroom (Parents)	33	50
Webinar 1 Getting started with Headsprout	-	2
Webinar 2 Monitoring progress when using Headsprout	-	0

STRATEGY TO SUPPORT PARENTS / CARERS

<p>Regional data:</p> <p>Users registered across the region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helping Your Child to Learn: 378 Helping your Teen to Learn: 451 	<p>Local Authority Data:</p> <p>Helping Your Child to Learn:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>83</td> </tr> </table> <p>Helping your Teen to Learn:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>11</td> </tr> </table>	Gwynedd:	83	Gwynedd:	11
Gwynedd:	83				
Gwynedd:	11				

OBJECTIVE 5 - SUPPORTING A SELF-IMPROVING SYSTEM

Supporting a system in which the education profession has the skills, capacity and agency to continually learn and improve their practice

PEER ENGAGEMENT

<p>Regional data:</p> <p>Number of schools/clusters/alliances committed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 206 / 37 <p>Number of Peer Reviewers trained:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 266

Number of Improvement Facilitators trained:

- 226

SCHOOLS CAUSING CONCERN**Regional data:****Secondary Schools**

- Special Measures: 3
- Significant Improvement: 1

Primary schools

- Special Measures: 2
- Significant Improvement: 2

Local Authority Data**Secondary Schools in statutory category:**

Gwynedd:	0
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Primary Schools in statutory category

Gwynedd:	0
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COACHING AND MENTORING**Regional data:****Train the Trainer Welsh training**

- 21 (56% of the All-Wales Welsh cohort)

Train the Trainer English training:

- 32

Local Authority Data:

Gwynedd:	Wel: 9
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COMMITTEE	Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee
TITLE OF THE REPORT	Post-16 Education Project in Arfon
DATE OF MEETING	23 January 2024
RELEVANT OFFICER	Debbie Anne Williams Jones Assistant Head: Corporate Services
CABINET MEMBER	Councillor Beca Brown, Cabinet Member for Education

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Post-16 Education has been identified as one of the main priorities in the Council Plan 2018-23, and it is also referred to as a part of the priorities of the current plan, namely the Council Plan 2023-28.
- 1.2 In January 2018, a report was submitted to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee noting the intention to undertake an assessment of the current provision, noting the possibility that the findings of the assessment would form the basis for further discussions regarding the future pathway for post-16 provision in the county.
- 1.3 In addition, at its meeting on 12 June 2018, the Cabinet approved the principle of considering the current post-16 situation, ensuring that the Authority would not wish to miss the opportunity to strengthen the provision in Arfon, should there be a case to do so. To this end, a sum of £18m of the Band B Funding, Sustainable Learning Communities Programme.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 As a part of the work of looking at the field, Iaith Cyf were commissioned to carry out research on behalf of the Department, in order to enrich and validate the evidence base gathered from desktop research.
- 2.2 After considering the evidence and information gathered as part of the research, a report entitled "Overview of Post-16 Education" was created, which confirmed that there was a case for change. A copy of the report can be seen by following this [link](#).
- 2.3 Consequently, on 10 March 2020, a report was submitted to the Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet seeking permission:
"... to hold discussions with stakeholders in order to consider the current provision and highlight the key considerations in order to co-identify the direction and opportunities to strengthen the post-16 education provision in Arfon. Afterwards, a further report will be submitted to the Cabinet in order to report back on the outcomes of the discussions."

- 2.4 The period of informal engagement took place for six weeks between 10 November and 22 December 2020. The purpose of the engagement was to give stakeholders such as learners, parents, staff, governors and the wider community an opportunity to present observations and ideas regarding the post-16 education system in Arfon, within the context of the Council's vision and objectives.
- 2.5 As a part of the engagement process, the following background documents were published on the Council's website:
- Cabinet Report 10 March 2020
 - Overview of Post-16 Education (March 2020)
 - IAITH Cyf Report 'Assessment of the current post 16 education provision in Gwynedd' (April 2019)
 - Presentation (October 2020)
 - The Vision and Objectives
 - Response Form

These documents can be accessed by following this [link](#).

- 2.6 On 4 February 2021, a report was submitted to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee on the informal engagement process on post-16 education. This report can be accessed by following this [link](#).

3. Cabinet 7 March 2023

- 3.1 On 7 March 2023, a report was submitted before the Cabinet, reporting back on the main messages of the informal engagement held. A copy of the report can be seen by following this [link](#).
- 3.2 In the report, the main observations received under the following themes are detailed -
- Quality of Education
 - The Welsh Language
 - Learners' well-being
 - Travelling
 - Facilities / Learning environment
 - Virtual Learning
- 3.3 Attention was also given to new considerations that emerged due to the pandemic, namely:
- Virtual Learning
 - E-Sgol
 - 16+ Travel Pass
 - Estyn Thematic Report '[Post-16 Partnership](#)'
- 3.4 As a result of the post-consultation feedback, the Cabinet's approval was sought "to undertake further work with stakeholders who make up the Gwynedd and Ynys Môn Post-16 Education Consortium to develop possible models for post-16 education in Arfon following on from the informal engagement on post-16 education in Arfon that took place in the autumn term 2020."

4 Cabinet 28 November 2023

- 4.1 On 28 November 2023, a report was submitted before the Cabinet reporting back on two working groups held with the headteachers of Arfon secondary schools in the Summer Term 2023. A copy of the report can be seen by following this [link](#).
- 4.2 The following principles were noted by the headteachers, which likely followed the discussion in the working groups, as well as future aspirations for the system:
- Fairness for the learners
 - Standards
 - Welshness
 - The voice of the stakeholders
 - Joint ownership
 - Trying to see the bigger picture
 - The impact of any change on the community
 - Sustainable system
- 4.3 The headteachers generally noted that the existing partnership system (Gwynedd and Ynys Môn Post-16 Education Consortium) and collaboration between schools worked well.
- 4.4 On 13 September 2023, the Education Department shared the conclusions of the two working groups held with Arfon secondary headteachers, which highlighted the reasons why the case for change was not as strong, i.e.:
- The Estyn Thematic Report 'Post-16 Partnerships' (January 2021) acknowledges the Gwynedd and Ynys Môn Post-16 Education Consortium as good practice.
 - Estyn Report on Cyngor Gwynedd Education Services (June 2023), noting that there are no obvious shortcomings in the Arfon Post-16 provision, although it is noted that there is a delay in moving forward with this project over the past years.
 - Arfon's secondary school A Level Results in the summer 2023 appeared to be positive on the whole - although it must be acknowledged that this initial data had not been verified and that differences remain between courses and between organisations.
 - Collaboration between Arfon secondary schools is good, and there is no desire to see any change in the system to have a harmful impact on some secondary schools in Arfon.
 - Ensuring learner well-being is key, and a key part of that is to enable the learners to continue with their post-16 education in their communities.
 - The need to look at the secondary system in its entirety, and that post-16 education cannot be considered in isolation, without considering the impact on KS3 and KS4 (11-16 years) also.
 - The need to consider the likely impact of the demographic change on the schools system in its entirety in the future.
 - The challenge of having to present a successful business case to Welsh Government in order to release the money (including match funding from the Council) when the case for change is weak, or more likely, the challenge of submitting a successful business case to Welsh Government in order to continue with the status quo.
- 4.5 As a result of the post-consultation feedback, the Cabinet's approval was sought *"to approve to redirect part of the Arfon Post-16 Education project's budget in accordance with*

the report, to address the financial deficit in Band B projects that cannot be progressed at present due to the insufficient budget for them as a result of increased costs."

- 4.6 The Cabinet's approval was also sought for the Head of Education to hold discussions on reviewing the memorandum of understanding with the stakeholders which form the Gwynedd and Ynys Môn Post-16 Education Consortium with the intention of strengthening the arrangements and report back to the Cabinet with recommendations for the amendments agreed.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 The Education Department has also submitted an application to the Welsh Government to approve the redirection of the funding for the Post-16 education project in Arfon to meet the financial deficit in Band B projects, following the Cabinet's approval.
- 5.2 The Education Department will submit an application before the Gwynedd and Ynys Môn Consortium Lead Group early in 2024 in order to seek permission to hold a discussion on reviewing the memorandum of understanding with the stakeholders which form the Gwynedd and Ynys Môn Post-16 Education Consortium with the intention of strengthening the arrangements and report back to the Cabinet with recommendations for the amendments agreed.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 The members are asked to present any observations on the steps implemented and the next steps in terms of post-16 education in Arfon.