

Meeting of:	Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	Wednesday, 12 November 2020
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Learning and Culture
Report Title:	Youth Service Update
Purpose of Report:	To make members aware of the progress made in the Youth Service in the past 6 months during Covid.
Report Owner:	Rhys Jones and Tara Reddy - Youth Service Managers
Responsible Officer:	Paula Ham, Director of Learning & Skills
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	<p>Clr Kathryn McCaffer</p> <p>Morwen Hudson, Head of Standards and Provision</p> <p>Martin Dacey, Lead for Social Inclusion and Wellbeing</p>
Policy Framework:	The recommendations of this report are within existing policy framework and budget.
Executive Summary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Vale of Glamorgan Youth Service is performing well and provides good value for money. National Audit Statistics figures for 2018/19 show a reduction in overall numbers attending the service, however, we performed well in terms of delivery of accredited outcomes. • Improved media and usage of ICT is increasing and maximising the publicity and marketing of the Vale Youth Service. This includes use of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube as mechanisms requested by young people. During the Covid pandemic the use of ICT to engage has been essential to offer a distanced offer. • The Youth Service has formed effective partnership working arrangements with The Urdd, Boys' and Girls' Clubs and housing providers to ensure there is non-duplication of services and to most effectively meet the needs of learners across the Vale of Glamorgan. Due to the Covid pandemic some partners have been unable to deliver or provide services this financial year and as a result, this will have implications on figures for 20/21. Internal improvement in data management has meant an increased usage of ONE alongside our own Integrated Youth Support Services (IYSS) Management Information System (MIS), ensuring greater communication, tracking and monitoring of young people during transitions and within services and projects.

- European Social Fund (ESF) programmes Inspire to Achieve (I2A) and Inspire to Work (I2W) both continue to deliver across the Vale with at risk and young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). I2W continues to support the progress for post 16 learners in the Vale of Glamorgan and has already exceeded its targets for the remaining 2 years of the project. During the Covid pandemic we have seen a significant rise in referrals to I2W due to higher levels of unemployment in young people.
- The Youth Engagement Project (YEP) continues to deliver the Personal and Social Education (PSE) curriculum as part of Y Daith's wellbeing provision. Consideration regarding wider future working and potential new school builds within education will form part of the developments. This is as a consequence of the project providing extra provision for up to 60 young people per week. The service utilises elements of SWEET BTEC qualification at both level 1 and level 2, Agored Cymru units at all levels which can contribute towards qualifications, and also supports students sitting GCSEs with assessments and examinations. During the Covid pandemic this service has been key to supporting those more vulnerable students alongside the PRU.
- Welsh Government continues to support the Youth Service with an additional £254,499 of grant funding aimed at targeting youth homelessness and enhancing youth health and wellbeing. This has meant an additional 5 staff have joined during 2020/21 to deliver extra provision, sessions and support for those most vulnerable learners. This is alongside services already in existence to ensure non-duplication.
- The funding of the Youth Service is split between 44% grant funding and 56% core funding. The additional grant funding allocation from Welsh Government has meant a rise in provision but it is potentially precarious with future planning in mind, so this is being utilised to top up provision rather than creating projects which are not sustainable.

Recommendations

1. That Members consider the progress made in the last 12 months of the Youth Service in order to showcase the developments made and highlight the increase in provision while recognising the impact of Covid.
2. That Scrutiny Committee (Learning and Culture) receives a further progress update report in 12 months (September 2021) about on-going delivery, alongside awareness of grants and European funding and the risks this poses.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. The Council has a strategic responsibility for implementing the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework to reduce the number of young people Not in Education Employment or Training (NEETs). This is impacted by projects including YEP, I2A, I2W, Youth Homelessness and also Youth Destination data, in all of which the Youth Service plays a key role; all these projects will help keep numbers low and manageable moving forward.
2. To ensure that Members of the Scrutiny Committee (Learning and Culture) continue to have oversight of the Youth Service.

1. Background

- 1.1 In recent years it was identified that the manner in which Youth Services (YS) were provided in the Vale of Glamorgan needed to evolve. There were several drivers for this change including Welsh Government's review of 'Extending Entitlement', recommendations in 'A Curriculum for Wales – Curriculum for Life', the 'Successful Futures' report by Professor Donaldson and the developing new National Youth Work Strategy for Wales. These policy changes required the service to take a more collaborative approach and develop improved and enhanced relationships with schools and local Youth Service providers.
- 1.2 The Youth Service is implementing a new approach for 11-25 year olds in the Vale of Glamorgan. This has been embedded via a range of open access and targeted interventions with a youth-led focus on the needs of young people in each area of the Vale of Glamorgan.
- 1.3 This report seeks to make elected Members aware of the progress made in the Vale of Glamorgan and milestones achieved despite the Covid pandemic, and the impact the restrictions may have on those most vulnerable.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1** The annual statistical release from National Audit Statistics reports that the number of young people registered and engaged with the Youth Service as a percentage of the youth population for the Vale of Glamorgan for 2018/19 was 13%, a little under the national average of 15%. This is a reduction from 2017-18 figure of 17% and is a result of rebuilding the service following restructure, the loss of street-based services and the changing direction of the Families First projects towards more targeted intervention and support. Due to the Covid pandemic, these figures will drop quite significantly as we have a reduced number of young people accessing online services.
- 2.2** The Universal Service supports a variety of provisions across the Vale of Glamorgan where young people are able to access projects and learning opportunities, many of which are accredited. The service provides, on average, 13 weekly sessions of open access youth provision in community settings and on the V-pod, alongside various project-based sessions including Duke of Edinburgh Award (DofE), Local Democracy Week, consultations and many community events. This financial year, to date, the universal service has provided 564 sessions. During the Covid pandemic the service has moved to an online model of delivery, supporting those vulnerable via online engagement and delivery of resources, alongside outreach and detached sessions when restrictions allowed to ensure we work with those who need our support.
- 2.3** The universal service supports participation projects including Penarth Youth Action (PYA), Llantwit Youth Council (LYC) and the Vale Youth Cabinet, offering young people opportunities to have a voice and work on community issues. These projects have also provided opportunities to participate in an international youth exchange with four countries including Germany, where our young people had the opportunity to learn about participation and culture of other countries. The service also supported the Make Your Mark ballot where 3386 young people across the Vale of Glamorgan were able to vote for the issues most important to them. The top three highlighted issues were: knife crime, curriculum for life and mental health.
- 2.4** The service will now ensure these issues are included in programme planning. The Youth Service facilitates the Rights Ambassadors project that teaches young people about children's rights and delivers workshops to children, young people and adults across the Vale. The project also supports primary and secondary schools with the Super and Student Ambassadors schemes from the Children's Commissioner for Wales. Support is also given to school councils, for example signposting of resources and training for teachers and governors. In the summer term of 2019, a school council audit was conducted and completed by all eight secondary schools on behalf of the Local Authority. The participation projects have successfully continued to meet throughout the lockdown period developing projects and undertaking consultations. The Youth Cabinet ran a question and answer session with the Cabinet, Leader and senior officers to discuss Covid-related issues that were affecting them.

- 2.5** The reshape has enabled the service to be more flexible and able to respond to need; during the pandemic the services have supported deliveries to pupils eligible for free school meals (eFSM), vulnerability check-ins for education, extra engagement and support for vulnerable clients. This has included food parcel delivery, wellbeing pack delivery, and general support and guidance where safe to do so.
- 2.6** The service runs a variety of activities during school holidays; this summer, the Youth Service supported a holiday enrichment programme in schools who had identified the need for childcare for the children of frontline staff and vulnerable children. Alongside delivering a varied outreach programme across the Vale in different areas, aspects of this included supporting Safer Vale, Housing and Play team with anti-social behaviour (ASB) hotspot work and support for project delivery.
- 2.7** Welsh Government's Youth Support Grant has provided additional funding for wellbeing activities this year. During Covid, interventions such as the 'Gloves in the Gym, Knives in the bin' consultations, and development work with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) young people via online forums have been delivered.
- 2.8** The service has a partnership with the Urdd to deliver Welsh language youth provision across the county. Although reduced during lockdown, the Urdd continues to support young people with online activity including 69 young people who competed in an online cultural event in place of the cancelled National Eisteddfod.
- 2.9** Following priority changes to Families First grants, the Youth Wellbeing Team were formed to provide mentoring support to young people referred who have experienced adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). This service worked with 280 children and young people between 2019-2020. During this period, staff completed 1,244 individual one to one mentoring sessions, including 184 drop-in sessions across schools, lunch times, wellbeing in the outdoors, physical activities and much more. Of the referrals, 29 were either children who were educated other than at school (EOTAS) or non-attenders, and a further 48 had multiple needs (considered as having 3 or more ACEs). The Wellbeing Team provided ongoing support to young people throughout the lockdown via telephone or digital platforms and increased this to face to face support when restrictions allowed. They have now also returned to schools.
- 2.10** The I2A Programme continues to be successful across secondary schools in the Vale of Glamorgan. The outcomes for the project include:
- Further Education and Training outcome – currently 264% above profile
 - Qualifications outcome – currently 72% towards target; due to Covid, certificates have been delayed by 3 months. Once they have been received and included, this will be on target.

- Reduced Risk of NEET outcome - currently 92% towards target; due to Covid and the certificates for qualifications, this will also increase above target.
- 2.11** It is worth highlighting that the lead beneficiary, Newport, is content with progress and support our re-profile for higher numbers and costs.
- 2.12** The I2W Programme is currently 29% above profile which means an additional 48 young people accessing support to date. The outcomes for the project include:
- Further Education and Training outcomes – currently 155% above profile
 - Qualification Outcomes – currently 327% above profile
 - Employment Outcomes currently 176% above target
- 2.13** The number of young people Not in Education, Employment or Training in Year 11 reduced from 1% in 2017 to 0.5% in 2018. This is significantly below the Welsh average of 1.6%. The Local Authority is ranked first position for having the lowest percentage of young people who are NEET in Wales, compared to third lowest last year. Year 12 NEET figures have reduced from 0.6% in 2017 to 0.4% in 2018. Again, this is below the Welsh average of 0.7%, however, the Vale of Glamorgan's ranking fell to 7th position compared to 5th position in 2017. Year 13 NEET figures have reduced greatly from 2.85% in 2017 to 1.55% in 2018. This remains below the Welsh average of 2.53% and places the Vale of Glamorgan in 4th position compared to 13th in 2017. Due to Covid, the service has put extra resources into supporting the wider NEETS and YEPF agendas. A further report for Scrutiny (Learning and Culture) will be shared once the destination data from Welsh Government has been published.
- 2.14** In 2020-2021, additional funding was provided by Welsh Government to support young people identified as at risk of homelessness. A number of interventions have since been introduced in partnership with the department of housing and housing provider Llamau, as a result, young people at risk of homelessness have been supported on a one to one basis with engagement staff to stay in education, employment and training and prevent home breakdown, family conflict and potential risks of homelessness during the Covid pandemic. This has included a variety of support from wellbeing parcels, food parcels, eFSM deliveries, school uniform support and much more.
- 2.15** Due to the pandemic, the professional training and education Llamau had aimed to deliver has been postponed. As a result, the model of delivery has changed to increase capacity to support those most vulnerable clients. This has supported mediation, wellbeing and general mentoring and coaching.
- 2.16** The Youth Engagement Programme (YEP) based in Barry YMCA continues to support young people with a PSE curriculum as part of the Y Daith education offer. Alongside supporting 10 key stage 3 (KS3) or KS4 pupils each day, the team

also provides wellbeing and nurture support for 3 to 4 learners each day as part of on-going informal education, helping them to deal with the issues they face. All of these students are at risk of becoming NEET and will have experienced multiple ACEs. During the pandemic, the delivery model changed to target those most vulnerable clients and also the implementation of a distanced learning offer. The team continues with this delivery model, working with those more vulnerable young people.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Wellbeing Objectives?

- 3.1** Reducing the percentage of young people from becoming NEET is set out in the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework and the Welsh Government Child Poverty Strategy. It helps support the national and local indicator of percentage of young people in education, employment or training, under the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015.
- 3.2** The variety of provision continues to develop a wide range of offers from alternative education providers, vocational learning with progression routes, tailored support, and information and guidance. This should help learners explore their interests and realise their potential. We are proud to be offering a wide range of subject pathways through our partners that will help inspire young people to fulfil their potential.
- 3.3** Improving standards of alternative education provision is important to the Youth Service and we need to ensure that provision is quality assured through regular contracts management meetings with providers. The process ensures we monitor the progress of learners. Monitoring is undertaken to ensure both the Council and learners are receiving value for money and that provision has a positive impact on young people's education and wellbeing.
- 3.4** We work collaboratively with internal and external partners including agencies, education and training providers, Careers Wales and Welsh Government, to help meet the wellbeing objective.

4. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 4.1** The Youth Service received £413,752 from Welsh Government's Youth Support Grant in 2020/21.

- 4.2** European Social Fund (ESF) is confirmed until December 2022. However, with a potential underspend within ESF, we will be requesting re-profiles for both I2A and I2W in order to attract additional funding before project end. The total cost of the European Social Fund (ESF) projects Inspire to Achieve (I2A) and Inspire to Work (I2W) for the Vale of Glamorgan is £1,671,743. The percentage of grant funding income received is £716,513. This funding is from 1st April 2016 to 31 December 2022 for the I2A project, and from 1st February 2017 to 31st December 2022 for the I2W project.
- 4.3** Families First Funding will form part of the wider Children and Communities Grant (CCG) and require regular monitoring and performance reviews as part of results-based accountability (RBA) to ensure we continue to receive this to impact the wellbeing agenda.
- 4.4** With regard to the end date on ESF of Dec 2022 we are awaiting guidance from Welsh Government regarding 'Shared Prosperity' funding that may become available. It is hoped that we will hear about this in March 2021 while continuing to develop exit strategies for the ESF programmes.

Employment

- 4.5** Welsh Government's Youth Support Grant continues to provide annual funding 20/21 to employ 5 additional youth engagement workers; 3 within youth homelessness and 2 within youth health and wellbeing. Welsh Government will confirm funding for 2021/22 by Christmas 2020.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 4.6** The Vale of Glamorgan Youth Service's use of the ONE management information service ensures we monitor equality of access to open access and targeted intervention opportunities being delivered. We share this data with equalities teams to monitor interventions and in areas of need the service may adapt to cater for this, for example, we have seen a need for an LGBTQ+ provision as part of the reshape so this year we have taken many steps in consultation with the community and over half term we will be developing this offer to this community.

5. Background Papers

None.