

Meeting of:	Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	Thursday, 11 March 2021
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Learning and Culture
Report Title:	Youth Engagement and Progression Update
Purpose of Report:	To make members aware of the progress made over the last 12 months of the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework and the current levels of young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)
Report Owner:	Nisha Shukla, Engagement & Progression Coordinator
Responsible Officer:	Paula Ham, Director of Learning and Skills
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Cllr Lis Burnett, Morwen Hudson, Head of Standards and Provision, Martin Dacey, Lead for Social Inclusion and Wellbeing, Rhys Jones, Senior Youth Manager
Policy Framework:	The recommendations of this report are within existing policy framework and budget.
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This report is to enhance members' awareness of the reduction of young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in the Vale of Glamorgan. • The report consists of annual destination data of school leavers carried out by Careers Wales on behalf of Welsh Government in October 2019 and October 2020. Due to the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, the official release of the 2019 data was delayed significantly, therefore it was not reported in 2020. • The Welsh Government official statistical data for October 2019 destination survey was released in July 2020. The data highlighted the level of young people NEET had reduced in National Curriculum Year (NCY) 12 and 13, whilst remaining below the Welsh average for all NCY groups. There was an increase in the percentage of year 11 young people NEET: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Year 11 young people NEET in the Vale was 1.4%, below the Welsh average of 1.8%. - Year 12 young people NEET in the Vale was 0.4%, below the Welsh average of 0.8%. - Year 13 young people NEET was 1.41%, below the Welsh average of 2.54%. • The October 2020 annual destination Pre-Release Access to Official Statistics (Wales) highlighted the level of young people NEET had reduced in years (NCY) 11 and 12 and increased in year 13. 	

The Welsh average will be made available in May 2021 when the official data is published for each year group. The data is as follows:

- Year 11 young people NEET in the Vale is 0.89%.
- Year 12 young people NEET in the Vale is 0.62%.
- Year 13 young people NEET in the Vale is 3.10%.
- The reduction of young people NEET in the Vale has been as a result of access to a range of alternative education provision contracted through the Local Authority (LA), European Social Fund projects and strategic partnership working.

Recommendations

1. That Members consider the progress made in the last 12 months of the implementation of the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF) to reduce the number of young people NEET in the Vale of Glamorgan.
2. That Scrutiny Committee [Learning and Culture] receives a further progress update report in 12 months.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. The Council has a strategic responsibility for implementing the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF) to reduce the number of young people Not in Education Employment or Training.
2. That the Scrutiny Committee [Learning and Culture] has continued oversight of the YEPF.

1. Background

- 1.1 The YEPF implementation plan set targets to reduce the numbers of young people aged 16-18 who are NEET in Wales to 9 per cent by 2017 and to further reduce the proportion of young people aged 19 to 24 who are NEET in Wales relative to the UK as a whole by 2017.
- 1.2 The Welsh Government are refreshing the YEPF and planning to carry out consultation events in March and April 2021.
- 1.3 This report seeks to make elected members aware of the progress made in the Vale of Glamorgan in respect of reducing NEETs and the milestones achieved

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1 The Welsh Government official statistical data on NEETs for 2020 was pre-released in December 2020. The annual survey of school leavers undertaken by Careers Wales in October of each year on behalf of the Welsh Government provides a snapshot of pupil destinations. It includes pupils in year 11 who have reached statutory school leaving age and pupils leaving school in years 12 and 13. The data indicates that NEET levels for year (NCY) 11 and 12 reduced in 2020 which is very positive when considered within the context of the global pandemic and its associated impact.
- 2.2 Since its implementation in 2014, the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework has been instrumental in reducing the number of young people NEET in the Vale.

- 2.3** The percentage of year 11 leavers who were NEET, reduced from 1.40% in 2019 to 1.00% in 2020. The Welsh average will not be available until May 2021.
- 2.4** The percentage of young people who left year 12 and who were categorised as NEET also reduced from 0.8% in 2019 to 0.62% in 2020.
- 2.5** The percentage of young people NEET who left school in year 13 increased from 1.55% in 2019 to 3.10% (21 young people) in 2020. Four young people face significant barriers to engagement and therefore were not ready to enter education, training or employment. Since the destination survey took place on the 31st October 2020, of the 17 NEET young people, seven have entered employment, training or education. Careers Wales are working with five young people, and four are not responding to Careers Wales.
- 2.6** The Local Authority and schools have independently commissioned a number of providers to deliver vocational education to pupils educated otherwise than at school (EOTAS) in KS3 and KS4. All providers were able to provide digital teaching and learning experiences during the periods of lockdown. A total of seven alternative education providers worked with comprehensive schools, the Local Authority and the Pupil Referral Unit during 2019/2020 academic year. The largest engaging alternative education provider in the Vale is Motivational Preparation College for Training (MPCT).
- 2.7** During 2019/20, nine year 11 learners were engaged with Associated Community Training (ACT), seven of whom completed the year and achieved qualifications that were set at the beginning of referrals. All learners achieved at least one qualification and 58% achieved four or more GCSEs or equivalent. All learners achieved a GCSE grade for English and/or mathematics. Of the seven learners who completed the year, two continued their post 16 education with ACT, one gained employment, two pursued college courses, and two were Children Looked After (CLA) with significant barriers to engagement and were not ready to enter education, training or employment.
- 2.8** In 2019/20, 84 young people from Vale schools accessed Cardiff and the Vale College's 14-16 Learning Pathways, an increase of 9% from 2018/19. All pupils worked towards GCSE, Level 1 or level 2 qualifications. 94% achieved their qualifications in English language, mathematics, numeracy, hair and beauty, healthy lifestyle, construction, hospitality and catering and vehicles and light commercial vehicles. Five pupils were enrolled onto the Junior Apprenticeship programme and 20 qualifications were achieved by pupils in years 10 and 11.
- 2.9** Similar to previous years, the Motivational Preparation College for Training (MPCT) engaged 187 pupils from seven Vale schools in year groups 9, 10 and 11 with 132 pupils gaining qualifications in 2019/2020 academic year. The remaining pupils are still working towards their qualifications and will complete in 2020/2021 academic year.
- 2.10** The continuation of the Early Identification (EI) exercise carried out by schools' flags up young people who have been categorised as Red, Amber or Green depending on analysis of risk factors. The task is carried out twice annually by

leads of KS3 and KS4 in schools. Due to the lock down the EI was only conducted once during 2020.

- 2.11** Pupils from key stage 3 (KS3) and key stage 4 (KS4) who are at risk of becoming NEET and therefore highlighted as red are considered for support from the European Social Fund, Inspire to Achieve (I2A) programme. The preventative programme helps reduce the number of young people at risk of becoming NEET. The programme has set three common results indicators to measure the impact of participants at risk of becoming NEET which are: 'gaining qualifications upon leaving'; 'in education, employment or training upon leaving'; and 'at reduced risk of becoming NEET upon leaving'. A total of 100 young people were supported at some stage during 2020, of whom, 32 left year 11 and entered education or training.
- 2.12** The ESF Inspire to Work (I2W) Programme is measured by the reduction of young people NEET aged 16-24 through entry into the labour market, thus reducing youth unemployment. The ESF programmes are managed regionally in partnership with Cardiff Council, Newport Council, Monmouthshire Council, Llamau, Careers Wales, Gwent College and Cardiff and the Vale College. Newport Council have the strategic overview and are the lead agency for the programmes. 52 young people were enrolled on to the I2W programme, four of whom have subsequently entered education or training, 13 have entered employment and four were signed off the programme with no outcomes and classed as early leavers/non-engagers. The remaining 31 young people are still receiving support. The Vale of Glamorgan is the lead authority in terms of performance for I2W in the ESF regional partnership programme.
- 2.13** The ESF programmes (I2W and I2A) have been re-profiled to take advantage of Brexit slippage and both projects have been funded until the end of December 2022. The impact has been positive and the increase in match funding has provided additional capacity to allow I2A and I2W staff to work with more young people, particularly during the school holidays. This also allows more time for door knocking activity to engage harder to reach young people more regularly.
- 2.14** The Youth Engagement and Progression Board continues to meet digitally every quarter and monitors the Welsh Government Youth Engagement and Progression Framework annual grant work plans. The board ensures the reduction of young people NEET in the Vale and relative to Wales as a whole, by monitoring performance, scrutinising NEET data and ensuring tracking of vulnerable groups. Another key function is to consider the quarterly data of young people aged 16-18 which includes the number of both identified and unknown NEET young people. The board also provides leadership, monitors the outcome of strategic partnership work and the use of resources to help reduce the number of young people NEET in the Vale.
- 2.15** A directory of alternative education provision for statutory school age has been updated for 2020/21 academic year. The directory is a useful resource for schools to access alternative education provision for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs who may benefit from more bespoke learning pathways. The range of provision is varied and subject specific to meet the

needs and interests of young people. The providers have worked with the LA and supported young people to enhance their engagement and attainment in many instances. The directory provides details of delivery including during lockdowns, expected learning outcomes, qualifications, progression routes and costs.

- 2.16** Lead worker meetings occur bi-monthly to consider young people at risk of dropping out of provision post 16 and those at risk in year 11. Providers raise awareness of education/training offers to young people NEET. The group collaborate to engage young people during set periods during the annual cycle of the Careers Wales Destinations Survey taken in October. Attendees are represented from colleges, training providers, Careers Wales and the LA.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being 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 Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015.
- 3.2** The Council's Corporate Plan 2020-2025 'working together for a brighter future' demonstrates a direct link with Objective 2 'to support learning, employment and sustainable economic growth', with specific actions set out to "ensure there is appropriate access to quality early years, nursery and education provision enabling people to achieve their best possible outcome whatever their age" and to "work with education, training business and other agencies to provide a range of advice, support and training opportunities which improve people's skills in readiness for work" and "work as part of Cardiff Capital Region to progress strategic planning in transport, initiatives and promote sustainable economic growth and employment".
- 3.3** The variety of provision continues to develop with a wide range of offers from alternative education providers, vocational learning with progression routes, tailored support, and information and guidance. This supports learners to 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.
- 3.4** Improving standards of alternative education provision is important to us and we want to ensure that provision is quality assured through regular contracts management meetings with the providers. The process ensures we monitor the progress of learners. Monitoring is undertaken to make certain that learners are receiving value for money and that provision has a positive impact on young people's education and wellbeing. Recently the LA has adopted a more robust process of conducting quality assurance, with a panel representation from a range of stakeholders. In addition to LA officers, representation includes Careers Wales and secondary headteachers.

- 3.5** We work collaboratively with internal and external partners that include agencies, education and training providers, Careers Wales and Welsh Government to help meet the well-being objective.

4. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 4.1** The Welsh Government Youth Engagement & Progression Framework (YEPF) is part of the Core Youth Support Service Grant of £159,253, of which £13,397 is assigned to the work of the YEPF, including provision. Welsh Government have made no announcements to the changes of the grant for 2021/2022 as yet. Welsh Government were due to refresh the YEPF at the end of 2019, but due to the pandemic, the process was delayed. Consultation events are due to take place in March and April 2021.
- 4.2** The total cost of the European Social Fund (ESF) projects Inspire to Achieve (I2A) and Inspire to Work (I2W) for the Vale is £1,671,743. The amount 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 the 1st April 2017 to 31st December 2022 for the I2W project.

Employment

- 4.3** The money allocated towards the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework has helped secure the YEPF coordinator role and specialist provision for vulnerable young people who are particularly hard to engage. An officer has also been appointed using ESF funding.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 4.4** The Engagement and Progression Framework supports the early identification of pupils at risk of becoming NEET and enables support to be put in place to ensure equality of access to education, training and employment opportunities.

5. Background Papers

None.