

Meeting:	Education & Economy Scrutiny Committee
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Title:	Outline of the Gwynedd TRAC project
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Member:	Councillor Cemlyn Rees Williams Cabinet Member for Education

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This report is presented at the request of the Scrutiny Committee to outline the TRAC project, which provides additional support to maintain vulnerable pupils within schools and/or to reengage with their education.

2. Project outline

- 2.1. TRAC is a project delivered across all six North Wales counties. The project aims to prevent vulnerable children and young people from disengaging with their education and as a result reduce the probability that they will become inactive and unemployed in the future.
- 2.2. TRAC is an EU funded project with a total value across the region of £39.6M. The project commenced in September 2015 and will come to an end on 31 July 2022.
- 2.3. Denbighshire County Council is co-ordinating the project across the region and in Gwynedd the Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Service within the Education Department lead the project. The total value of the project in Gwynedd is £4.6M (with £3.3M of European funds with the Council providing officer time to the value of £1.3M as match funding). We aim to support at least 1,340 children and young people by the time the project ends.

3. The provision

- 3.1. The project in Gwynedd employs 15 additional members of staff in the Education Department and works with children and young people of between 11 and 16 years of age (Year 6 to Year 11). To date we have supported 699 pupils in Gwynedd's schools.
- 3.2. TRAC provides a range of varied interventions which supports *but do not duplicate* provision within mainstream education, concentrating on raising the aspirations of the children and young people's referred to the project and supporting their reengagement with their education.
- 3.3. The support that offered through TRAC is tailored to the individual needs of the pupil and can include:
 - Counselling (therapeutic work)
 - Wellbeing / family support
 - One to one mentoring (support to raise motivation, self-esteem, personal health, etc.)
 - Careers support, tailored work placements, employer visits

- Support with attendance
- Work on raising attainment
- Support for pupils who receive their education outside the mainstream (e.g. pupils on Pecyn 25, or on the Home Education Register because of illness, etc.)
- Support for the provision that pupils receive from other services (such as the Children's Department, Child and Young People Mental Health Service, etc.)
- Intense support over a specific period for identified vulnerable Year 6 pupils to ensure a successful transition to secondary education.

3.4. In addition to the support that is directly provided by the TRAC team, the project has a budget of £450,000 to procure additional provision which including vocational courses and accreditations. Examples of provision that has been commissioned to date includes:

- Vocational Training Courses in fields such as catering, child care, the construction industry and first aid,
- BTEC Level 1 and 2 qualifications,
- Outdoor education courses such as NICAS, Duke of Edinburgh Award/Forest Schools, etc.,
- Wellbeing support, anger management, etc.,
- Music courses,
- Courses in personal health and substance misuse awareness

4. The approach

4.1. Working in partnership is imperative to the delivery of intervention and success of TRAC. The project brings together the Education Department, Schools and a range of partners within Children's Services, Careers Wales, Young People's Mental Health Services and others to ensure the best possible outcome for the children and young people it supports.

4.2. The core principles of TRAC in its work include:

- Being creative in its provision thinking outside the box about how we may overcome the barriers that the pupils are facing to their engagement with education;
- Designing provision that is bespoke to the individual and is young person centred;
- The ability to develop and build an effective relationship with the pupil;
- Being consistent, transparent and patience, as frequently the children and young people that we work with are facing a multitude of complex issues in their lives, which influences their ability to succeed.

4.3. A tool has been created to help identify pupils who would benefit from working with the TRAC project. The tool uses a number of key indicators, such as attendance, attainment, behaviour issues in school etc. to identify the individuals who would benefit from support as early as possible.

4.4. Having identified a pupil and received confirmation from the school and guardian that the individual would benefit from TRAC's intervention, an individual support package tailored to meet their needs and agreed with relevant partners, in order to work together to make substantive change to the individual.

- 4.5. On commencing work with the pupil, a TRAC key worker is allocated, who has responsibility for coordinating the provision that they will receive and working towards the best outcome possible. The impact that the TRAC intervention is having is monitored and reviewed regularly throughout the period that the individual is with the project and the support is adapted as required.
- 4.6. Once their time with TRAC is complete, an exit strategy will be prepared to ensure that the individual continues on a prosperous path, or to identify if additional support is required by another service or agency

5. Outcomes

5.1. The impact of the work TRAC undertakes can be measures in a number of ways:

- Increase in attendance and motivation (minimum of 10% increase in attendance within a term)
- Completion of a Level 1 or 2 course through TRAC to support their chosen post 16 path
- That the pupil is able to achieve their predicted grades within Key Stage 3 and 4
- Reduction in number of 'incidents' (e.g. truancy) from the commencement date of intervention until the end of the academic year
- Reduction in the number of exclusions within an academic year
- Increase in the soft skills of the pupil e.g. enhanced self-confidence (this is evidenced in a 'star outcome' tool that is used)
- The individual in year 11 moving on to further education, traineeship or employment

5.2. At the close of July 2022 the TRAC project in Gwynedd will

- Have supported 1,200 young people identified at risk of becoming 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' through disengagement
- 80% of the young people aged 16 supported will move onto Further Education or a traineeship
- 561 of the young people will exit the project with a reduced risk of becoming 'Not in Education, Employment or Training'
- 336 young people acquiring a Level 1 (equivalent to a GSCE A –E grade) or a Level 2 (equivalent to GSCE A* -C grade) qualification
- 140 of Year 6 pupils supported in their transition period

5.3. To date 699 pupils have received TRAC support in Gwynedd. With a range of positive outcomes from progressing to work or traineeship, increases in attendance and behaviour and support to young people whom have profound mental health issues.

- 439 have exited the project
- 215 are identified at being at a reduced risk of becoming NEET
- 75 have acquired a Level 1 or 2 accreditation
- 10 have secured employment or traineeship
- 99 Year 11 have successfully moved on to Further Education with no issues arising in college
- Unfortunately there are 42 who have a NEET status

- 5.4. Beyond the figures, the actual impact that TRAC is accomplishing in the lives of the children and young people that it supports is what matters. On a regular basis, we gather evidence of the results of our work in the form of case studies and a selection are attached as Appendix 1, here the actual benefit of the project to the people of Gwynedd is illustrated.
- 5.5. The impact on the individual is obvious. On a broader scale, we believe that TRAC benefits the community by reducing the number of young people who are unemployed, raising the aspirations of young people, reducing anti-social behaviour and ensuring the public resources consumed by a small number of individuals is reduced (thus increasing the resources available to all the pupils within schools in Gwynedd)
- 5.6. We aim to ensure our work benefits the individual through their life and leads to a reduction in their needs and the demand for services today and tomorrow. In the long term, a reduction in the risk that the next generation will have such profound needs should also be seen.

6. Priorities and challenges

- 6.1. TRAC receives broad support and is considered a means of early intervention to improve the life opportunities of the young people who have been identified as at risk of becoming dis engaged. The individuals and families benefit directly from the project, but there is also benefit for the through improved behaviour and results.
- 6.2. In this academic year the priorities for TRAC will be:
- establishing the Year 6 support;
 - enriching our alternative provision;
 - to begin planning for the project's exit strategy / succession
- 6.3. In the medium term, by 2022, TRAC will have been operational for a period of six years. Already we are seeing a dependency on the support that TRAC offers within schools, the provision that deliver to the pupils whom are receiving their education outside of main stream and other services within the Council. In a climate of uncertainty regarding the future of funding for similar work as a result of Brexit, there is a need to start planning as soon as possible and with care what support will be in place as the project comes to its end.
- 6.4. A Wales wide evaluation of the TRAC project is being undertaken, but it will not be able to assess and evaluate the true impact of the TRAC's provision locally and what the impact of the project coming to an end will be. In response, we aim to commission local research to evaluate if the provision offers value for money to the public purse in the short, medium and long term This work will provide the basis for the Council and its partners to plan, post 2022.